

Practices middle school principals in large school divisions located within the Commonwealth of Virginia  
employ during the supervisory process

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the practices middle school principals employed during the supervisory process. The qualitative study focused on practices middle school principals followed during the pre-observation process, observation process, and post observation process. The study also detailed how the data collected from formal observations and classroom walk-through observations was utilized by middle school principals. Middle school principals who served in large school divisions located within the Commonwealth of Virginia were randomly selected to participate in the study in which the results were obtained by conducting standardized, open-ended interviews. Due to the increasing number of responsibilities and the mounting pressure to provide quality teacher supervision, the practices employed by middle school principals during the supervisory process was an important topic in need of additional research.

## DEDICATION

This accomplishment is dedicated to my wife Carisa whose encouragement and patience never wavered during the doctoral journey. Her belief in my abilities motivated me when I had doubts and her willingness to be a partner during this journey assisted me every step of the way. I am very thankful to share this accomplishment with her. I would also like to dedicate this accomplishment to my parents who instilled a love of learning and helping others early in my life. I am forever grateful for the support of my parents in helping me become the person I am today. Finally, I would like to dedicate this accomplishment to Dr. Charles Ridgell who instilled a belief in a young teacher that he could accomplish anything he set his mind to achieve and whose support never wavered.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	ii
DEDICATION .....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT .....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	v
LIST OF TABLES .....	vii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION .....	1
Statement of the Problem .....	1
Research Questions .....	2
Significance of Study .....	2
Definition of Key Terms .....	3
Limitations of the Study .....	4
Organization of the Study .....	5
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW .....	6
Introduction .....	6
Pre-observation Process .....	7
Observation Process .....	8
Classroom Walk-through Observation Process.....	11
Post Observation Process .....	13
Data Utilization .....	17
Conclusion .....	20
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY .....	23
Introduction .....	23
Population .....	23
Sample .....	24

Instrument ..... 26

Prior Consent and Protocol ..... 28

Data Gathering ..... 29

Data Analysis ..... 32

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS ..... 34

Introduction ..... 34

Interview Protocol ..... 34

Findings ..... 35

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, STUDY CONCERNS,  
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY ..... 66

Summary of Findings ..... 66

Conclusions ..... 71

Discussion ..... 73

Study Concerns ..... 77

Recommendations for Future Study ..... 79

REFERENCES ..... 81

APPENDICES ..... 83

    A. Interview Protocol ..... 83

    B. Telephone Script to Research Office ..... 85

    C. Email Script to Middle School Principals ..... 86

    D. Phone Script to Middle School Principals ..... 87

    E. Informed Consent ..... 88

    F. Institution Review Board Approval Letter ..... 91

    G. Coded Responses to Questions ..... 93

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
G.1: Question #1: Please describe all of the steps you follow during the teacher observation process. ....	93
G.2: Question #2: What steps or processes do you follow before conducting a teacher observation? .....	95
G.3: Question #3: What items do you require teachers to have prepared for the pre-observation conference? .....	97
G.4: Question #4: What type of feedback do you provide to teachers during the pre-observation conference? .....	99
G.5: Question #5: How do you inform teachers about the observation process? .....	101
G.6: Question #6: What steps or processes do you follow when conducting a teacher observation? .....	103
G.7: Question #7: What are the differences between the formal observation instrument and the classroom walk-through observation instrument utilized in your school division? .....	105
G.8: Question #8: What steps or processes do you follow when conducting a classroom walk-through observation? .....	107
G.9: Question #9: Are teachers made aware of when a classroom walk-through observation would be conducted? If so, how was the schedule of classroom walk-through observations communicated to them? .....	109
G.10: Question #10: What steps or processes do you follow after conducting a teacher observation? .....	111
G.11: Question #11: What type of feedback do you provide to teachers during the post observation conference? .....	113
G.12: Question #12: How long does it take you to provide feedback to teachers following a formal observation? .....	115
G.13: Question #13: How long does it take you to provide feedback to teachers following a classroom walk- through observation? .....	117
G.14: Question #14: What do you do with the data collected following a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation? .....	119
G.15: Question #15: Based on the data, what steps could you take to make the supervisory experience more beneficial for the teachers? .....	121
G.16: Question #16: How do you track the number of formal observations conducted in the building? How do you track the number of classroom walk-through observations conducted in the building? .....	123
G.17: Question #17: What factors control how many classroom walk-through observations you accomplish in a week? .....	125

G.18: Question #18: Are there any questions I should have asked regarding practices employed by middle school principals during the supervisory process that I did not ask? ..... 127

G.19: Question #19: What improvements or suggestions do you have regarding the interview instrument? ..... 129

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

One of the most important factors in increasing student achievement is the quality of the instructor in the classroom. The higher the quality of instruction, the more likely students are to maximize learning. The quality of instruction in the classroom can be increased in a variety of ways. Hiring new staff members has the potential to increase the quality of instruction. Another way to raise the quality of instruction is by implementing effective supervisory practices. In most school divisions the responsibility of supervising teachers lies with the principal. Knowing how principals employ effective supervisory practices is useful not only to local educators but also the entire profession of educational leadership.

Teacher supervision practices and procedures should be designed to help teachers perform better in the classroom. The goal of supervision is to assist teachers in employing better teaching practices which will result in increased student engagement and higher levels of academic performance. In some cases however, the supervisory process has been used to eliminate poor performing teachers. The degree in which principals employ effective supervisory processes can be impacted by many things. The knowledge base of the principal, managerial tasks, and increased responsibility for student safety, are some of the competing tasks that can impact principals from employing effective supervisory practices. Due to increasing pressure on principals to provide quality supervision in the school, perhaps it is prudent to determine what principals are doing during the course of the school day.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Due to the increasing number of responsibilities, it is becoming more difficult for principals to identify time during the school day to observe teachers in the classroom. When principals do make an appearance in the classroom, the visit can vary in time of observation and perhaps with little or no feedback provided to teachers because of the pressure of administrative responsibilities. If no feedback is provided, teachers are not made aware if the teaching strategies they are using are effective. Without feedback,

teachers are provided no guidance on how to improve instruction. If instruction within the classroom remains the same, results will remain stagnant and student achievement will not improve. The need for more research on practices employed by principals during the supervisory process could have a positive influence on the professional development of teachers.

## **Research Questions**

This study is designed to explore the practices middle school principals in large school divisions located within the Commonwealth of Virginia employ during the supervisory process. Research questions included:

- (a) What processes does the middle school principal employ before conducting a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation?
- (b) What process do middle school principals employ when conducting a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation?
- (c) What type of constructive feedback do principals provide following a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation?
- (d) How are the collected data utilized following a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation?

## **Significance of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to identify the practices employed by middle school principals during the supervisory process. Most research studies tend to be completed at the elementary or high school level. There is a limited amount of research conducted at the middle school level. This study will focus on the supervisory practices of those who lead and guide teachers during this transitional period in the life of a child. The amount and method of sharing feedback by the principal following a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation reinforces the perception that learning is the most important function

that should be occurring in the classroom. How middle school principals approach the task of supervising teachers can have an enormous effect on the learning environment they wish to create within their school. The steps and processes a principal engages in with teachers before and after a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation can be shared with other educational professionals and impact the supervisory process. The structure of formal observation and classroom walk-through observation practices can serve as a reference tool for other school administrators who are responsible for supervising teachers.

The topic of supervisory practices is important because data from formal observations and classroom walk-through observations can be used to improve teaching practices in the classroom. The number of feedback sessions and the quality of the feedback sessions following a formal observation or a classroom walk-through observation can be analyzed by the principal to determine if they are committed to observing the instructional practices occurring in the classroom. The pre-observation and post observation conference can provide valuable information to the principal and teacher in regards to improving instruction and raising student achievement. Teachers can use the feedback from the supervisory process to validate classroom strategies or improve instructional tactics. The practices employed by middle school principals during the supervisory process can have a positive impact on the level of instruction that occurs in the classroom. Additionally, the practices employed by middle school principals who participate in the study can serve as a reference for new and tenured school administrators across the Commonwealth of Virginia in the area of teacher supervision. The results of this study can provide a knowledge basis for development of a survey instrument to explore supervisory practices on a larger scale.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

Key terms used during the course of the study include:

- (1) Feedback- comments provided by the principal to the teacher following a formal observation or walk-through observation

- (2) Large school divisions- the ten largest school divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia based on student enrollment in public elementary, middle, and high schools within the school division
- (3) Middle school- a public school with any grades six through eight (Virginia Department of Education, 2006)
- (4) Observation- the attentive watching and recording of teacher actions by a principal
- (5) Pre-observation conference- a meeting between the principal and teacher before an observation to discuss lesson objectives and strategies
- (6) Post observation conference- a meeting between the principal and teacher following an formal observation or walk-through observation with feedback provided
- (7) Supervisory practices- the practices used by a principal to oversee and guide instructional strategies employed by teachers
- (8) Formal observation- a classroom observation in which the principal monitors teacher instruction over an extended period of time
- (9) Classroom walk-through observation- a classroom observation conducted by the principal that is brief in time

### **Limitations of the Study**

While the results of the study can impact the supervisory practices of elementary and secondary principals, the study is limited to the responses provided by middle school principals. The study will only be conducted within the Commonwealth of Virginia. The study is also limited to middle school principals who serve in ten school divisions located in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

### **Organization of the Study**

Chapter one of the study contains the introduction, statement of the problem, research questions, significance of the study, definition of key terms, and limitations of the study. Chapter two contains

relevant literature related to practices principals employ during the supervisory process. Chapter three addresses the methodology including the population sample for the study. Chapter four will contain the results from the study and provide answers to the research questions. Chapter five will serve as a conclusion and reiterate the original purpose of the study.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### Introduction

There are a multitude of roles and duties a middle school principal is expected to perform. A middle school principal is expected to serve as an accountant, manager, investigator and, most importantly, an instructional leader. The act of instructional supervision is the most important role principals assume because it fosters the idea that learning is central to the organization (Range, Holt, Scherz, & Young, 2011). Although classroom instruction has the greatest school level impact on student achievement, leadership has the second greatest effect (Sanzo, Clayton, & Sherman, 2010).

According to Stronge, Grant, and Ward (2011) the common denominator in school improvement and student success is the teacher. Principals are responsible for identifying and monitoring teacher behavior in the classroom. Repeated systematic observation tells us that certain teaching practices will, with a high degree of probability, have a positive effect on students (Range, Holt, Scherz, & Young, 2011). Most successful school leaders were also reported to be visible in the classroom and accessible to staff members (Leithwood, 2005).

The act of teacher supervision involves observing the strategies employed by teachers in the classroom. Range, Holt, Scherz, and Young (2011) defined clinical supervision as a three step process composed of the pre-observation conference, the extended observation, and the post observation conference. Aside from a study conducted in Wyoming regarding how principals supervise and improve teacher performance, there is a limited amount of research which focuses on the practices employed by middle school principals during the supervisory process.

The narrative which follows focuses on four research questions which center on actions taken by principals during the teacher supervision process. The four research questions are:

- 1) What processes does the principal employ before conducting a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation?
- 2) What processes do principals employ when conducting a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation?
- 3) What type of constructive feedback do principals provide following a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation?
- 4) How are the collected data utilized following a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation?

The practices employed by principals during the pre-observation, observation, and post observation process can be used as a reference by educational leaders given the task of supervising teachers. The practices employed by principals during a classroom walk-through observation can provide insight into the possible value of conducting these brief, unannounced visits in a classroom. Examining how the data following a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation is utilized can be used as a reflection exercise by other instructional leaders.

### **Pre-observation process**

The pre-observation conference is an opportunity for the principal to share his or her vision for the learning process with the teacher. Principals who are unable to coherently verbalize a vision for supervisory practice tend to experience difficulties in providing constructive feedback to teachers (Range, Holt, Scherz, & Young, 2011). In a study of Virginia high school principals regarding facilitating high achievement, Crum and Sherman (2008) discovered principals who utilized multiple forms of supervision of instruction and preferred not to rely solely on scheduled classroom observations or short visits, and instead utilized approaches during a pre-observation conference which focused on both breadth and depth of understanding, provided valuable information about what is happening in the classroom before setting one foot in the classroom.

The pre-observation conference provides structure for the actual observation and the post observation conference which follows. The pre-observation conference allows the teacher to outline the intent of the lesson and allows the principal to focus on items which should be visible during the lesson. The entire supervision cycle begins with goal setting which is accomplished during the pre-observation process (Range, Holt, Scherz, & Young, 2011.) High expectations are communicated during the pre-observation conference, which consist of students mastering complex and basic skills (Stronge, Grant, & Ward, 2011). At the conclusion of the observation, the principal should then be able to identify if the teacher achieved the goal established during the pre-observation conference.

In order for the supervisory process to be fruitful for both the principal and teacher, trust must be established. Trust is a bond that could transform schools into organizations that value teacher development (Range, Holt, Scherz, & Young, 2011). Jointly setting a climate of respect and collaboratively clarifying the expectations for the actual performance can assist the principal in achieving teacher buy-in during the pre-observation conference (Ovado, 2006).

Before beginning an observation, a meeting between the principal and teacher can provide insight into the learning environment created by the teacher. The need to schedule time to complete the observation and to communicate with the teachers is perceived to be very important to the preparation to offer written feedback to teachers (Ovado, 2006). Discussions during the pre-observation conference can set the tone and climate for the observation process and the post observation conference which will follow.

### **Observation process**

A formal observation consists of a principal monitoring teacher instruction for an extended period of time. During the formal observation, the principal is monitoring a variety of elements within the classroom. Effective principals analyze instruction and student learning through regular classroom observations in order to provide detailed feedback to teachers that supports instructional improvement (Ovado, 2006). Principals

must have their finger on the pulse of the school and must be cognizant of the instructional practices and processes occurring in their building (Crum & Sherman, 2008). Outstanding principals focus on the students and the learning (Crum & Sherman, 2008). The observation process allows principals to witness the strategies utilized by teachers in the classroom to impart knowledge within their students.

The observation process could also target instructional areas the teacher may request to be observed. Supervisory experiences should be tailored to the specific needs of teachers or based on current performance (Range, Holt, Scherz, & Young, 2011). In order to make a difference in the quality of education, we must be able to identify and record what strategies good teachers use to enhance student learning (Stronge, Grant, & Ward, 2011). Collecting pertinent classroom performance data during the observation allows for future analyzing and reflecting upon the collected data (Ovado, 2006). The observation allows for the targeted collection of instructional data and builds the foundation for future principal-teacher discussions.

There can be a difference in the number of observations conducted by a principal in regards to teacher tenure. Principals are keenly aware of the nuances between new and veteran teachers and can adjust their leadership accordingly thereby moving seamlessly between direct, indirect, and collaborative supervision (Crum & Sherman, 2008). According to a Wyoming study, principals indicated probationary contract teachers received more direct supervision in the form of formal observations than continuing contract teachers (Range, Holt, Scherz, & Young, 2011). Beginning teachers may struggle with instructional traits such as pace of the lesson, transition between activities, and exit exercises. By applying more direct control on the supervision of probationary contract or marginal teachers, principals can quickly diagnose problems before they morph into habits (Range, Holt, Scherz, & Young, 2011).

During the observation process principals monitor instructional strategies employed by teachers. Effective teachers check for student understanding throughout the lesson and adjust instruction based on student feedback (Stronge, Grant, & Ward, 2011). Checking for understanding and adjusting instruction based on student feedback are two traits employed by effective teachers which can be referenced during an

observation by the principal. Principals may also observe how the teacher starts and finishes a lesson, focusing on if students know what they are doing that day and if they learned what the teacher intended for them to learn (Sanzo, Clayton, & Sherman, 2010).

In addition to examining instructional practices during an observation, a principal may also observe how the teacher interacts with students. When observing teachers who are labeled effective in terms of their student achievement results, principals could seek to identify and record attitudes, approaches, strategies, or connections the teacher establishes with students (Stronge, Grant, & Ward, 2011). The positive connection between students and teachers could manifest in nonacademic ways and may contribute to higher student academic success (Stronge, Grant, & Ward, 2011). Classroom climate, positive reinforcement, rules, procedures and routines, and classroom management are other areas principals may observe during a lesson (Ovado, 2006).

In order to receive a clear picture of what is occurring in the classroom, the principal must be visible. According to a principal who participated in a leadership study conducted in Virginia, “I am in the classrooms. You cannot lead if you are not in the classrooms with teachers and kids. Any good principal looks back and says I was not in the classroom enough” (Sanzo, Clayton, & Sherman, 2010). Principals need to be instructionally minded and strive to spend portions of their time during the instructional day focused on student learning and working directly with staff to support their instructional needs and efforts (Sanzo, Clayton, & Sherman, 2010). Principals who visit classrooms more often are able to observe and converse with teachers in an effort to know what is occurring in the classroom and on campus (Ovado, 2006).

While the principal can document the strategies utilized by the teacher during an observation, a climate of trust should be established between the principal and teacher. Successful principals build trust through establishing cultures and systems that promote bottom up and enable top down approaches to succeed (Crum & Sherman, 2008). One of the roles of the principal is providing instructional support to

teachers. Crum and Sherman (2008) found principals often described their leadership role as supportive with one of their obligations including developing the personnel within their building to be effective at their respective jobs. The documentation of teaching practices during the observation process provides teachers with information based on data from actual observation.

The principal must examine the performance of staff members in order to provide constructive feedback and to make decisions that affect individual teachers and the school itself (Ovado, 2006). The formal observation process consists of the principal observing teacher instruction and behavior for an extended period of time. Instructional leaders should conduct classroom observations on a regular basis (Ovado, 2006). The collection of detailed artifacts and processes can lead to instructional improvements and an increase in student achievement.

### **Classroom walk-through observation process**

A supervisory strategy utilized by principals involves classroom walk-through observations. Classroom walk-through observations are brief, frequent, and not necessarily announced classroom visits by the principal followed by a reflective conversation with the teacher about instruction (Range, Holt, Scherz, & Young, 2011; Ovado, 2006). Visits can vary by length of time but usually do not exceed ten minutes. Principals could create their own classroom walk-through observation form and include other administrators in the classroom walk-through observation process. A principal who participated in a leadership study in Virginia created a tailored three-minute classroom walk-through form with his assistants in order to conduct classroom walk-through observations (Sanzo, Clayton, & Sherman, 2010). Principals can also determine how often classroom walk-through observations should occur. A high school principal in a study conducted in Virginia decided a goal for the leadership team would be 70-80 classroom walk-through observations a week (Crum & Sherman, 2008).

According to Range, Holt, Scherz, and Young (2011), classroom walk-through observations can focus on instructional practices, student engagement, and curriculum issues. Classroom walk-through observations also allow principals to identify instructional areas of weakness and intervene before more complicated issues arise. Classroom walk-through observations can allow principals the opportunity to provide feedback and start discussions about effective teaching (Range, Holt, Scherz, & Young, 2011). Classroom walk-through observations require principals to go visit classrooms. During the classroom walk-through observation, principals are collecting data, examining actual learning by talking with students regarding what they are actually doing, and then meeting with the teacher (Crum & Sherman, 2008).

Classroom walk-through observations could be an effective strategy used by principals to monitor teacher instruction. In a study conducted in Wyoming, over 80 percent of the principals who responded to the survey indicated they used the classroom walk-through observation format to monitor instruction (Range, Holt, Scherz, & Young, 2011). According to Range, Holt, Scherz, and Young (2011), the classroom walk-through observation is often more reflective of classroom operation than a planned formal observation. According to Ovado (2006), classroom walk-through observations have been recognized by principals as an effective strategy to collect information of real teaching episodes, teacher instructional performance, student learning, and teachers' needs.

During the supervisory process, a principal may observe teachers providing instruction in a subject which they are not endorsed. As principals utilize the classroom walk-through observation protocol to make formative visits to the classroom, they become familiar with the school's curriculum and climate along with instructional practices utilized by teachers (Range, Holt, Scherz, & Young, 2011). Frequent classroom walk-through observations can result in the principal gaining more time to observe teachers. Frequent classroom walk-through observations decrease the reliance on the pre-planned, extended formal classroom observations, which usually create a skewed view of actual teaching performance (Range, Holt, Scherz, & Young, 2011).

Classroom walk-through observations provide the principal a snapshot of practices employed by teachers on a daily basis. According to Range, Holt, Scherz, & Young (2011) most principals who participated in the Wyoming study felt classroom walk-through observations allowed them to formatively supervise instruction because classroom walk-through observations provided a quick mechanism for collecting data. Several principals also felt classroom walk-through observations afforded opportunities to observe realistic teaching (Range, Holt, Scherz, & Young, 2011). Classroom walk-through observations allow principals to visit classrooms on a more regular basis and instill the belief that learning is the most important function in the classroom. According to Range, Holt, Scherz, & Young (2011) classroom walk-through observations allow principals to gain a better picture of instruction because they allow principals to watch true instruction.

Conducting multiple classroom walk-through observations can assist in establishing trust between the principal and teacher. The classroom walk-through observation process can transform supervision into a partnership focused on reflective practice and enables principals to obtain a clearer picture of teacher performance (Range, Holt, Scherz, & Young, 2011). According to Range, Holt, Scherz, & Young (2011) frequent classroom walk-through observations assist in eliminating teacher fear regarding the observation process.

### **Post observation process**

The comments and feedback provided by a principal to a teacher following a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation can have a positive impact on the level of instruction occurring in the classroom. The feedback provided by the principal can assist in improving instructional pedagogy and provide long term benefits to the teacher. The goal of instructional supervision is formative in scope and concerned with improving the skill set of teachers (Range, Holt, Scherz, and Young, 2011). Providing intellectual stimulation by asking teachers to reflect on existing practices, questioning taken-for-granted assumptions, and considering new practices can contribute to professional growth (Leithwood, 2005). In

order for the feedback to be well received, the principal must develop a knowledge foundation related to quality instruction in order for teachers to receive, appreciate, and respond positively (Ovado, 2006).

One of the goals of conducting a post observation conference is providing feedback to the teacher in a non-evaluative setting. Feedback provided to teachers through the formative approach is focused on improving performance and is not associated with evaluation (Range, Holt, Scherz, & Young, 2011). Formative supervision involves providing comments and suggestions based on what was observed during the formal observation or classroom walk-through observation. Formative feedback should be relative to teacher performance and should be strictly for the improvement of teaching and not for evaluation (Ovado, 2006). Formative supervision does not consist of evaluative components. Principals who participated in a Wyoming study reported the use of coaching and mentoring to formatively support teachers, both of which are supervisory behaviors (Range, Holt, Scherz, & Young, 2011).

The manner in which information is shared with teachers during the post observation process can be differentiated based on the experience and tenure of the teacher. Veteran teachers may need greater detail as to why a change or improvement in instructional strategies is necessary. Feedback needs to be appropriate to the teacher developmental stage because teachers function at different stages of cognitive, conceptual, morale, and ego development and at different stages of consciousness and concern (Ovado, 2006). In a study conducted by Crum and Sherman (2008), a principal shared his strategy when working with a primarily veteran staff when demonstrating why change was necessary. Showing how the change in practice is going to help teachers during the instructional process and relating the change to student achievement and success are strategies which can be used when conversing with teachers during the post observation conference (Crum & Sherman, 2008).

According to Range, Holt, Scherz, & Young (2011) principals who make suggestions through constructive feedback and praise regularly reap the largest rewards from the supervisory process. Principals should deliver the feedback acknowledging strengths, identifying areas of development, praising extra

professional efforts, asking questions for future reflection, and providing suggestions (Ovado, 2006).

Providing positive, constructive feedback can increase the level of trust between the principal and teacher during the supervisory process.

Principals must be professional when delivering feedback and schools need to establish a system for the effective delivery of constructive feedback to the teacher in order for teaching and learning excellence to be achieved (Ovado, 2006). Successful principals in a study conducted by Leithwood (2005) demonstrated considerable cognitive flexibility which was evident in their willingness to listen carefully to the ideas of others, in their open-mindedness, and in the creativity and lateral thinking which they applied to their problem solving. Effective principals are able to provide feedback to teachers with the purpose of improving classroom instruction (Ovado, 2006). During the post observation conference, principals who are skilled communicators can clearly and concisely relay feedback to teachers.

The post observation process is a two-way street, providing an opportunity for the principal and teacher to discuss what transpired following an observation. After the observation, the teacher and principal analyze the data from the classroom visit, looking for behaviors to celebrate and identifying areas for continued improvement. Principals should also place a great deal of thought to how to compose the feedback in a way that is constructive, but not destructive, to the teacher (Ovado, 2006). Once teachers receive feedback, there should be an opportunity for the teacher and principal to discuss the lesson and feedback (Ovado, 2006). The length of the observation could determine the amount of feedback provided by the principal. The principal should provide on-going, constructive feedback following an observation and short, direct feedback after unannounced visits (Range, Holt, Scherz, & Young, 2011).

Written feedback has a more long-term effect on teacher instruction than verbal feedback. Ovado (2006) adds written feedback from the principal has the potential to influence instructional behaviors of the teacher. Teachers may appreciate feedback in written form more than receiving feedback in verbal form because written feedback provides evidence of reflection on the part of the principal. Written feedback

should contain areas of strengths, areas of concern or questions to ponder, and suggestions for development (Ovado, 2006). According to Ovado (2006), it is also critical to keep a balance in identifying teachers' strong areas of teaching and areas of possible professional growth. Written constructive feedback provided by the principal is a tool which can be used by a teacher to grow professionally. Prior research conducted by Ovado (2006) highlights the importance of written feedback as a promising vehicle to enhance instruction.

Providing feedback following a classroom walk-through observation can also have a positive impact on future teacher performance. According to Range, Holt, Scherz, & Young (2011) classroom walk-through observations positively impact teachers' self-efficacy, attitudes about professional development, attitude about teacher appraisal, classroom instruction, perceptions of principal effectiveness, and perceptions of school effectiveness. Providing specific and constructive comments following a classroom walk-through observation can assist in helping a teacher to be more accepting of future observations and feedback. In a study of constructive feedback provided by principals by Ovado (2006), principals who participated in the study stressed the importance of following up with a discussion about the classroom walk-through observation, especially with new teachers or teachers with whom they were concerned. According to the results from a Wyoming study, several respondents perceived classroom walk-through observations as a way to provide feedback to teachers and as a way to discuss instruction (Range, Holt, Scherz, & Young, 2011).

Classroom walk-through observations provided an opportunity to discuss effective instruction with teachers and these discussions were strong and meaningful (Range, Holt, Scherz, and Young, 2011). The Wyoming principals who participated in the study also viewed classroom walk-through observations as an opportunity to provide immediate feedback to teachers (Range, Holt, Scherz, & Young, 2011). Following a classroom walk-through observation, the feedback should be brief, specific, and informative (Ovado, 2006). Classroom walk-through observations allow the principal to conduct several mini-observations during the

course of a school day. Classroom walk-through observations allow the principal to provide teachers the opportunity and resources they need to reflect on their practice and sharing these practices with others must be a priority for instructional leaders (Ovado, 2006).

In order for constructive feedback to be effective, the feedback must be relevant, factual, immediate, useful, and encouraging (Ovado, 2006). The discussion between a principal and teacher during a post observation conference can produce ideas for instructional improvements and identify effective instructional practices that are already in place in the classroom. Ovado (2006) suggests clear and specific written feedback is valued by teachers and has the potential to foster opportunities for professional dialogue based on factual classroom data. By systematically collecting, analyzing classroom based data, and delivering constructive written feedback to teachers, principals and teachers may collaboratively plan, implement, and evaluate instructional development activities so that more effective instruction can occur (Ovado, 2006).

### **Data utilization**

The data collected during a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation can be used by the principal in a variety of ways to improve the instructional program of the school. According to Range, Holt, Scherz, & Young (2011) the two purposes of supervision are collecting data on teacher performance by various means and linking the data to professional development. After collecting and analyzing data, the principal should then link the findings to developmental planning, goal setting and organizational support (Ovado, 2006). The data collected from formal observations or classroom walk-through observations could be used as a tool for professional growth if the principal presents the data in a manner that interests teachers.

Data collected from observations could be utilized to improve the instructional pedagogy of teachers regardless of their years of experience. The data collected during the supervisory process can be used to gain information that can help teachers, even teachers who are already proficient, to improve or expand their

abilities (Range, Holt, Scherz, & Young, 2011). One of the ways principals attempt to expand the instructional abilities of teachers is through professional development. The supervisory process allows principals to collect a rich data set on teacher performance from which professional development is linked (Range, Holt, Scherz, & Young, 2011).

Supervision allows principals, in their role as instructional leader, the opportunity to identify specific instructional areas in which teachers may need assistance. Supervision is the formative process in which principals attempt to maximize teacher growth and assess the professional development needs of teachers. (Range, Holt, Scherz, & Young, 2011). Candid, but respectful, conversations and dialogue surrounding data and gaps between subgroups can be led by principals with their teachers to ensure learning and improvement is ongoing rather than stagnate (Crum & Sherman, 2008). Supervision of teacher instruction in the classroom provides the opportunity for quality discussions to occur between the principal and teacher.

Professional development should be linked to identifiable teacher needs based on data from observations. In a study examining successful leadership practices of high school principals, Crum and Sherman (2008) found principals spoke specifically about the types of professional development they provided to their staff in order to increase and enhance their instructional capabilities. Professional development is a never ending journey and can be changed depending on teacher strengths and areas identified for improvement.

While classroom walk-through observations provide a snapshot of teaching practices at a given time, the data collected from these unannounced visits is valuable. According to respondents from a Wyoming study, principals felt classroom walk-through observations allowed them to formatively supervise instruction because they provided a quick mechanism for collecting data (Range, Holt, Scherz, & Young, 2011).

When a principal notices a teacher is struggling or not meeting proficiency, the data collected from the supervisory process can also be utilized. Once problems are detected, principals must collect data to support claims and conduct face-to-face conferences to discuss problems (Range, Holt, Scherz, & Young, 2011). Confronting marginal or unsatisfactory teaching can be a difficult proposition for some principals. The data collected during the supervisory process can assist the principal in identifying potential strategies to combat unsatisfactory performance. Typical strategies used for remediation include more frequent observations, mandated professional development, and opportunities for the teacher to observe model teaching (Range, Holt, Scherz, & Young, 2011).

The building of a trusting relationship between the principal and teacher may take time but can reap tremendous rewards once achieved. Once trust has been established between the principal and teacher, the data can be presented and discussed in a manner that is constructive and non-evaluative. According to Range, Holt, Scherz, & Young (2011), once trust is secured, formative supervision techniques can be incorporated into the day-to-day operations of schools to begin data collection. Effective formative supervision requires principals to communicate a vision for instruction, build trust with teachers, collect formative data on performance, and link professional development to identified performance needs (Range, Holt, Scherz, & Young, 2011).

In order to build a trusting relationship effective communication practices should also be implemented by the principal. Without the establishment of both communication and rapport, the majority of school improvement initiatives would not have been possible for the principals (Crum & Sherman, 2008). Building a positive rapport with teachers will allow the principal to share data in non-threatening, supportive role. Rather than working in a direct and prescriptive manner, principals working side-by-side with teachers could create a warm and caring learning environment (Sanzo, Clayton, & Sherman, 2010).

Professional development is the sharing of ideas and strategies with teachers in the hope of positively impacting instruction through implementation in lessons and unit plans. Instructionally focused

development activities can enable teachers to effectively use data to impact instruction occurring in the classroom (Sanzo, Clayton, & Sherman, 2010). Information collected from principals who participated in a Wyoming study indicated data regarding teacher performance was collected by various means then followed by aligning the data to professional development (Range, Holt, Scherz, & Young, 2011). Principals who use data from observations to align professional development can impact the instructional knowledge base of their teachers.

Professional development sessions can be scheduled by the principal and could occur before, during or after school hours. Professional development can also be provided on teacher workdays or before the start of the school year. Some principals have changed the focus of their faculty meetings from general school information sessions to devoted periods of time where faculty can contribute to the professional knowledge of their colleagues (Sanzo, Clayton, & Sherman, 2010). Teacher may respond more positively to professional development that is offered by their peers than professional development which is offered by the principal or outside specialists.

## **Conclusion**

One of the duties which must be performed by the principal is teacher supervision. Successful practices employed by principals during the supervisory process could be replicated by other school leaders. The supervisory process is composed of three elements. The first element is the pre-observation conference which is followed by the actual observation. Following the observation, a post observation conference is conducted between the principal and teacher. The data collected by the principal during an observation can be utilized to recognize areas of strength and as a catalyst for professional development.

The pre-observation conference provides the opportunity for the principal and teacher to meet and discuss the lesson which will be observed. The pre-observation conference provides the structure and framework for the lesson and eventually the post observation conference. Goals of the lesson can be shared

by the teacher during the pre-observation conference. Identification of the goals for the lesson cues the principal to observe specific teaching behaviors and strategies during the lesson.

The observation consists of the principal observing teacher behaviors and strategies employed during an actual lesson. A formal observation requires the principal to observe teacher behavior during an extended period of time. Principals can vary the number of observations based on teacher experience and need. During the observation, the principal can collect specific data regarding classroom management, student engagement, and activities employed by teachers at the beginning and end of the lesson. A climate of trust and respect during the observation process can be created by the principal engaging in conversations with the teacher and being visible. The observation process allows for the collection of detailed artifacts and processes which allow the principal to determine if the teacher accomplished what they intended to accomplish during the lesson.

The classroom walk-through observation is a supervisory strategy which allows the principal to observe teacher behavior and instruction during a short period of time. Typically a classroom walk-through observation lasts between five and ten minutes. Classroom walk-through observations provide a snapshot of what is occurring in the classroom during a given period of time. Classroom walk-through observations also reveal more authentic instruction because they are usually unannounced. In order for classroom walk-through observations to have a positive effect on instruction and teacher behavior, principals would need to provide feedback immediately following the classroom walk-through observation. Conducting classroom walk-through observations before formal observations can assist in building a climate of trust between the principal and teacher.

Following a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation, providing the teacher with immediate, meaningful feedback is one of the most important duties a principal could undertake. When the principal provides feedback to the teacher in written form, the principal should conduct a follow-up conference with the teacher to answer any questions and clarify the provided feedback. Formative feedback

consists of providing the teacher with comments and suggestions following the observation. Principals should acknowledge areas of strength, identify areas of development, and ask questions for future reflection during the post observation conference. The comments provided by the principal following a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation can have a positive impact on the instruction provided to students by the teacher.

One of the goals of the supervisory process is the collection of data. The data collected by the principal during an observation could be used to improve the instructional program of the school. Data collected during a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation could be shared with teachers and could also be used to plan professional development targeting areas of instructional weakness. Professional development should be linked to teacher needs, which is linked to data collected by the principal during a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation. Data also allows principals to provide specific and constructive feedback to the teacher regarding the practices employed during the lesson.

Practices employed by middle school principals during the supervisory process have the potential to influence teacher practices in the classroom. One of the most important factors in improving student success is the effectiveness of the teacher in the classroom. Principals who conduct pre-observation conferences, formal observations, classroom walk-through observations, and post observation conferences have the potential to indirectly affect student achievement by increasing the instructional capacity of the teachers in the classroom. Principals who collect and share data with teachers and who utilize the data to create professional development opportunities may have the largest influence on teacher effectiveness and ultimately student achievement. The quality of practices utilized by middle school principals during the supervisory process is an area for future research.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **Introduction**

This chapter contains information related to the population and sample for the study. Chapter three will also address the instrument, data gathering process, and data analysis which were utilized during the study. The target population was middle school principals who serve in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The procedures for obtaining informed consent and interview protocol will be outlined in the chapter. The procedures used in order to gather the data will be addressed and a thematic analysis of the data occurred following the interviews.

### **Population**

Principals who serve in a middle school located in a large school division within the Commonwealth of Virginia composed the population for the study. The ten largest school divisions based on student enrollment were identified as large school divisions. This population was composed of 123 principals who served as instructional leaders for middle schools which contained students in grades six through eight or grades seven and eight. The ten largest school divisions within the Commonwealth of Virginia are located within three distinct regions; northern Virginia, capital area, and tidewater area. Each of the three regions is located in close proximity, 50 miles or less, to a large urban area

Middle school principals were selected to participate in the study because there is a dearth of information to be reviewed regarding the supervisory practices of middle school principals. While studies regarding the leadership practices of elementary, middle, and high school principals have been conducted within the Commonwealth of Virginia, there is no such study which specifically targeted the practices employed by middle school principals during the supervisory process.

Middle school principals were also selected to participate in the study because they are expected to supervise teachers who have various educational backgrounds. Normally, middle school teachers are

trained to teach at an elementary, middle, or high school setting. However, teachers certified in elementary education are certified to teach grade six in a middle school setting while teachers certified in grades seven through twelve could instruct students in seventh and eighth grade. The diversity within the training of potential teachers could impact instructional pedagogy and result in teaching strategies which may not be appropriate for middle school age students.

## **Sample**

In an effort to focus on specific practices employed during the supervisory process, two middle school principals from each large school division were intended to compose the sample for the study. In order to obtain specific information regarding the supervisory practices of middle school principals, the study was limited to 20 participants. Limiting the number of participants allowed for in-depth analysis of the data. Limiting the sample to 20 participants also provided the opportunity to engage respondents by conducting one-to-one interviews which resulted in meaningful discussions focused on specific supervisory practices. Individual interviews also allowed middle school principals the opportunity to describe what they were actually doing in regards to supervision of teachers and to what extent.

As suggested by researchers including Rossman and Rallis (2013) and McMillan and Wergin (2010), a carefully selected purposeful sample of participants was selected for the study. While all middle school principals in the ten largest school divisions could serve as participants, there was specific set of criteria to be selected for the sample. Participants were required to have served as a middle school principal during the 2013-2014 school year. The 2013-2014 school year was the most recently completed and information pertaining to practices employed during the supervisory process would be relevant and easier for middle school principals to recall. Participants were also required to have conducted formal observations and classroom walk-through observations during the course of the 2013-2014 school year. Principals who were on sabbatical or did not have a teaching staff during the 2013-2014 school year were ineligible to participate in the study. Additionally, participants who served as a middle school principal during the 2013-2014

school year must be working in some capacity within their school division during the 2014-2015 school year. Participants who do not intend to work in the same school division during the 2014-2015 school year would be difficult to contact and interview. After identifying principals who met the criteria, a list of middle school principals who could potentially serve as a sample for the study was generated.

The selection of middle school principals to participate in the study was achieved through the process of random selection. Using the school division website, a list of sitting middle school principals during the 2013-2014 school year was generated. Middle school principals for each school division were then placed in alphabetical order. Once in alphabetical order, each middle school principal was assigned a number. The first principal in alphabetical order was assigned the number one. Numbering continued until each middle school principal within the school division had been assigned a number.

Once each principal was assigned a number, a random number generator was used to identify the order in which each principal will be contacted. Every middle school principal who was eligible was assigned a contact order number. Beginning with contact number one, the principal represented by contact number one, was notified about participating in the study. The second middle school principal based on contact number was also notified about participating in the study. The contact order number was followed until two participants from each school division which granted permission for the study and who met the selection criteria agreed to participate in the study. This resulted in eight of the ten school divisions being represented by one or two principals resulting in a sample size of 14 participants. Narrowing the field of participants from 123 to 14 allowed for more meaningful dialogue to occur during the interview process. The chart below anonymously identifies how many middle school principals participated in the study from each of the eight school divisions which granted permission for middle school principals to participate in the study.

School  
Division  
Number of  
Middle School  
Principals

S.D. #1	2
S.D. #2	2
S.D. #3	2
S.D. #4	2
S.D. #5	2
S.D. #6	1
S.D. #7	2
S.D. #8	1

## **Instrument**

The instrument was composed of 19 questions related to the four research questions posed in chapter one. The topics within the instrument pertained to the pre-observation process, the formal observation or classroom walk-through observation process, feedback provided following a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation, and utilization of data following a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation. The steps and processes a principal engages in with teachers before and after an observation can have an impact on the instruction which occurs in the classroom. The structure of formal observations and classroom walk-through observations reinforces the concept that student learning is one of the most important functions occurring within the school.

The 19 questions were generated after reviewing two previous studies conducted in the Commonwealth of Virginia related to successful leadership practices of principals. A previous study regarding supervision and evaluation practices of principals in the State of Wyoming was also used as a

reference. The questions from previous studies were adjusted in order to shift the focus from leadership practices to practices employed by middle school principals during the supervisory process. Previous studies conducted by Range, Holt, Scherz, and Young (2011); Crum and Sherman (2008); and Sanzo, Clayton, and Sherman (2010) provided appendices for interview guides which were used as reference points to construct the 19 questions for the current study.

The instrument was validated by using a peer review process. Five middle school principals not included in the sample were contacted by phone and asked if they would be willing to review the interview questions. Additionally, the director of research for Loudoun County Public Schools and a professor from Shenandoah University were also contacted and asked if they would be willing to review the interview questions. Once receiving confirmation to assist as a reviewer, the instrument was sent electronically. The purposefully selected group of middle school principals, director of research, and university professor were expected to provide feedback and suggestions electronically, face-to-face, or by phone. The instrument was not used for interviews with the sample group until the reviewers have provided their feedback and suggestions.

Appendix A lists the 19 interview questions which were asked to each middle school principal selected for the sample. The interview questions were related to one of the four research questions posed in the study. The first question asked the middle school principal to describe the steps they followed during the teacher observation process. The next set of four interview questions focused on processes the principal employed before conducting a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation. The next four questions sought to identify the processes middle school principals employed when conducting a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation. Questions ten through thirteen were specific to the type of constructive feedback provided by middle school principals to teachers following a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation. The next set of four questions asked middle school principals how

they utilized the data collected following a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation. The last two questions focused on the interview instrument.

### **Prior Consent and Protocol**

Before contacting the sample of middle school principals, approval was granted from two different entities. First, the interview questions were submitted and reviewed by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Virginia Tech. Once IRB approval had been obtained the second entity, which is the Office of Research for each of the ten largest school divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia, was contacted by phone or email and asked for approval. Permission to conduct the study was obtained before the letter of consent was sent to the sample of middle school principals through email.

“Gathering the informed consent of participants is crucial for the ethical conduct of research” (Rossman and Rallis, 2012, p. 73). Once IRB approval had been secured and each school division had granted permission for the study, an introductory email was sent to the sample of middle school principals. The letter of consent was also attached to the introductory email. In order to participate in the study the sample of middle school principals were asked to sign and return the consent form by fax, email, or in-person before the interview. If a middle school principal requested a paper copy of the consent form, then a paper copy and a self-addressed stamped envelope would be mailed to the requested address. The sample of middle school principals could then return the consent form by using fax, email, or regular mail. Each participant only needed to return one letter of consent. Within one week of sending the email, each middle school principal was contacted by phone and asked if they had any questions regarding the study or letter of consent. When a middle school principal included in the sample completed and returned the consent form, a thank you email was sent. After receiving the signed letter of consent, a copy of the consent form with all signatures was provided to the participant by email. A copy of each letter of consent was secured in an electronic folder for each middle school principal.

## **Data Gathering**

The primary avenue for acquiring information for the study was accomplished by conducting one-to-one interviews. After receiving written or verbal confirmation to participate, the respondent was contacted by phone or email and a date and time which was convenient for the interview was established. The date and time of the interview was placed on a calendar. During the phone conversation, a location for the interview was discussed and agreed upon. Additionally, the participant was informed the interview would be digitally recorded for the transcription process. The date, time and location of the interview were recorded and placed in the electronic folder for the participant. An email confirming the date, time, and location was also sent to the participant.

Anonymity of the middle school principals who participated in the one-to-one interview was maintained throughout the study. After agreeing to participate in the study, each participant was issued a pseudonym. The pseudonym was used to identify participants and all written evidence pertaining to the study. All documentation including the signed letter of consent, contact information, transcripts, field notes, and digital recordings were kept in a secure location.

Prior to interviewing, a set of 19 standardized open-ended questions was created (see Appendix A). One week before the interview, the interview protocol was sent to the participant. Providing the standardized open-ended questions to the participants provided a structure for the actual interview. This step assisted the middle school principal in preparing for the interview and allowed the participant to reflect on supervisory practices used during the course of the 2013-2014 school year. Knowledge of the open-ended questions before the interview allowed the interview to flow smoothly and allowed the participant to gather relevant information beforehand in order to respond to each question during the actual interview.

During the one-to-one interview, the 19 questions were asked to each participant in the same order and in the same manner. While each open-ended question contained in the interview protocol was asked to

each participant, the question was phrased in a different manner if the respondent asked for clarification. The participant may also be asked follow-up questions to probe for more information in order to gather richer data. The one-to-one interview allowed for each of the four research questions to be discussed in greater detail and provided an opportunity for the respondent to indicate what they were actually doing in regards to supervisory practices and to what extent. The same opening statement was recited when meeting with each participant (see Appendix B). The following protocol was used during the interview:

### Opening Statement

Hello (*insert name*). Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to meet with me today. The first form I would like to review with you is the informed consent form. Did you have any questions regarding the information contained in the informed consent form? As a reminder, you are free to stop the interview at any time. If there is a question you do not feel comfortable answering, you do not have to answer the question.

As was mentioned during our phone conversation, I anticipate the interview will last approximately 60 minutes. The interview will be audio taped and, with your permission, I will be taking notes during the interview as well. Within seven days, you will receive the transcripts from our interview in an email. If, during the course of your review of the transcripts, you have any questions regarding the information contained, please feel free to contact me by phone or email. At the conclusion of our interview, I will provide you with the Starbucks gift card. Do you have any questions before we get started? (*Any questions the participant may have before beginning the interview will be answered.*) Let's begin with question number one.....

### Standardized Open-Ended Interview Questions

1. Please describe the steps you follow during the teacher observation process?
2. What steps or processes do you follow before conducting a teacher observation?

3. What items do you require teachers to have prepared for the pre-observation conference?
4. What type of feedback do you provide to teachers during the pre-observation conference?
5. How do you inform teachers about the observation process?
6. What steps or processes do you follow when conducting a teacher observation?
7. What are the differences between the formal observation instrument and the classroom walk-through observation instrument utilized in your school division?
8. What steps or processes do you follow when conducting a classroom walk-through observation?
9. Are teachers made aware of when a classroom walk-through observation will be conducted? If so, how was the schedule of classroom walk-through observations communicated to them?
10. What steps or processes do you follow after conducting a teacher observation?
11. What type of feedback do you provide to teachers during the post observation conference?
12. How long does it take you to provide feedback to the teacher following a formal observation?
13. How long does it take you to provide feedback to the teacher following a classroom walk-through observation?
14. What do you do with the data collected following a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation?
15. Based on the data, what steps could you take to make the supervisory experience more beneficial for teachers?
16. How do you track the number of formal observations conducted in the building? How do you track the number of classroom walk-through observations conducted in the building?
17. What factors control how many classroom walk-through observations you accomplish in a week?
18. Are there any questions I should have asked regarding practices employed by middle school principals during the supervisory process that I did not ask?
19. What improvements or suggestions do you have regarding the interview instrument?

During the interview process, the first subject from each school division was interviewed before the second selected subject from each school division was interviewed. If the responses provided by the first ten subjects during the interview process elicited similar data, then the second selected subjects from each of the ten school divisions will not be interviewed due to reaching the saturation point of the data. If the saturation point was not met after interviewing the first ten subjects, then the second selected subject in each school division would be interviewed. Interviews proceeded until a saturation point was met or until all eligible participants had been interviewed.

According to Rossman and Rallis (2012), field notes turn what the researcher sees, hears, tastes, and smells into data. Field notes validate the responses provided by the participant and enable the researcher to identify certain words and phrases which are meaningful and important. The field notes were also used to document reactions, ideas, emerging themes, and thoughts during the interview and were used to construct a comprehensive audit trail during the interview process. Field notes taken during each interview and became an artifact which was secured in the electronic folder for each participant. Information gathered from the field notes during each interview was compared and identified trends were included in the study.

### **Data Analysis**

The information gathered during the one-to-one interview was immediately transcribed from the digital recorder to paper. The transcript was then placed in the appropriate electronic folder for each participant. Following the transcription, the transcript from the interview was emailed to the participant as a check for accuracy and validity. If there is inaccurate information, an adjustment was made and the revised transcript was then be sent to the participant. When the participant agreed with the accuracy of the transcript, the participant indicated agreement by sending an email.

After agreeing to the accuracy of the transcripts, coding of the transcripts occurred. The process for coding the transcript was to select words or phrases that best captured the analysis of each line of the

transcribed interview. Memos for each question were established based on developing certain themes for the response to each question. Transcripts and field notes were also analyzed to ensure accuracy and record initial impressions for each interview. According to Rossman and Rallis (2012) this process “encourages analytical thinking and demands the researcher commit emerging ideas to paper” (p. 287). Responses provided by the participants to each interview question were compared in order to establish themes, identify findings, and develop conclusions for the study. The responses to each question are listed in a table which is attached in Appendix G. There were a total of 19 tables, one for each of the 19 interview questions. Memos from each participant were included in the appropriate table related to the interview question. The results of the findings are presented as narrative descriptions in chapter four and the conclusions reached for each of the four research questions is be presented in chapter five.

## **Chapter 4: Findings**

### **Introduction**

The middle school principals who participated in the interviews served as a middle school principal in the Commonwealth of Virginia during the 2013-2014 school year. Additionally, each of the middle school principals who participated in the interview was working for the same school division during the 2014-2015 school year. A mutually convenient date and time was established for each interview and each participant was provided a copy of the interview questions one week before the actual interview. All interviews were digitally recorded and field notes were also taken during the interview. Eleven interviews were conducted face-to face while two middle school principals agreed to be interviewed using Skype. One middle school principal agreed to participate but requested a phone interview.

### **Interview Protocol**

A total of 14 middle school principals chose to participate in the one-to-one interview. The 14 principals served in one of the ten largest school divisions within the Commonwealth of Virginia. Two principals from six school divisions participated in the interview. One principal each from two different school divisions also agreed to participate in the interview process. A total of eight school divisions granted permission for middle school principals to participate in the study.

Two school divisions did not grant permission for middle school principals to participate in the study. Additionally, two school divisions agreed for middle school principals to participate in the study but the school division chose which two middle school principals from their school division could participate. Both middle school principals from one of the school divisions agreed to participate in the study. One middle school principal from the other school division, which wanted to choose which middle school principals would participate, chose to participate in an interview.

Before each interview, the participants were asked if they had any questions regarding the informed consent form. Each middle school principal was also informed that the interview would be digitally recorded. Participants responded to every question on the open-ended interview instrument. Following the interview, the digital recordings were transcribed and then sent to the participant for review. Two participants asked for information they provided to a question to be adjusted to protect anonymity. The transcripts were then coded, citing key words and phrases provided by the participants for each question. The coded information from each interview was then placed in a table for each interview question. A total of 19 tables were created from the coded information.

## **Findings**

The purpose of the study was to identify the practices middle school principals employed during the supervisory process. Specifically, the study focused on the steps middle school principals utilized during the pre-observation, observation, and post observation process. The study also sought to identify how the data collected from formal observations and classroom walk-through observations was utilized by middle school principals. How middle school principals approached the task of supervising teachers during the formal observation process could have an enormous effect on the learning environment which exists within their school. The findings from the one-to-one interviews with middle school principals related to the practices they followed during the pre-observation, observation, and post observation process as well as identified how the data from formal observations and classroom walk-through observations were utilized. The coding from the 14 interview transcripts, related to each open ended interview question, can be located in Appendix G.

### **1. Please describe the steps you follow during the teacher observation process.**

Before delving into the four open ended questions regarding steps and processes utilized by middle school principals during the pre-observation conference, the 14 middle school principals who participated in

the interview were asked to describe the steps they followed during the teacher observation process. After examining the responses provided by the 14 middle school principals, similarities began to arise regarding the steps which they followed during the teacher observation process.

Nine middle school principals indicated they conducted an individual meeting with teachers who were designated as being on the formal evaluation cycle. Those meetings occurred at the beginning of the school year and were conducted before the first formal observation. Multiple principals reported the list of teachers on formal evaluation was generated by the human resources or personnel department within their school division. During those individual meetings, seven middle school principals indicated teachers created SMART goals to measure student progress throughout the year. Two middle school principals believed a teacher's SMART goal should be linked to the school improvement plan.

Before the first formal observation occurred, multiple middle school principals stated they conducted informal classroom walk-through observations. Additionally, multiple middle school principals implied the date for the first formal teacher observation was mutually agreed upon. Two middle school principals added they informed teachers of specific items they would look for during the lesson, which were expected to be seen in practice. During the observation process, eight middle school principals responded they conducted a pre-observation conference with the teacher while eight middle school principals also noted they conducted a post observation conference following the formal observation. While only one administrator was in the teacher's classroom during a formal observation, four middle school principal's responded multiple members of the administrative team would conduct at least one observation of a teacher during the teacher observation process.

When asked about the steps which were followed during the teacher observation process, the majority of middle school principals stated they met individually with teachers who were on the formal evaluation cycle for the school year. Formal observations are a requirement for teachers who are on the formal evaluation cycle. Most middle school principals conducted a pre-observation conference with the

teacher before the actual formal observation. Additionally, most middle school principals specified they conducted a post observation conference with the teacher following the formal observation. Half of the participants in the study also indicated teachers were engaged in some sort of a goal setting process at the beginning of the year. The coded transcripts designating the steps middle school principals followed during the teacher observation process can be located on Table 4.1 in Appendix G.

## **2. What steps or processes do you follow before conducting a teacher observation?**

When identifying the steps a middle school principal followed during the pre-observation process, it was necessary to identify what steps or processes the middle school principal followed before conducting a teacher observation. Table 4.2 in Appendix G lists the steps or processes middle school principals followed before conducting a teacher observation. While the formal observation process can be used as a means to evaluate a teacher's skill and practice, it can also be used as a tool for professional growth and improvement. One middle school principal stated, "The observation process is about growth (D.D.)," when describing information shared with teachers before conducting a teacher observation. When discussing a teacher on formal evaluation compared to a teacher on informal evaluation, one middle school principal believed there were different expectations for teachers who were on formal evaluation than those on informal evaluation. The differences in practices when conducting formal observations and informal observations were also cited by multiple middle school principals.

The majority of middle school principals indicated they met with the teacher before conducting a formal observation. Three middle school principals did not conduct pre-observation conferences. Eight middle school principal's alluded teachers were required to submit a lesson plan to them before the actual observation. Five middle school principals reviewed the lesson plan with the teacher during the pre-observation conference or asked the teacher to walk them through the lesson plan. While two middle school principals informed the teacher what specific items they would look for in practice during the lesson, one principal admitted to asking the teacher if there were any items in particular they would like for them to look

for during the observation. Multiple middle school principals attempted to conduct the pre-observation conference one or two days before the actual formal observation.

Four middle school principals added they did not meet with teachers before conducting a formal observation. One of the reasons provided for not meeting with teachers before a formal observation was the fact that in two school divisions, middle school principals required teachers to place their lesson plans on an electronic or shared drive, which allowed them to view the lesson plan. While one middle school principal did not meet with teachers before conducting a formal observation, a lesson plan was to be provided when the administrator entered the classroom. Finally, two middle school principals mentioned they attended grade level department collaborative leadership team meetings and knew upcoming lessons, negating the necessity for them to meet with the teacher before conducting a formal observation.

### **3. What items do you require teachers to have prepared for the pre-observation conference?**

There are a number of items or artifacts a teacher may be required to have prepared when they meet with the middle school principal for the pre-observation conference. While not all middle school principals who participated in the study conducted a pre-observation conference, every middle school principal did provide a response regarding items teachers should have prepared before the lesson.

One middle school principal stated the teacher did not have to bring anything with them to the pre-observation conference. However, the middle school principal indicated teachers were required to submit their lesson plans electronically at the beginning of the week and would review the lesson plan before conducting the pre-observation conference with the teacher. According to middle school principal responses contained in Table 4.3 in Appendix G, eleven middle school principals stated they required teachers to bring a lesson plan with them to the pre-observation conference. Five middle school principals added lesson plans should be placed on the electronic shared drive before the actual pre-observation conference. One middle school principal stated, "I do not hold a pre-observation conference. Teachers provide me with a lesson plan

when I arrive in their classroom (F.F.).” Thirteen of the fourteen middle school principals who participated in the study specified they required teachers to create a lesson plan before the actual formal observation occurred.

During the pre-observation conference, three middle school principals discussed with the teacher the specific objectives or learning targets which would be addressed during the lesson. Additionally, three middle school principals discussed with the teacher, during the pre-observation conference, if they were on track with the pacing guide for the subject area. Two middle school principals asked the teacher if there were specific items or practices they wanted them to look for during the lesson. These two middle school principals added the items or practices reinforced the notion the observation process was about professional growth for the teacher. The notes or minutes from collaborative learning team meetings were also identified as an artifact teachers should have prepared for the pre-observation conference. One middle school principal also required teachers to list what modifications would be implemented during the lesson for special needs students. Finally, two middle school principals pointed out teachers on informal observation did not have to meet for a pre-observation conference or present a lesson plan to them before the actual observation.

#### **4. What type of feedback do you provide to teachers during the pre-observation conference?**

The pre-observation conference is usually the last communication the principal has with the teacher before the actual formal observation. When discussing the feedback provided to a teacher during the pre-observation conference, one middle school principal asked questions and provided comments during the pre-observation conference but did not want the teacher to feel overly anxious or nervous about the actual observation. Another middle school principal stated, “I usually start with something nice then I will provide a question or two for them to reflect upon (A.A.).” Five middle school principals indicated they engaged in cognitive coaching, attempting to spur self-reflection about the lesson through verbal questioning, when

meeting with teachers. The type of feedback provided by the middle school principal to the teacher was guided by the dialogue which occurred during the pre-observation conference.

During the pre-observation conference, eight middle school principals provided the opportunity for the teacher to walk them through the lesson and would then verbally discuss the lesson with them. Topics middle school principals discussed with the teachers included areas of concern they may see in a teacher's lesson plan; some type of activity that was unusual; or what the teacher would be trying to accomplish with the lesson. Two middle school principals admitted to asking the teacher how they would know if the students learned what you intended for them to learn. One middle school principal would begin the pre-observation conference by providing feedback regarding what was observed during the first formal observation and then address any areas which were identified for growth. Table 4.4 in Appendix G lists the type of feedback provided by middle school principals during the pre-observation conference.

When providing comments or feedback to the teachers in their building, one middle school principal admitted to priming the teacher to focus on utilizing 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills during the lesson. The middle school principal stated, "My administrative team informs teachers we are looking for communication, creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking opportunities for students during the lesson (M.M.)." In contrast, three middle school principals indicated they asked the teacher what they wanted the observer to look for during the lesson. One middle school principal admitted to not providing much feedback to the teacher during the pre-observation conference while one middle school principal reiterated the fact that they did not hold pre-observation conferences and therefore did not provide feedback to the teacher before the actual lesson observation. One middle school principal was pleased with how the majority of teachers created lesson plans and rarely had to provide feedback regarding their lesson plan and when feedback was provided, it was mainly positive.

## **5. How do you inform teachers about the observation process?**

The observation process for a teacher can vary depending on the expectation of the middle school principal. The steps a middle school principal may take to inform the teacher of the observation process could be dictated by the school division, if the teacher is on formal or informal evaluation, or the level of autonomy provided to the teacher. Six middle school principals indicated sending an email to the teachers who needed to be formally observed during the school year. Three middle school principals sent a standard memorandum to the teacher informing them they are on the formal observation process. Five middle school principals conducted a large faculty meeting at the beginning of the year and reviewed the observation process with all teachers. One middle school principal met with the grade level collaborative learning team at the beginning of the year and informed them of the observation process including what the observation will look like, specific practices which should be incorporated during the lesson, and how often the teacher will be observed.

Before the actual observation took place, the majority of middle school principals who participated in the study allowed teacher input during the observation process. Eight middle school principals provided a timeline to the teacher when they wanted to conduct a formal observation and allowed the teacher to pick a date for the formal observation within the specified window. Two middle school principals encouraged the teacher to pick a regular or inclusion class for their formal observation block. Six middle school principals indicated formal observations were made known in advance. One middle school principal provided an observation timeline to the staff at the beginning of each semester. Table 4.5 in Appendix G lists the responses provided by middle school principals regarding how they informed teachers about the observation process.

While thirteen out of fourteen middle school principals indicated they controlled the timeline during the observation process, one middle school principal indicated the observation process was pre-determined. The middle school principal shared the electronic observation instrument used in the school division automatically marked the date and period during the school year when the teacher should be observed.

Three middle school principals believed in sharing the responsibility for observing teachers with assistant principals. Three middle school principals informed teachers which administrator would be conducting the first formal observation or who would serve as lead administrator during the observation process. The sharing of duties during the observation process allowed for more than one administrator to make a determination regarding a teacher's effectiveness in the classroom. One middle school principal attempted to ease the minds of teachers during the observation process and stated, "I inform my teachers that we are going on a treasure hunt not a witch hunt (J.J.)."

#### **6. What steps or processes do you follow when conducting a formal observation?**

When conducting the actual formal observation, middle school principals who participated in the study followed a variety of procedures. While technology was available in the form of an electronic observation instrument, six middle school principals chose to handwrite or script their notes on paper before transcribing the notes into the electronic observation instrument. In comparison, five middle school principals admitted to scripting notes directly into the electronic observation instrument during a formal observation. Three middle school principals added they scripted notes, during the observation, in the notes section of the electronic observation instrument then cut-and-pasted the notes next to each standard. When discussing note-taking during an observation, one middle school principal attempted to keep a running transcript of what occurred during the lesson. The responses provided by middle school principals who participated in the study regarding the processes they followed during a formal teacher observation can be found in Table 4.6 in Appendix G. Four middle school principals admitted to reviewing notes from the formal observation before submitting the observation form to the teacher.

Middle school principals who participated in the study also had a variety of items they would look for during the formal observation. Nine middle school principals indicated there were certain items they would look for during the formal observation. Items included student work displayed in the classroom, SOL standards or objectives, student engagement, interaction between students and teacher, and assessments the

teacher utilized. Three middle school principals provided a time stamp to signify when certain events occurred during the lesson. Two middle school principals recorded the amount of time they spent in the classroom, number of students in the classroom, student demographics, and arrangement of student furniture. Three middle school principals admitted to remaining in the classroom during the entire block while three middle school principals remained in the classroom for at least half the block. Two middle school principals specifically wanted to witness how the teacher began and ended the lesson.

When conducting a formal observation, five middle school principals indicated the focus during the observation was not directly on the teacher but rather what the students were doing. One middle school principal enjoyed talking to students during the lesson in an effort to determine if the students could identify what they are doing and why. A different middle school principal added, “I ask students to tell me how this is relevant to your life or where do you see this being used in the future (L.L).” Six middle school principals admitted to walking around the classroom during a formal observation and interacted with students or participated in student activities. In contrast, two middle school principals indicated they did not interact with students during a formal observation and instead chose to be a silent observer.

**7. What are the differences between the formal observation instrument and the classroom walk-through observation instrument used in your school division?**

After discussing the differences between the formal observation instrument and the classroom walk-through observation instrument with middle school principals who participated in the study, the format of the formal observation and classroom walk-through observation instrument was the most common response provided. Five middle school principals indicated they utilized the same instrument for classroom walk-through observations as they did for formal observations, which was similar to the formal evaluation instrument. Six middle school principals stated their school division did not have a standardized classroom walk-through observation instrument. Five middle school principals created their own classroom walk-through observation instrument which was utilized in their school. Three middle school principals also

indicated the classroom walk-through observation instrument they utilized had more checkboxes while the formal observation instrument allowed space for more open-ended comments and notes. The classroom walk-through observation instrument was also identified as being more specific than the formal observation instrument.

According to the responses provided by middle school principals in Table 4.7 in Appendix G, the formal observation instrument targeted the needs of the teacher while the classroom walk-through observation instrument targeted the needs of the school. Three middle school principals added they used classroom walk-through observations to gather bits and pieces of information which they could share the results with staff. Three additional middle school principals stated they looked for certain items such as objectives posted on the board, type of instruction occurring, level of Bloom's Taxonomy utilized, use of 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills, and student engagement while conducting a classroom walk-through observation. Two middle school principals identified using a protocol designed for a specific program which was used within their school division to track the progress of English Language Learners (ELL) and strategies which should be evident in the classroom, as their classroom walk-through observation instrument. Six middle school principals claimed they are in the classroom between three and ten minutes when conducting a classroom walk-through observation, which is far less than when conducting a formal observation.

The topic of feedback was the biggest difference recognized between the formal observation instrument and the classroom walk-through observation instrument. Five middle school principals did not provide feedback or conference with the teacher following a classroom walk-through observation. Four middle school principals however admitted to leaving a handwritten note or recorded comments on a post-it note and then left the note on the teacher's desk following a classroom walk through observation. One middle school principal admitted to leaving a quick note on a note card such as good job or I enjoyed what I saw before leaving the classroom. Three middle school principals placed the classroom walk-through observation template as a Google doc and used their laptop or iPad when conducting a classroom walk-

through observation. This allowed the three middle school principals to provide immediate feedback to the teacher following the classroom walk-through observation.

Eight middle school principals indicated the classroom walk-through observation instrument was used for non-evaluative purposes. However, since the instruments looked the same, it was difficult for teachers to grasp the concept that classroom walk-through observations were not used as part of the final evaluation. One middle school principal addressed the situation and stated, “There might be something on the classroom walk-through observation form that I do not mark off, not because the teacher does not do it, but because I did not see it while I was in the classroom. This is a difficult hurdle for teachers to overcome when they receive feedback from a classroom walk-through observation (L.L.)”

#### **8. What steps or processes do you follow when conducting a classroom walk-through observation?**

A classroom walk-through observation consisted of an administrator or combination of administrators and teachers visiting a teacher’s classroom for a brief period of time. Middle school principals who participated in the study were consistent in the amount of time spent and the purpose of conducting classroom walk-through observations. Seven middle school principals shared they were in the classroom between three and ten minutes during a classroom walk-through observation. Six middle school principals indicated classroom walk-through observations provided a snapshot of what was occurring in the classroom. During the classroom walk-through observation, the same six middle school principals revealed they took notes on what they observed or completed a checklist of items. When informing teachers when a classroom walk-through observation would occur, two middle school principals declared teachers were aware when the administrative staff would be conducting classroom walk-through observations but the teacher did not know the specific block or time. The two middle school principals added they conducted classroom walk-through observations according to the collaborative learning team or specific grade level.

Four middle school principals stated classroom walk-through observations were a surprise visit and teachers were not aware when a classroom walk-through observation would be conducted.

When discussing who conducted a classroom walk-through observation, the middle school principals who participated in the study provided a variety of answers. The responses provided by the middle school principals regarding the steps or processes they followed when conducting a classroom walk-through observation can be found in Table 4.8 in Appendix G. Three middle school principals declared the administrative team was responsible for conducting classroom walk-through observations. One middle school principal stated, “During the first few weeks of school, the administrative team and myself will conduct classroom walk-through observations together then discuss what we saw and try to reach some type of consensus on what we are seeing (D.D).” Three different middle school principals admitted to conducting classroom walk-through observations with staff members who had received training in conducting classroom walk-through observations. Classroom walk-through observations involving an administrator and staff members observing a teacher were referred to as instructional rounds. One middle school principal believed instructional rounds were uplifting and positive. Middle school principals also indicated their role as a supervisor was different when conducting a classroom walk-through observation. One middle school principal wanted the administrative team to be seen as a coach or mentor when conducting classroom walk-through observations.

Following a classroom walk-through observation, a middle school principal can choose whether or not to provide feedback to the teacher. Six middle school principals shared the notes from the classroom walk-through observation with the teacher either electronically, meeting face-to-face, or in written form. During a classroom walk-through observation, five middle school principals admitted to having specific practices they would look for during their time in the classroom. The practices included the type of instruction the teacher was providing, types of assessment being utilized, and could the students identify the goal and objectives for the lesson. Additionally, three of the five middle school principals revealed the

specific focus area during classroom walk-through observations was student engagement. One middle school principal shared with the teacher classroom walk-through observations could be hit or miss but did not want to witness a dog and pony show during the visit. Four middle school principals mentioned, after analyzing the data from classroom walk-through observations, they would share what they were seeing in the classroom with the staff during a faculty meeting.

**9. Are teachers made aware of when a classroom walk-through observation would be conducted?**

**If so, how was the schedule of classroom walk-through observations communicated to them?**

According to the results of whether middle school principals informed teachers when a classroom walk-through observation was going to be conducted, twelve of the fourteen middle school principals, who participated in the study, did not inform teachers when a classroom walk-through observation was going to occur. Three of the twelve middle school principals stated they generally did not inform teachers when a classroom walk-through observation was going to occur. One middle school principal divulged they would, however, alert teachers if someone from central office or a community member was in the building and classroom walk-through observations could occur. Two middle school principals indicated they are always in the hallways during the school day and would just pop-in and out of classrooms. One middle school principal justified not informing teachers when classroom walk-through observations would occur by stating, “I want teachers to be on their ‘A’ game all the time. I do not want to see a dog and pony show. When I stop by for a classroom walk-through observation, it is what it is (L.L.)”

Two middle school principals admitted to informing teachers when a classroom walk-through observation was going to occur. Both middle school principals added they followed a certain protocol when conducting classroom walk-through observations, and informing teachers when classroom walk-through observations would be conducted, was part of the protocol. One middle school principal stated, “We inform teachers one week ahead of time we are going to be conducting classroom walk-through observations on a specific day. If we conduct classroom walk-through observations frequently enough, teachers will not feel

like they need to give us a dog and pony show when we walk in. There are no negatives and no positives when discussing what we witnessed only what we observed (B.B.).” The other middle school principal, who admitted to informing teachers when a classroom walk-through observation would be conducted, shared sending an email to grade level teachers within the collaborative learning team and informed them classroom walk-through observations, would be conducted on a certain day.

While the majority of middle school principals who participated in the study did not inform teachers when a classroom walk-through observation would be conducted, five middle school principals did admit the administrative team at their school had a schedule they followed when conducting classroom walk-through observations. When discussing the classroom walk-through observation schedule followed by administrators, the same five middle school principals shared the procedures they followed. The responses provided by middle school principals who participated in the study regarding teacher awareness of when a classroom walk-through observation would be conducted can be found in Table 4.9 in Appendix G.

One middle school principal revealed the administrative team would rotate the classroom walk-through observation schedule so no one administrator is seeing the same teacher during the same block of time. Another middle school principal added trying to visit general education or inclusion classes more often than honors classes. One middle school principal divided the school into zones and placed an administrator in charge of each zone. The teachers were aware which administrator was in charge of each zone. The middle school principal added, “Along with our zone coverage responsibility was conducting classroom walk-through observations. Every month we rotate which zone we would observe. Teachers would not know which day a classroom walk-through observation would be conducted but they did know which administrator would be conducting the classroom walk-through observation (H.H.).” A different middle school principal mentioned classroom walk-through observations were not scheduled among the administrative team unless there was a concern about a teacher. Another middle school principal expressed

the administrative team discussed which teachers were seen and which teachers needed to have classroom walk-through observations conducted during their weekly administrative meetings.

#### **10. What steps or processes do you follow after conducting a teacher observation?**

After the formal observation had been completed, the middle school principals who participated in the study were asked what steps or processes they followed. Ten of the fourteen middle school principals declared they met with the teacher following the observation regardless if the teacher was on the formal or informal observation cycle. Two middle school principals stated they did not conduct a post observation conference with every teacher and would only meet with the teacher if there was a concern or question that arose during the observation. Two different middle school principals mentioned the post observation conference occurred electronically with the teacher, which allowed for an exchange of comments back and forth. Three middle school principals indicated the amount of time they spent with a teacher following a formal observation varied depending on how the actual observation went. Four middle school principals would email the teacher and invite them to the post observation conference.

Seven middle school principals admitted to sharing their notes from the formal observation with the teacher before meeting with them during the post observation conference. One middle school principal did not provide teachers with observation notes before the post observation conference but did provide observation notes when the teacher arrived for the post observation conference. Five middle school principals indicated the electronic observation form utilized by their school division allowed teachers to view comments immediately after the formal observation once the administrator clicked the submit button. Before sending the observation notes and comments to the teacher, three middle school principals admitted reviewing and organizing their notes before placing the notes in the electronic observation instrument. One middle school principal stated, “Sometimes I will conference with the teacher before I have typed my observation notes. Sometimes we meet after I have typed my notes. I always have a sit down, face-to-face conference with the teacher following a formal observation (J.J).” Two middle school principals required

the formal observation form to be signed by the teacher at the end of the post observation conference. One middle school principal placed a paper copy in the teacher's mailbox even though the teacher could view the observation notes and comments electronically.

When discussing the type of feedback provided to teachers following the formal observation, eight middle school principals admitted to always providing some type of written feedback to the teacher. Three middle school principals went a step further and stated they tried to provide the teacher with specific recommendations which could be incorporated into future lesson plans. When discussing the conference with the teacher following a formal observation, one middle school principal wanted the post observation conference to be more like a joint exploration instead of simply telling the teacher you did this right or you did this wrong and would encourage the teacher to brainstorm ideas or strategies they could use next time.

Two middle school principals indicated there were specific forms that assisted in guiding the conversations that occurred during the post observation conference. One middle school principal followed a post observation agenda which was provided by the school division. The other middle school principal required the teacher to bring a four-square reflection form which the teacher was expected to have completed before the post observation conference took place. Additional responses provided by the middle school principals regarding the steps or processes followed after conducting a formal observation can be located in Table 4.10 in Appendix G.

#### **11. What type of feedback do you provide to teachers during the post observation conference?**

When discussing the feedback provided to teachers during the post observation conference, eight of the fourteen middle school principals who participated in the study stated they preferred to engage in cognitive coaching which consisted of asking self-reflective questions of the teacher regarding the formal observation. Eight middle school principals indicated they began the post observation conference by asking the teacher how they felt the lesson went. The answer provided by the teacher would possibly guide the rest

of the discussion during the post observation conference. Three of the eight middle school principals specifically stated they would first ask the teacher how they felt the lesson went before providing them with feedback. Examples of reflective questions that were asked included:

How do you think the lesson went?

What are some things you think you could improve?

What can I do to assist you?

What are some things you thought went well?

Additional self-reflective questions asked by middle school principals can be found in Table 4.11 in Appendix G. One middle school principal wanted to make sure they agreed about the same items from the formal observation and if there was something good they did, the teacher would be encouraged to share the strategy with their team members.

Four middle school principals who participated in the study admitted to being more direct with their questioning during the post observation conference. The feedback provided by four middle school principals consisted of listing the strengths of the lesson, areas for growth, and interventions in place for students who struggled academically. Three middle school principals declared they wanted to provide teachers with feedback that was meaningful, actionable, specific, and timely. One middle school principal elaborated on providing feedback during the post observation conference by stating, “I believe in providing praise first and then addressing any areas of concern. I try to hit my bullet points and keep the conversation as clinical as possible (I.I).” Two middle school principals added they attempted to provide comments for each of the six teaching standards observed during the lesson.

Twelve of the fourteen middle school principals admitted to recording notes during the formal observation. Six of the twelve middle school principals indicated they provided a copy of the observation

notes to the teacher when they arrived for the post observation conference. Three middle school principals admitted to having the observation instrument completed before the teacher arrived for the post observation conference but if something popped up during the post observation conference, an adjustment would be made to the final copy. One middle school principal took the feedback during the open dialogue further and stated, “I will ask the teacher if there was anything I missed during the observation that they would like for me to include in my notes (J.J).” Two middle school principals believed it was a good idea to focus on the positive points of the lesson first before engaging the teacher in questions regarding improvements which could be made to the lesson.

## **12. How long does it take you to provide feedback to the teachers following a formal observation?**

Middle school principals who participated in the study provided three distinct responses when asked how long it takes them to provide feedback to a teacher following a formal observation. The list of responses provided by the middle school principals can be found in Table 4.12 in Appendix G. Five of the fourteen middle school principals indicated they provided feedback to the teacher within 24 hours of conducting the formal observation. One of the five middle school principals met with the teacher the same day as the formal observation and at a minimum conducted a verbal discussion of the formal observation. Three middle school principals provided a written copy of their notes to the teacher the same day as the formal observation, even though they may not meet with the teacher the same day as the observation. One middle school principal stated, “If a teacher struggled during the observation and I provided a lot of constructive feedback, it might take me longer than 24 hours to provide feedback (B.B).” Two middle school principals who initially indicated they provided feedback to the teacher within 24 hours mentioned it may take them longer to provide feedback if weaknesses were noted during the formal observation.

Six middle school principals who participated in the study declared they attempted to provide feedback to the teacher within 48 hours of the formal observation. One of the six middle school principals waited until the post observation conference to share their observation notes with the teacher. The same

middle school principal could provide notes to the teacher electronically before the post observation conference but did not want the teacher to become fixated on what was typed. Two middle school principals indicated the longer the wait between the formal observation and providing feedback, the less of an impact the feedback would have on the instructional practices of the teacher. The same two middle school principals also expressed concern the teacher may forget what happened during the formal observation.

Three of the fourteen middle school principals admitted to providing feedback to the teacher somewhere between three and five days after the formal observation. One of the three middle school principals was remorseful that it took this long to provide the teacher with feedback following a formal observation. The middle school principal stated, “A goal for me this year is to provide feedback in a timely manner. We have an electronic observation instrument but I opt to write out my notes first and then go back and enter the information on the form (E.E.)” A different middle school principal shared the same sentiment and indicated hand writing the notes first resulted in spending more time formatting the notes to fit the observation form template.

### **13. How long does it take you to provide feedback to teachers following a classroom walk-through observation?**

The majority of middle school principals who participated in the study admitted to providing teachers with feedback following a classroom walk-through observation. Eleven of the fourteen middle school principals provided feedback to the teacher after conducting a classroom walk-through observation. Seven of the eleven middle school principals provided immediate feedback to the teacher either before leaving the room or within five minutes of leaving the teacher’s classroom. Four of the eleven middle school principals who provided feedback did so during the same day. The responses provided by the fourteen middle school principals regarding feedback provided to teachers following a classroom walk-through observation can be located in Table 4.13 in Appendix G.

Eight of the eleven middle school principals provided an electronic copy of their notes to the teacher by utilizing a standardized classroom walk-through observation form. The eight middle school principals indicated email was utilized to communicate with teachers following a classroom walk-through observation. One middle school principal indicated teachers in the building seemed to appreciate receiving an email after a classroom walk-through observation had been conducted. Three of the eleven middle school principals declared leaving hand written notes, comments on post-it notes, or a triplicate form on the teacher's desk before leaving the classroom following a classroom walk-through observation. Five middle school principals also admitted to conducting a brief verbal conversation with the teacher following a classroom walk-through observation.

Two middle school principals did not provide feedback to the teacher following a classroom walk-through observation. Both middle school principals believed classroom walk-through observations were informal, non-evaluative, and did not require meeting with a teacher afterward. One middle school principal stated, "Classroom walk-through observations are non-evaluative and non-individual. Teachers do not receive the document back to them. After a week of conducting classroom walk-through observations, I will send a letter to the staff which includes evidence noticed during the classroom walk-through observations (B.B)." Both middle school principals also re-affirmed the belief that data acquired from classroom walk-through observations should only be used for professional development purposes.

One middle school principal sometimes provided feedback to the teacher following a classroom walk-through observation and stated, "Sometimes I do not provide feedback following a classroom walk-through observation. Sometimes I might tell them it was a good class or leave the teacher a little note. It all depends (J.J)." Two middle school principals admitted to having a specific area of focus when conducting classroom walk-through observations, which was co-teaching. Four of the fourteen middle school principals added the feedback provided to teachers following a classroom walk-through observation was always positive.

#### **14. What do you do with the data collected following a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation?**

Following a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation, the notes taken by a middle school principal can be shared with the teacher, filed internally, analyzed and shared with the entire staff, or thrown away. Eight of the fourteen middle school principals who participated in the study admitted to sharing the data collected from classroom walk-through observations with the entire staff at a monthly or quarterly faculty meeting. Four of the eight middle school principals indicated compiling the data from classroom walk-through observations in an electronic table or document and then shared the information with the staff at a faculty meeting. One middle school principal stated, “Sometimes bad results are good results if we learn from them. If an area of concern was noticed, such as a lot of drill and kill teaching in the classroom, the practice would be mentioned in the weekly newsletter sent out to staff. I want to address what was observed during the classroom walk-through observations but did not want to name any teacher individually in front of the staff (C.C).” Three middle school principals mentioned if they saw something great during a classroom walk-through observation, they would provide the teacher with praise and the instructional strategy would be mentioned at a faculty meeting. The eight middle school principals who shared classroom walk-through observation data at faculty meetings would mention what was observed during the brief visit, provide praise when appropriate, and offer suggestions if necessary.

The fourteen middle school principals who participated in the study only shared data from a formal observation with the teacher who was observed. Four middle school principals indicated keeping a copy of the notes from formal observations and classroom walk-through observations in a binder or notebook which was kept in their office. One middle school principal expanded on the purpose of keeping observation notes in a notebook following a formal observation and stated, “The notebook is used to send a note or letter over the summer to specific teachers citing specific examples of exceptional practices which were observed during the past school year (J.J).” Two middle school principals shared data from classroom walk-through

observations with assistant principals during weekly administrative leadership meetings. The same two middle school principals attempted to individually tailor what they were doing to support a teacher who is experiencing difficulty according to the data from formal observations and classroom walk-through observations. One middle school principal believed it was not good for staff morale to address the entire faculty when a situation only pertained to four or five individual teachers.

Five of the eight middle school principals who shared the data from classroom walk-through observations with the faculty mentioned the data provided focus for professional development or identified staff development needs. When conducting classroom walk-through observations, the same five middle school principals focused on specific areas during classroom walk-through observations. The four specific focus areas were co-teaching, higher level thinking questioning, student engagement, and reinforcing content language objectives. The responses from the fourteen middle school principals regarding what they do with the data collected following a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation can be found in Table 4.14 in Appendix G.

During the interview, one middle school principal experienced a revelation regarding the collection and sharing of data. The middle school principal initially admitted to not collecting any formal data from classroom walk-through observations but would informally engage in conversations with the teacher following a classroom walk-through observation. The same middle school principal then stated if a trend was noticed during formal observations and classroom walk-through observations, then the information would be shared with the entire staff and would become a focus area for professional development. After reflection, the middle school principal realized data was being collected from formal observations and classroom walk-through observations but was not aware of doing so until answering question fourteen.

**15. Based on the data, what steps could you take to make the supervisory experience more beneficial for teachers?**

One of the key duties of a middle school principal is supervising teachers. The middle school principals who participated in the study were asked to reflect on their supervisory practices and indicate if there were improvements they intended to make regarding the supervisory process. The responses provided by the middle school principals can be located in Table 4.15 in Appendix G.

The responses provided by six middle school principals centered on providing feedback to the teacher. Two of the six middle school principals mentioned providing feedback to teachers in a timely manner following a formal observation. One middle school principal admitted writing too much when conducting a classroom walk-through observation and in the future would only highlight certain areas. However, the same middle school principal announced it was difficult to only write one word or phrase because of wanting to create a very clear picture of what occurred during the classroom walk-through observation. A different middle school principal believed the classroom walk-through observation form used in the school division was constricting and not geared for providing authentic feedback. This middle school principal set a goal of providing more authentic feedback to teachers following formal observations and classroom walk-through observations during the upcoming school year.

Two middle school principals declared their current practices in regards to supervision was beneficial to teachers but admitted there is always room to improve when it comes to providing meaningful feedback. One of the two middle school principals wanted to conduct more face-to-face meetings with teachers and engage those teachers in more informal conversations regarding what was noticed during a classroom walk-through observation.

Three middle school principals believed finding more time to be in the classrooms was an area they wanted to improve when asked about what they could do to make the supervisory process more beneficial for teachers. The three middle school principals provided different reasons for not being able to be in the classroom as much as they would like. One of the three middle school principals admitted to having many new staff members in the building and found it difficult to find time to be in all their classrooms and then

provide personalized feedback. Another middle school principal claimed the high number of snow days during the previous year disrupted their formal observation and classroom walk-through observation schedule and they were never able to catch back up. The third middle school principal wanted to be present in teacher classrooms more often and serve as an instructional leader but believed the reports and data being required by the state and division were overwhelming and prohibited being in the classroom on a regular basis.

Five middle school principals revealed they would like to provide supervisory opportunities for teachers and assistant principals. Three of the five middle school principals addressed opportunities involving their assistant principals. One middle school principal stated, “I want to block out time during the day so the administrative team could conduct classroom walk-through observations uninterrupted. While one member of the administrative team was conducting a classroom walk-through observation, the other members of the administrative team could cover duties or handle student discipline issues that arose (J.J).” One middle school principal believed it would be beneficial for assistant principals to conduct classroom walk-through observations or formal observations in other buildings to identify what was occurring at other schools regarding the supervisory process. One middle school principal wanted to norm the observation practices of the administrative team and suggested it would be beneficial to the teachers if they knew they would be observed in a similar fashion by the administrative team.

Two middle school principals indicated it would be very powerful for teachers to observe each other and provide feedback. One middle school principal stated, “I want to create an instructional rounds team of exemplar teachers to observe teachers who are struggling and then provide feedback through a verbal discussion. The teachers on the instructional rounds team could be observed by new teachers, who would then glean best instructional practices from the observation (M.M.).”

**16. How do you track the number of formal observations conducted in the building? How do you track the number of classroom walk-through observations conducted in the building?**

The fourteen middle school principals who participated in the study indicated they kept track of the number of formal observations conducted in the building. Seven middle school principals admitted to discussing which teachers were observed within the past week during weekly administrative team meetings. The responses provided by the fourteen middle school principals as to how they track the number of formal observations and classroom walk-through observations in the building can be found in Table 4.16 in Appendix G.

Two middle school principals kept track of the number of formal observations and classroom walk-through observations conducted in the building by utilizing a visual chart. One middle school principal stated, “I begin by listing every teacher’s name on a plastic chart and keeping track of the dates a member of the administrative team was in the classroom. Each administrator has a different colored marker and, after completing a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation, would record the date next to the teacher’s name. The chart is a good visual tool for the administrative team to keep track of who we observed and who we need to observe (C.C).” A different middle school principal utilized a monthly calendar which contained the names of all teachers. The teacher names were color coded based on their observation status. The administrative team would then place a letter code on the date they visited a teacher’s classroom.

Five middle school middle schools indicated the electronic observation tool used by their school division keep track of formal observation dates and times. A total of six middle school principals utilized a spreadsheet to track the date and time of formal observations, including two middle school principals who indicated the electronic observation tool in their school division kept track of the observation date and time. Two middle school principals kept track of formal observations by utilizing an electronic tracker system which could be accessed by the administrative team. Three middle school principals kept track of formal observation dates and times by keeping a hard copy of the observation form in the teacher’s file.

Thirteen out of fourteen middle school principals kept track of the number of classroom walk-through observations conducted in the building. The two middle school principals who utilized a visual chart were included in the number of middle school principals who tracked classroom walk-through observations. Six of the thirteen middle school principals used Google docs to track the date a classroom walk-through observation was conducted. Three middle school principals tracked the number of classroom walk-through observations by utilizing a table or spreadsheet. One middle school principal shared the administrative team had a focus area when conducting classroom walk-through observations, which was co-teaching, and tracked the dates and times they were in a co-taught classroom in an excel spreadsheet.

Two middle school principals initially stated they did not require the administrative team to track classroom walk-through observations but admitted to tracking the classroom walk-through observations they personally conducted. One of the two middle school principals tracked classroom walk-through observations by writing the date and teacher on an index card and then placed the index card in an index card box. The second middle school principal stated, “I do not feel there is a reason to keep track of classroom walk-through observations because the administrative team completes so many and we are only in the classroom for a short amount of time. I do however track my own classroom walk-through observations because it is a big deal to some teachers when the principal visits their room. I attempt to visit every single teacher’s classroom at least once every thirty days and keep a staff list, with the classroom walk-through observation date, as a visual reminder (M.M.)”

**17. What factors control how many classroom walk-through observations you accomplish in a week?**

There are a variety of factors that can impact the amount of time a middle school principal can spend in the classroom during a week. Some factors may be beyond the control of the middle school principal but some factors can be controlled. Student and community demographics as well as building infrastructure can also play a large role in how a middle school principal spends their day. The responses provided by middle

school principals who participated in the study regarding factors which impacted how many classroom walk-through observations they accomplished in a week can be found in Table 4.17 in Appendix G.

Three middle school principals who participated in the study indicated the testing calendar for their school division impacted the number of classroom walk-through observations they were able to accomplish during a week. One middle school principal indicated the testing calendar really impacted the opportunity to observe teachers in the classroom. The same middle school principal also declared time can get away quickly during testing due to the operation of a seven period master schedule. Middle school principal D.D. supervised students during six 30-minute lunch periods every day, which resulted in losing three hours each day due to lunch supervision. One middle school principal maintained an open door policy for staff which resulted in teachers popping into the principal's office which impeded being in the classrooms. Three middle school principals admitted the number of meetings they were required to attend off-campus impacted their ability to conduct classroom walk-through observations. While events such as testing, meetings, lunch duty, and conversations with teachers are expected, middle school principals do have some type of control whether or not to engage in those activities.

Eight middle school principals who participated in the study indicated unexpected events or lack of predictability impacted the opportunity to conduct classroom walk-through observations. Five of the eight middle school principals elaborated and spent time managing items such as unexpected parent visits, student disciplinary incidents, some type of crisis, or building infrastructure issues. One middle school principal admitted, "Since we only have two assistant principals, I handle one grade level of discipline. While we do not have many disciplinary incidents at the school, when a disciplinary incident does arise, it takes time away that could be spent conducting a classroom walk-through observation (C.C.)." Four of the eight middle school principals declared unexpected disciplinary incidents impacted the amount of time they had to conduct classroom walk-through observations.

Four middle school principals indicated they would block out a set amount of time during the school day to conduct classroom walk-through observations. The four middle school principals also shared it was important to protect the time for classroom walk-through observations and informed others the time was sacred. One middle school principal stated everyone knew first block was protected including teachers, front office staff, parents and the community. The same middle school principal also stated parents were made aware when they visited the school without making an appointment, they were impeding the process of improving instruction for their child. The four middle school principals admitted to blocking out somewhere between 70 and 90 minutes a day to conduct classroom walk-through observations.

Two middle school principals had unique situations which impacted their ability to conduct classroom walk-through observations on a regular basis. One middle school principal stated the building was in the middle of a major renovation project and events such as a power outage or unexpected fire alarm would need immediate attention which impacted the ability to be in the classrooms. The other middle school principal spent time during the school day serving as a translator for parents who visited the school. The middle school principal stated, “Half of our student population is Hispanic. Since the main office and nurse’s office are close to my office, I am usually the first person notified if translating is necessary and serving as a translator for parents and students impacts my ability to be in the classroom (A.A).”

**18. Are there any questions I should have asked regarding practices employed by middle school principals during the supervisory process that I did not ask?**

The purpose of the study was to identify the practices utilized by middle school principals during the supervisory process. The fourteen middle school principals who participated in the study were asked if there were questions which should have been asked regarding practices employed during the supervisory process which were not asked during the interview. Five of the fourteen middle school principals believed the questions asked during the interview were thorough and covered all aspects of the supervisory process.

The responses provided by the middle school principals who participated in the study regarding questions which should have been asked during the one-to-one interview are included in Table 4.18 in Appendix G.

While the study focused on practices employed by middle school principals during the supervisory process, three middle school principals suggested questions could have been asked regarding teacher evaluation practices. Two middle school principals were interested in the processes followed when a teacher was not meeting expectations or performing well in the classroom. One middle school principal shared questions regarding the teacher evaluation process or teacher goal setting were not asked or discussed during the interview.

Two middle school principals believed the supervisory process should focus on a growth mindset to assist teachers. One middle school principal wanted to determine what specific, actionable, and timely feedback would look like in practice. A different middle school principal indicated a question regarding how middle school principals highlight, recognize, and showcase talented teachers should have been asked during the one-to-one interview.

Two middle school principals sought to identify the role of others during the supervisory process. Both middle school principals believed a question regarding how principals delegate tasks such as teacher observations to their assistant principals would be relevant to the study. One middle school principal suggested a specific question be added which focused on who principals included in the classroom walk-through observation process and what opportunities were provided to staff members to learn and grow from each other during the supervisory process.

Two middle school principals reflected on questions which were asked during the one-to-one interview. One middle school principal stated, “I would like to know how a principal’s leadership style influences formal observations and classroom walk-through observations. I think the differences in personality traits affect who you are as a leader (L.L.)” When asked if there were any questions which

should have been asked regarding practices employed by middle school principals during the supervisory process which were not asked during the interview, one middle school principal shared, “I like question number seventeen, the other stuff that gets in the way. It caused me to reflect on those things that eat away at my time. The principal is the captain of the ship and if something comes up you just cannot walk past it and give it to someone else and say good luck to you (C.C).”

### **19. What improvements or suggestions do you have regarding the interview instrument?**

The fourteen middle school principals who participated in the study provided a response regarding improvements or suggestions related to the interview instrument. The complete list of responses provided by each middle school principal can be located in Table 4.19 in Appendix G. Four of the ten middle school principals provided suggestions regarding the interview instrument. Ten of the fourteen middle school principals did not believe the interview instrument should be changed or adjusted. Five of the ten middle school principals who did not believe the interview instrument should be changed or adjusted also provided comments regarding the interview instrument.

The four middle school principals who provided suggestions did not target a specific question but rather provided feedback which they believed would be beneficial to the future of the study or allow the interview to flow more smoothly. One middle school principal provided a suggestion if the results from the study would eventually be published. A different middle school principal suggested if an answer was provided during a previous question to a future question, the future question should be skipped since the answer was already provided. One middle school principal stated, “I believe it would be beneficial if you had access to everyone’s observation forms and then shared those observation forms with the middle school principals who participated in the study. I think it would be very helpful to see what observation tools other middle school principals are using (I.I).” A different middle school principal indicated classroom walk-through observations have a different meaning depending on the middle school principal and what the goal is for observations in their school.

Five of the ten middle school principals who participated in the study added additional comments after initially stating they did not have improvements or suggestions regarding the interview instrument. One middle school principal believed the interview flowed well and enjoyed the idea of the interview being more of a casual conversation. A different middle school principal declared the interview instrument contained a good number of open-ended or situational questions which touched on all areas of the supervisory process. When reflecting on the observation process, one middle school principal stated, “I have worked in four different middle schools during my career and the process for teacher observation always seems to change. I am not sure if we ever have gotten it right (M.M.).” One middle school principal mentioned if the interview only consisted of yes or no questions, the amount of information gained of how the supervisory process worked at each school would be incomplete. A different middle school principal indicated the purpose of the study appeared to be trying to determine the practices middle school principals utilized during the teacher observation process.

## **Chapter 5: Summary of Findings, Conclusions, Discussion, Study Concerns, Recommendations for Future Study**

The purpose of chapter five is to provide a summary of the findings related to practices middle school principals in large school divisions located within the Commonwealth of Virginia employ during the supervisory process. The responses provided by the fourteen middle school principals who participated in the study were transcribed, coded, and analyzed. A summary of the findings is included in this chapter. Conclusions from the study as well as a discussion of the findings, concerns related to study, and recommendations for future study are also included in the chapter.

### **Summary of Findings**

Before conducting the actual observation middle school principals, who participated in the study, were asked what steps were followed during the pre-observation process. Whether or not a middle school principal conducted a pre-observation conference depended on whether the teacher was on the formal or informal observation cycle. The majority of middle school principals stated they conducted a pre-observation conference with a teacher who was on the formal observation cycle. Nine middle school principals conducted the pre-observation conference one or two days before the actual formal observation. If a teacher was on the informal observation cycle, a pre-observation conference did not occur. Middle school principals informed teachers on the formal observation cycle by sending an email to them at the beginning of the school year. Middle school principals indicated teachers knew in advance when a formal observation was going to be conducted. Thirteen out of fourteen middle school principals provided a timeline of observation dates to the teacher while eight of the thirteen middle school principals allowed the teacher to select the date for the formal observation.

Thirteen middle school principals required teachers to create a lesson plan before the formal observation occurred. Eleven of the thirteen middle school principals who required the creation of a lesson

plan admitted to reviewing the lesson plan before the actual observation. Teachers were encouraged to submit their lesson plans to the middle school principal electronically. During the pre-observation conference, middle school principals attempted to engage the teacher in self-reflection regarding the information contained within the lesson plan. The asking of open-ended questions during the pre-observation conference was referred to as cognitive coaching. The dialogue which occurred during the pre-observation conference between the teacher and middle school principal focused on what the teacher wanted to accomplish during the lesson. During the pre-observation conference, middle school principals wanted the teacher to walk them through the lesson. During the explanation of the lesson, middle school principals indicated they would provide feedback to spur self-reflection and would inform the teacher of specific items they would be looking for in practice during the formal observation.

Middle school principals who participated in the study followed a set of procedures and processes when conducting a formal teacher observation. The fourteen middle school principals indicated the observation instrument was the same for all schools within the school division. The formal observation instrument was teacher-centered and targeted the needs of each specific teacher. Five middle school principals directly scripted their notes into the electronic observation instrument during the formal teacher observation. Six middle school principals chose to handwrite their notes during the actual observation and then transcribed their notes into the electronic observation instrument. The middle school principals admitted to reviewing the notes they took during the observation before submitting the observation form to the teacher. Nine middle school principals had certain items they were looking for during the lesson. Six middle school principals admitted to walking around the classroom and interacted with students during the formal observation. Middle school principals also shared the focus during a formal observation was not what the teacher was doing but rather what the students were doing. Three middle school principals remained in the classroom during the entire lesson when conducting a formal observation. Five middle school principals indicated they remained in the classroom to witness half the lesson.

Classroom walk-through observations are shorter in duration than a formal observation. Eight middle school principals stated a classroom walk-through observation typically lasted between three and ten minutes. Classroom walk-through observations were non-evaluative and provided a snapshot of what was occurring in the classroom or during a particular lesson. Twelve middle school principals admitted classroom walk-through observations were a surprise visit and teachers were not aware when a classroom walk-through observation would be conducted. Classroom walk-through observations could be completed by an administrator, more than one administrator, or by a combination of teachers and an administrator. When teachers participated in classroom walk-through observations, the process was referred to as an instructional round. Five middle school principals indicated the feedback provided to the teacher following a classroom walk-through observation was mainly positive. Middle school principals did admit to having specific items they wanted to see in practice during a classroom walk-through observation. Five middle school principals used the same instrument for classroom walk-through observations as they did formal observations. Five different middle school principals created their own classroom walk-through observation instrument for use in their building.

Following a formal observation, middle school principals provide feedback to the teacher. The type of feedback, amount of time it takes to provide feedback, and how feedback was presented to the teacher varied depending on the philosophy of the middle school principal regarding the supervisory process. Ten middle school principals who participated in the study shared they met with the teacher following an observation regardless if the observation was formal or informal. The length of the post observation conference varied depending on if the objectives for the lesson were met by the teacher. Seven middle school principals shared their notes from the observation with the teacher before conducting the post observation conference. The electronic observation instrument allowed teachers to view the observation notes once the middle school principal pressed the submit button. The majority of middle school principals

provided some type of written feedback to the teacher following a formal observation. Teachers were invited by email to attend the post observation conference.

During the post observation conference, eight middle school principals preferred to engage in cognitive coaching and asked the teacher reflective questions pertaining to the lesson. Middle school principals would begin the post observation conference by asking the teacher how they felt the lesson went and if the objectives for the lesson were met. Following the teacher's response, the middle school principals would then provide feedback. Depending on the items which were discussed during the post observation conference, middle school principals were willing to adjust their notes or comments on the observation instrument before submitting the final copy. The majority of middle school principals wanted to provide feedback which was meaningful, specific, and timely. Four middle school principals admitted to following a more direct line of questioning during the post observation conference and would share strengths and areas for growth with the teacher based on the observation.

The amount of time it took for middle school principals to provide feedback to the teacher following a formal observation ranged from 24 hours to five days. Eleven middle school principals provided feedback to the teacher within 48 hours of the observation. The eleven middle school principals shared their goal was to provide purposeful feedback to the teacher in a timely manner. The three middle school principals who took longer than 48 hours to provide feedback admitted writing their notes by hand before completing the electronic observation instrument seemed to delay providing feedback following a formal observation. Eleven middle school principals provided feedback to the teacher following a classroom walk-through observation. Seven middle school principals provided feedback within five minutes after leaving the teacher's classroom. The feedback following a classroom walk-through observation was primarily positive and eight middle school principals admitted to providing the teacher with a copy of their notes by utilizing an electronic standardized classroom walk-through observation form. Six middle school principals also

admitted to conducting a verbal discussion with the teacher following a classroom walk-through observation.

Following a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation, middle school principals have a decision regarding what to do with the data which was collected. The fourteen middle school principals who participated in the study only shared data collected during a formal observation with the teacher who was observed. After conducting a classroom walk-through observation, eight middle school principals indicated they would share highlights or areas of concern with the staff. The middle school principals tended to provide praise and recognize the teacher along with the best practices during a faculty meeting. Five middle school principals utilized the data from classroom walk-through observations to guide future professional development. During a classroom walk-through observation, middle school principals indicated having a specific focus area such as student engagement, co-teaching, and posting of content language objectives. The majority of middle school principals wanted to find more time during the school day to be in teacher classrooms. Six middle school principals set a goal of providing authentic and meaningful feedback to teachers in a timely manner during the school year.

The fourteen middle school principals who participated in the study kept track of the number of formal observations conducted in the building. Seven middle school principals shared with their assistant principals which teacher they observed during weekly administrative team meetings. Six middle school principals used a spreadsheet to keep track of the number of formal observations conducted while five middle school principals indicated the electronic observation instrument kept track of observation dates and times. Thirteen middle school principals kept track of the number of classroom walk-through observations they conducted. The middle school principals used Google Docs, charts, tables, and spreadsheet to track the number of classroom walk-through observations.

There are a variety factors that can impede the opportunity a middle school principal has to conduct classroom walk-through observations. Unexpected events such as student discipline, building infrastructure

failures, parent visits, or medical emergencies impacted the ability of middle school principals to conduct classroom walk-through observations. Maintaining an open-door policy for staff, supervising students during lunch, testing schedule, and meetings held outside the school building were also listed as items which prevented middle school principals from conducting classroom walk-through observations. Three middle school principals attempted to block out time during the school day to conduct classroom walk-through observations and shared this information with staff and parents.

## **Conclusions**

The purpose of the study was to identify practices middle school principals in large school divisions located within the Commonwealth of Virginia employed during the supervisory process. Due to the qualitative nature of the study, there is no single conclusion which can be reached regarding practices middle school principals employed during the supervisory process. The research questions which were posed to middle school principals participating in the study focused on processes which were employed before, during, and after conducting a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation as well as how the data was utilized following a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation. Some concluding statements related to the research questions will be based upon practices employed by middle school principals who participated in the study. While there is no one stand alone conclusion, the following concluding statements are related to the responses provided by middle school principals to the research questions which formed the basis for the study. Middle school principals who participated in the study provided responses which addressed the four research questions related to the practices employed during the supervisory process.

The first research question related to the activities of the middle school principal before conducting a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation. Middle school principals reported conducting a pre-observation conference with the teacher before conducting a formal observation. Teachers were expected to create and share a lesson plan with the middle school principal before the formal observation.

During the pre-observation conference, the middle school principals indicated they would inform teachers of certain items they wanted to see in practice during the actual observation. Middle school principals did not meet with teachers before conducting classroom walk-through observations.

The second research question related to the processes middle school principals employed when conducting a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation. When conducting a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation, middle school principals who participated in the study had specific instructional processes they wanted to see in practice. The middle school principals remained in the classroom for at least half the lesson when conducting a formal observation. When conducting a classroom walk-through observation, middle school principals spent no more than ten minutes in the classroom. The middle school principals reported the classroom walk-through observations were non-evaluative and provided a snapshot of what occurred during the lesson. During formal observations and classroom walk-through observations, the middle school principals were focused on the type of activities students were engaged, not necessarily what the teacher was doing.

The third research question was related to the type of constructive feedback provided by the middle school principal following a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation. Middle school principals met with the teacher following formal and informal observations. The middle school principals admitted to sharing their notes from the observation with the teacher. Middle school principals provided constructive feedback to the teacher within 48 hours of conducting the formal observation. Following a classroom walk-through observation, middle school principals provided immediate constructive feedback to the teacher. The feedback provided following a classroom walk-through observation was positive and teachers were provided a copy of the notes taken by the middle school principal during the classroom walk-through observation.

The fourth research question related to how the data collected was utilized following a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation. Middle school principals declared data collected

during a formal observation was only shared with the teacher who was observed. Following a classroom walk-through observation, the data collected would be shared with staff during a faculty meeting and was utilized to guide future professional development opportunities. The classroom walk-through observation data which was shared by middle school principals during the faculty meeting was positive and teachers implementing best practices were recognized. The middle school principals used a chart, table, or spreadsheet to track the number of formal observations and classroom walk-through observations they conducted during the school day.

In the discussion section of chapter five, the conclusions reached to the four research questions will be compared to what authorities in the field state a middle school principal should practice during the supervisory process. Observations and ideas regarding the responses provided by middle school principals who participated in the study will also be provided in the discussion section.

## **Discussion**

The first research question sought to identify processes middle school principals followed before conducting a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation. The pre-observation conference allows the teacher to outline the intent of the lesson (Range, Holt, Scherz, & Young, 2011). Middle school principals indicated teachers were expected to create and share a lesson plan before the actual formal observation. According to Stronge, Grant, and Ward (2011) high expectations are communicated during the pre-observation conference. Middle school principals who participated in the study indicated they would inform teachers of certain items which they wanted to see in practice during the lesson.

The second research question posed to middle school principals related to processes employed when conducting a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation. During a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation, middle school principals were focused on the type of activities students were engaged during the lesson. According to research, outstanding principals focus on students

and the learning (Crum & Sherman, 2008). Middle school principals reported classroom walk-through observations provided a quick snapshot of what was occurring during the lesson. According to Range, Holt, Scherz, & Young (2011) classroom walk-through observations provided a quick mechanism for collecting data.

The third research question related to the type of constructive feedback middle school principals provided to the teacher following a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation. Middle school principals admitted to meeting with teachers following a formal observation. Once teachers receive feedback, there should be an opportunity for the teacher and principal to discuss the lesson (Ovado, 2006). According to Ovado (2006), written feedback has the potential to influence instructional behaviors of the teacher. Middle school principals who participated in the study shared their observation notes with the teacher. According to the research, the principal should provide on-going, constructive feedback following an observation and short, direct feedback after unannounced visits (Range, Holt, Scherz, & Young, 2011). Middle school principals who participated in the study provided constructive feedback to teachers following a formal observation and provided immediate, direct feedback following classroom walk-through observations.

The fourth research question focused on how the data collected following a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation were utilized by the middle school principal. Middle school principals declared data collected during a formal observation would only be shared with the teacher who was observed. Range, Holt, Scherz, and Young (2011) stated data collected during the supervisory process can be used to help teachers improve or expand their abilities. Middle school principals who participated in the study strived for data collected by conducting classroom walk-through observations and shared at a faculty meeting to be positive. Sanzo, Clayton, and Sherman (2010) stated principals working side-by-side with teachers could create a warm and caring learning environment. Middle school principals indicated data collected from classroom walk-through observations could be utilized to guide future professional

development opportunities. According to Range, Holt, Scherz, and Young (2011) two purposes of supervision are collecting data on teacher performance and linking the data to professional development.

Before conducting a formal observation, a pre-observation conference is scheduled with the teacher. During the pre-observation conference, teachers are asked to present a lesson plan and then guide the middle school principal through the lesson plan. The discussion of the lesson plan between the teacher and middle school principal during a pre-observation conference is routine practice. Regardless of the size of the student population, middle school principals conduct a pre-observation conference before conducting a formal observation. Due to the experience of the teacher and the non-evaluative nature of classroom walk-through observations, middle school principals typically do not conduct pre-observation conferences before conducting a classroom walk-through observation. In regards to practices middle school principals followed before conducting a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation, middle school principals across the Commonwealth of Virginia follow similar supervisory processes as the middle school principals who participated in the study.

When conducting a formal observation, the middle school principals who participated in the study focused on student engagement during the lesson, not necessarily the actions of the teacher. Due to differences in observation instruments utilized in each school division, this may not be a common practice followed by most middle school principals across the Commonwealth of Virginia. During the actual observation, the teacher is the individual who is being evaluated based on a set of standards. The standards establish the foundation for items the middle school principal should witness during the lesson. When conducting a formal observation, it is expected most middle school principals across the Commonwealth of Virginia spend at least half the lesson in the classroom. Due to the non-evaluative nature and short amount of time in the classroom, it is difficult for middle school principals to place as much emphasis on classroom walk-through observations as they do regarding formal observations.

The middle school principals who participated in the study admitted to providing constructive feedback to the teacher following a formal observation and classroom walk-through observation. While most middle school principals meet with teachers and provide feedback following a formal observation, providing constructive feedback after conducting a classroom walk-through observation is much more difficult to accomplish. Due to the short amount of time a middle school principal may spend in the classroom and the lack of or cumbersome nature of technological devices such as iPads, tablets, and laptops, constructive, written feedback would be difficult to provide to teachers on a regular basis following a classroom walk-through observation. More common practice for a middle school principal would be to conduct a verbal discussion with the teacher or leave a brief note in the classroom following a classroom walk-through observation. It is also difficult for the middle school principal to have an authentic conversation with the teacher following a formal observation if the teacher has already seen the notes from the observation. During the post observation conference, the teacher may simply agree with the comments provided by the middle school principal regarding the observation, thus making the conversation less fruitful for dialogue and inhibit cognitive coaching opportunities.

The middle school principals who participated in the study utilized data from formal observations and classroom walk-through observations differently. Following a formal observation, the middle school principals only shared data collected with the individual teacher. This is a similar practice followed by most middle school principals across the Commonwealth of Virginia. The finding in which middle school principals indicated data collected during classroom walk-through observations were utilized for professional development purposes seems to square with commonly accepted practices. Data collected from classroom walk-through observations can be utilized to share best practices occurring in the classrooms and improve teacher pedagogy. Teachers across the Commonwealth of Virginia who implemented best practices are typically recognized at faculty meetings and the feedback provided by middle school principals

following classroom walk-through observations is generally positive. Middle school principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia choose to praise teachers in public but correct in private.

Middle school principals who participated in the study indicated they wanted to be seen more as a coach during classroom walk-through observations. The findings in the study conducted by Range, Holt, Scherz, and Young (2011) indicated principals were more comfortable conducting classroom walk-through observations than formal observations. While middle school principals may want to be seen in a different role when conducting classroom walk-through observations, teachers often times find it difficult to distinguish between the two roles middle school principals assume as coach and evaluator. The role dichotomy middle school principals seek is unattainable because at the end of the school year, the middle school principal is responsible for the teacher's evaluation. Every time a middle school principal enters the classroom, they are unconsciously collecting data which could be used to make some type of judgment regarding the effectiveness of the teacher in the classroom. While middle school principals who participated in the study indicated classroom walk-through observations are non-evaluative, teachers believe they are being evaluated every time a middle school principal enters their classroom.

### **Study Concerns**

The purpose of the study was to identify practices middle school principals in large school divisions located within the Commonwealth of Virginia employed during the supervisory process. Due to the qualitative nature of the study, the number of middle school principals who could participate was limited. The middle school principals who participated in the study engaged in a one-to-one interview which lasted no more than 60 minutes. Each participant was asked the same 19 standardized open-ended questions. The conclusions for the study were based on the responses provided by a limited number of middle school principals who provided responses to a set number of questions during a one-to-one interview which did not exceed 60 minutes in length.

A limitation of the study was the overall number of middle school principals who elected to participate in the study. A total of 14 middle school principals from the ten largest school divisions located within the Commonwealth of Virginia participated in the study. The 14 middle school principals served in one of eight school divisions located within the Commonwealth of Virginia. There are over 130 total school divisions located within the Commonwealth of Virginia. Additionally, only those middle school principals who served in one of the ten largest school divisions were eligible to participate in the study. Student demographics and socio-economic status varied amongst the 14 middle schools. The middle school principals who served in a school with a high number of students listed as lower socio-economic status and more diverse student demographics referenced both as a factor which impacted their ability to be more fully engaged during the supervisory process.

Another study concern focused on the two school divisions which elected to choose which middle school principals would be solicited to participate in the study. One of the two school divisions which selected which middle school principals could be contacted required a director to serve as the sponsor of the study. The director selected two middle school principals based on the geographical region their school was located within the school division. The other school division required a personalized letter addressed to the two middle school principals which were selected to participate in the study to be sent to the Department of Research. The Department of Research would then forward the personalized letter to the appropriate middle school principal who could then contact me if they wanted to participate in the study. While these two school divisions played the role of gatekeeper, I do not believe their influence impacted the findings of the study.

While the middle school principals who participated in the study served in one of the ten largest school divisions located within the Commonwealth of Virginia, the size of the student population within their building varied widely; which was also a concern of the study. The range in student population in which middle school principals who participated in the study served as an instructional leader ranged

between 400 students to over 1400 students. The size of the student population determined the number of teachers within a building and the higher the number of teachers, the greater number of teachers a middle school principal would be responsible for observing. The number of students also determined how many administrators were assigned to each school. Middle school principals serving in schools with a smaller student population had a greater burden placed on them during the supervisory process due to the lack of other administrators who could complete formal observations and classroom walk-through observations.

### **Recommendations for Future Study**

The purpose of the study was to identify the practices employed by middle school principals during the supervisory process. The supervisory process is composed of the pre-observation conference, actual observation, and the post observation conference. Additionally, the study wanted to identify how the data collected following a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation were utilized. The focus for the study was the supervisory process. A recommendation for future study could center on the practices middle school principals employed during the teacher evaluation process. Another recommendation for future study could include how the middle school principal guides the teacher through the goal setting process which accounts for 40 percent of a teacher's overall formal evaluation.

School divisions across the Commonwealth of Virginia require certain artifacts to be included when evaluating a teacher. One artifact which is included when completing a teacher evaluation is data collected during formal observations. School board policies regarding how many formal observations must be completed during the course of a school year vary amongst school divisions. Middle school principals who participated in the study indicated classroom walk-through observations were non-evaluative and therefore data collected from classroom walk-through observations would not be included in a teacher's final evaluation. The school board policies regarding which artifacts from the supervisory process can be included and which are useful when completing a teacher's evaluation is a recommendation for future study.

While conducting the study, there were a few recommendations offered by the participants which were related to the supervisory process which could be areas for future study. The study could be expanded to gather responses from middle school principals in small school divisions regarding the processes they followed during the supervisory process. In regards to the observation instrument, a future study could be conducted to compare the formal observation instruments utilized in school divisions within the Commonwealth of Virginia. Another area for future exploration and study could focus on the processes middle school principals followed when a teacher is not meeting expectations. Finally, a recommendation for future study could focus on how middle school principals balance the supervisory process with the multitude of other duties and requirements which they are expected to complete.

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## Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Hello (*insert name*). Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to meet with me today. The first form I would like to review with you is the informed consent form. Did you have any questions regarding the information contained in the informed consent form? As a reminder, you are free to stop the interview at any time. If there is a question you do not feel comfortable answering, you do not have to answer the question.

As was mentioned during our phone call, I anticipate the interview will last approximately 60 minutes. The interview will be audio taped and I will be taking notes during the interview as well. Within seven days, you will receive the transcripts from our interview in an email. If, during the course of your review of the transcripts, you have any questions regarding the information contained, please feel free to contact me by phone or email. At the conclusion of our interview, I will provide you with the Starbucks gift card. Do you have any questions before we get started? (*The researcher will answer any questions the participant may have before beginning the interview.*) Let's begin with question number one.....

### *Standardized Open-Ended Interview Questions*

1. Please describe the steps you follow during the teacher observation process?
2. What steps or processes do you follow before conducting a teacher observation?
3. What items do you require teachers to have prepared for the pre-observation conference?
4. What type of feedback do you provide to teachers during the pre-observation conference?
5. How do you inform teachers about the observation process?
6. What steps or processes do you follow when conducting a teacher observation?
7. What are the differences between the formal observation instrument and the classroom walk-through observation instrument used in your school division?
8. What steps or processes do you follow when conducting a classroom walk-through observation?

9. Are teachers made aware of when a classroom walk-through observation would be conducted? If so, how is the schedule of classroom walk-through observations communicated to them?
10. What steps or processes do you follow after conducting a teacher observation?
11. What type of feedback do you provide to teachers during the post observation conference?
12. How long does it take you to provide feedback to the teacher following a formal observation?
13. How long does it take you to provide feedback to the teacher following a classroom walk-through observation?
14. What do you do with the data collected following a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation?
15. Based on the data, what steps could you take to make the supervisory experience more beneficial?
16. How do you track the number of formal observations conducted in your building? How do you track the number of classroom walk-through observations conducted in your building?
17. What factors control how many classroom walk-through observations you accomplish in a week?
18. Are there any questions I should have asked regarding the practices employed by middle school principals during the supervisory process?
19. What improvements or suggestions do you have regarding the interview instrument?

## **Appendix B: Telephone Script to Research Office**

Hello. My name is Ryan Hitchman and I am currently a middle school principal in Loudoun County, Virginia. I am also a graduate student at Virginia Tech and I am pursuing my educational doctorate in educational leadership. I am calling today to ask for your assistance and permission. I am currently working on a study focusing on the practices employed by middle school principals during the supervisory process. Specifically, I am interested in examining the practices employed by middle school principals during the pre-observation, observation, walk through, and post observation process. I am also interested in how middle school principals are utilizing the data from formal observations and classroom walk-through observations.

I am asking permission to contact two middle school principals within your school division and asking if they would be interested in participating in the study. If necessary, I can send your office IRB approval from Virginia Tech and any other items you may need in order to make a decision on whether to grant permission for the study. There will be a total of 20 participants involved in the study. There will be no mention of the principal's name, school, or school division in the study.

An interview protocol will be followed and I can send your office a copy of the interview protocol. I would be asking two middle school principals within your division to participate in a 60 minute interview following the interview protocol. The interview would occur in the principal's building, central office building, or at another agree upon destination.

Do you have any questions? Would you be willing to grant permission for me to contact two middle school principals within your division?

Thank you and have a great day.

## **Appendix C: Email Script to Middle School Principals**

Hello (*insert name*). My name is Ryan Hitchman and I am currently the principal of Belmont Ridge Middle School in Loudoun County, Virginia. I am also a graduate student at Virginia Tech and I am in the process of completing my educational doctorate in education leadership. I am asking for your assistance in a study I am conducting regarding the practices employed by middle school principals during the supervisory process. Specifically, I am interested in examining the practices used by middle school principals during the pre-observation, observation, walk-through, and post observation process. I am also interested in how the data collected from a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation is utilized within your building. Your expertise and insights in the supervision process are vital to the completion of my research and may have an impact on supervisory practices of other instructional leaders.

If you agree to participate, please indicate by returning a signed copy of the informed consent form which is attached to my email. The informed consent form can be returned by email, fax, or regular mail. I will then contact you to set a convenient time and date to meet for a one-on-one interview. The interview should last approximately 60 minutes and can be conducted at your building, central office building, or at another convenient place. One week before the interview I will send you the interview protocol including the 19 standardized open-ended questions. During the interview, we will focus our discussion on the 19 standardized open-ended questions.

Our interview will be digitally recorded and I will also be taking field notes. Within one week after the interview, the transcripts from the interview will be sent by email for your review and correction. Everything you say will be completely confidential and you will not be identified in the study. You may request to stop the interview at any time. At the conclusion of the interview, you will be provided a \$10 gift card for Starbucks. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. Thank you for the consideration and have a great day.

## **Appendix D: Phone Script to Middle School Principals**

Hello (*insert name*). My name is Ryan Hitchman and I am currently the principal of Belmont Ridge Middle School in Loudoun County, Virginia. I am also a graduate student at Virginia Tech and I am in the process of completing my doctorate in educational leadership. I am asking for your assistance in a study I am conducting regarding the practices employed by middle school principals during the supervisory process. Specifically, I am interested in examining the practices used by middle school principals during the pre-observation, observation, and post observation process. I am also interested in how the data collected from formal observations and classroom walk-through observations is utilized within your building. Your expertise and insights in the supervision process are vital to the completion of my research and may have an impact on supervisory practices of other instructional leaders.

If you agree to participate in the study, please sign and date the informed consent form which was attached to my initial email. I would also like to set a convenient time and date to meet for a face-to-face interview. The interview should last approximately 60 minutes and can be conducted at your building, central office building, or at another convenient place. One week before the interview I will send you the interview protocol including the 19 standardized open-ended questions. During the interview, we will focus our discussion on the 19 standardized open-ended questions.

Our interview will be digitally recorded and I will also be taking field notes. Within one week after the interview, the transcripts from the interview will be sent by email for your review and corrections. Everything you say will be completely confidential and you will not be identified in the study. You may request to stop the interview at any time. At the conclusion of the interview, you will be provided a \$10 gift card for Starbucks. Do you have any questions? Would you be willing to participate?

## Appendix E: Informed Consent

### VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

#### Informed Consent for Participants

#### in Research Projects Involving Human Subjects

**Title of Project:** Practices middle school principals in large school divisions located within the Commonwealth of Virginia employ during the supervisory process

**Investigator(s):** Ryan P. Hitchman

**Contact Information:** [ryanh74@vt.edu](mailto:ryanh74@vt.edu)

#### I. Purpose of this Research Project

The purpose of this study is to record and analyze the practices employed by middle school principals during the supervisory process. The purpose of the research is: (a) identify and document the practices middle school principals employ before conducting an observation or walk through; (b) identify and document the practices middle school principals employ when conducting an observation or walk through; (c) identify and document the constructive feedback middle school principals provide to teachers following an observation or walk through; and (d) identify and document how the data collected by the middle school principals following an observation or walk through is utilized. The results of the study will be used to construct a dissertation focusing on practices employed by middle school principals during the supervisory process. There will be a total of 20 respondents participating in one-on-one interviews. Pseudonyms will be used to protect the identity of the respondents and the specific school division for each respondent will not be identified. The subject pool will consist of two middle school principals from each of the ten largest school divisions based on total student enrollment within the Commonwealth of Virginia.

#### II. Procedures

Should you agree to participate, you will be asked to participate in a 60 minute interview. The interview will be conducted in a one-on-one setting at your school, school board building, or another conveniently located public area such as a library. The interview will be recorded and notes will be taken by the investigator. You will only be asked to sit for one interview. You will also be provided a list of the interview questions at least one week before the scheduled interview.

During the interview, you will be given the opportunity to respond in as much detail as you like. All of your responses will become part of the data for the study. The information collected will allow the researcher to identify the practices employed by middle school principals within the Commonwealth of Virginia during the supervisory process.

Following the interview, the investigator will transcribe the recorded information and send you the transcripts for review. You will receive the transcripts seven-to-ten days after the interview. If there is information contained in the transcripts that is inaccurate, the information will be changed following a phone call or email. If there is information you do not want to have included in the dissertation, the information will not appear in the dissertation. A copy of the informed consent form will be provided to you before we begin the one-on-one interview and the researcher will also

retain a copy.

### **III. Risks**

Your participation in the study should pose minimal risks to you. The researcher will limit questions to the 16 listed on the interview protocol sheet. If there is a question you do not feel comfortable answering or do not know the answer, the question will not be answered. You have the right to stop the interview or line of questioning at any point during the one-on-one interview. If you would like another person in the room during the interview as an observer, that will be allowed.

### **IV. Benefits**

The possible benefits of participating in the study may include the opportunity to share your experiences and expertise with other instructional leaders regarding the practices employed during the supervisory process. School leaders may benefit from the information contained in the study to assist them in supervising teachers during future school years. No promise of guarantee of benefits has been made to encourage you to participate in the study.

### **V. Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality**

Every effort will be made to protect your identity and confidentiality. Your name, school division, school name, and location will not be identified in the study. Pseudonyms will be used at all times and every effort will be made to not reveal any personal or identifying characteristics. All information obtained including tapes of interviews, field notes, memos, transcripts, and interview notes will be stored in a secure location and will only be used for purposes of the study. Only the researcher and the research committee will have access to the tapes and transcriptions of the interview. The audio tapes will be destroyed once the research has been compiled and the study has concluded.

The Virginia Tech (VT) Institutional Review Board (IRB) may view the study's data for auditing purposes. The IRB is responsible for the oversight of the protection of human subjects involved in research.

### **VI. Compensation**

As a participant, you will receive a \$10 Starbucks gift card at the conclusion of the interview.

## VII. Subject's Consent

I have read the Consent Form and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent:

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Subject signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Subject printed name

## VIII. Freedom to Withdraw

It is important for you to know that you are free to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. You are free not to answer any questions that you choose or respond to what is being asked of you without penalty.

Please note that there may be circumstances under which the investigator may determine that a subject should not continue as a subject.

Should you withdraw or otherwise discontinue participation, you will be compensated for the portion of the project completed in accordance with the Compensation section of this document.

## IX. Questions or Concerns

Should you have any questions about this study, you may contact one of the research investigators whose contact information is included at the beginning of this document.

Should you have any questions or concerns about the study's conduct or your rights as a research subject, or need to report a research-related injury or event, you may contact the VT IRB Chair, Dr. David M. Moore at [moored@vt.edu](mailto:moored@vt.edu) or (540) 231-4991.

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*(Note: each subject must be provided a copy of this form. In addition, the IRB office may stamp its approval on the consent document(s) you submit and return the stamped version to you for use in consenting subjects; therefore, ensure each consent document you submit is ready to be read and signed by subjects.)*

## Appendix F: IRB Approval

### VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

#### Office of Research Compliance

Institutional Review Board  
North End Center, Suite 4120, Virginia Tech  
300 Turner Street NW  
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061  
540/231-4606 Fax 540/231-0959  
Email: [irb@vt.edu](mailto:irb@vt.edu)  
Website: <http://www.irb.vt.edu>

#### MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** July 1, 2014

**TO:** Glen I Earthman, Ryan Patrick Hitchman

**FROM:** Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires April 25, 2018)

**PROTOCOL TITLE:** Practices middle school principals in large school divisions located within the Commonwealth of Virginia employ during the supervisory process

#### IRB NUMBER: 14-651

Effective July 1, 2014, the Virginia Tech Institution Review Board (IRB) Chair, David M Moore, approved the New Application request for the above-mentioned research protocol. This approval provides permission to begin the human subject activities outlined in the IRB-approved protocol and supporting documents. Plans to deviate from the approved protocol and/or supporting documents must be submitted to the IRB as an amendment request and approved by the IRB prior to the implementation of any changes, regardless of how minor, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. Report within 5 business days to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others. All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at:

<http://www.irb.vt.edu/pages/responsibilities.htm>

(Please review responsibilities before the commencement of your research.)

#### PROTOCOL INFORMATION:

Approved As: **Expedited, under 45 CFR 46.110 category(ies) 5,6,7**

Protocol Approval Date: **July 1, 2014**

Protocol Expiration Date: **June 30, 2015**

Continuing Review Due Date\*: **June 16, 2015**

\*Date a Continuing Review application is due to the IRB office if human subject activities covered under this protocol, including data analysis, are to continue beyond the Protocol Expiration Date.

#### FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS:

Per federal regulations, 45 CFR 46.103(f), the IRB is required to compare all federally funded grant proposals/work statements to the IRB protocol(s) which cover the human research activities included in the proposal / work statement before funds are released. Note that this requirement does not apply to Exempt and Interim IRB protocols, or grants for which VT is not the primary awardee. The table on the following page indicates whether grant proposals are related to this IRB protocol, and which of the listed proposals, if any, have been compared to this IRB protocol, if required.

Date*	OSP Number	Sponsor	Grant Comparison Conducted?

\* Date this proposal number was compared, assessed as not requiring comparison, or comparison information was revised.

If this IRB protocol is to cover any other grant proposals, please contact the IRB office ([irbadmin@vt.edu](mailto:irbadmin@vt.edu)) immediately.

## Appendix G: Coded Responses to Questions

### G.1

Question #1: Please describe the steps you follow during the teacher observation process?	
A.A.	The staff is informed in August after receiving the list from personnel. After sending a letter to those teachers on the formal evaluation cycle, meet with those to discuss goals and outcomes for the year. Veteran teachers have one observation before January while new teachers have two formal observations before December.
B.B.	At the beginning of the year, teachers go through a three step process. They are informed how many times we will observe them, second is a SMART goal workshop, and finally, prior to the end of September, the administrative staff meets with teachers and reviews the SMART goals created by the team.
C.C.	At the beginning of the year, we hold professional growth conferences where teachers on formal evaluation establish goals for the year. I also inform them that I will conduct unannounced walk-through observations and informal observations during the year. I allow teachers on formal observation to pick the date and time for the first observation. I usually conduct a pre observation conference with new teachers before the formal observation. I will also conduct a post observation conference within one week of the observation.
D.D.	We attempt to link our teacher observation process with our school improvement plan. We also try to link teacher growth plans with our school goals. We work with teachers individually on attaining the SMART goal they created at the beginning of the year which should focus on student learning outcomes.
E.E.	Human resources will send us a list of teachers on formal observation at the beginning of the year and then I send an email to those teachers alerting them they are on formal observation. Each administrator observes every teacher on formal observation at least once so we all get to observe teachers on formal observation. There is a pre observation conference before the first observation. I will also conduct a post observation conference after the observation.
F.F.	I do not conduct a pre observation conference unless a situation requires it. I will send an email to the grade level department and inform them that I plan on conducting observations during a particular week. I do not provide a specific day. I will also include in the email what “look fors” such as use of 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Learning skills, higher order thinking strategies, literacy strategies I will be looking for during the lesson. I will usually select an inclusion class to observe or during first bell
G.G.	I will conduct a brief meeting with all probationary teachers before I observe them. The first observation is mutually agreed upon by me and the teacher. I then conduct a post observation conference within 48 hours of the observation.
H.H.	I meet with those teachers I will be observing formally at the beginning of the year. I conduct a pre observation conference before any formal observation. Following the observation, I will send an email to the teacher in order to schedule the post observation conference. Our division uses an electronic

	observation tool which includes text boxes for the lesson summary and standards set by the school division.
I.I.	I receive a list of teachers who are on summative or informal evaluation for the school year. I provide a list of pre observation dates to teachers on summative evaluation and allow them to select the date. The first observation is conducted after the pre observation conference and after several walk-through observations. My assistant principals and I share observation duties...if I observe a teacher first, then one of my AP's will conduct the second observation. I try to conduct the post observation conference within 48 hours of the observation.
J.J.	We have all teachers create individual SMART goals at the beginning of the year. Teachers on continuing contract are observed once every three years. We will divide those teachers on formal observation between the four administrators. The same administrator will complete the first two observations and a different administrator will conduct the third observation. Teachers on formal evaluation must be observed a minimum of three times during the year.
K.K.	At the beginning of the year, we hold a self assessment conference with teachers on formal observation. After the conference, teachers are instructed to post their self assessment and SMART goal with data. We then will schedule the observation with pre and post conference dates. At mid-year, we meet with teachers and review their self assessment. We conduct additional formal observations during the spring semester and then conduct a final evaluation at the end of the year.
L.L.	Human resources will send us a list of all teachers and what observation cycle they are on. We then email the teachers what observation cycle they are on and we place a copy of the email in their mailbox. I will then meet with all teachers on summative evaluation and make sure they understand what is required of them. I elect to observe all brand new teachers and they receive full observations. We do not have the same administrator formally observe the same teacher more than once during the year unless they are a new teacher.
M.M.	In our division, administrators can use two different models, the mini-observation model throughout the year or two longer formal observations. The first step is instructing all teachers to create a SMART goal which we try to connect back to our School Improvement Plan. Before an observation, I will meet with the teacher and ask if there is anything specific they would like for me to look for. After the observation, I conduct a post observation conference.
N.N.	Before an observation, I meet with the teacher and schedule the formal observation on a date that is mutually convenient. I will then inform the teacher how long I will be in the classroom and what I will be looking for. During the formal observation, I will use the observation form developed by our school division. Following the observation, I meet with the teacher within 24 hours. We also ask teachers to complete a self reflection form before our post observation conference which we will discuss at our post observation conference.

## G.2

Question #2: What steps or processes do you follow before conducting a teacher observation?	
A.A.	All lesson plans are on the shared drive and I review them before conducting the actual observation. Since lesson plans are on the shared drive, I do not conduct pre observation conferences.
B.B.	There are different expectations for teachers who are on formal evaluation than those on informal evaluation. Teachers are required to submit a lesson plan for formal observations. Teachers who are on informal observation do not need to submit a lesson plan nor do they have to meet with me.
C.C.	I will ask the teacher for a lesson plan. We do not formally collect lesson plans but I like to have one before the observation. During the observation, they do not need to follow the plan exactly.
D.D.	There is a pre-observation conference before all formal observations. The pre-conference allows the teacher to inform me what they are going to be doing during the lesson I will be observing. I let the teachers know that the observation process is about growth.
E.E.	I send out an email to those teachers who are on formal evaluation for the school year. The first observation is a mutually agreed upon date while the second and third are unannounced.
F.F.	While I do not hold a pre-observation conference with teachers, they need to provide me with a lesson plan when I arrive in class. I attend the PLC meetings so I pretty much know what is going to be taught at a certain time.
G.G.	We attempt to find a mutual time and date for the first observation. Depending on the teacher, I may meet with them before the observation to discuss the focus of the lesson and what items I should look for during the lesson.
H.H.	At the beginning of the year, I conduct a planning conference where we discuss their student growth measure for the year and the self assessment they completed within the electronic evaluation form. When scheduling the observation, we will also schedule the pre-observation conference.
I.I.	There is communication during the pre-observation conference. I will ask the teacher if there is anything in particular they want me to look for. If the teacher is on a plan of improvement, I inform them what I am looking for.
J.J.	I used to conduct a pre-observation conference with every teacher but now I only conduct pre-observation conferences with new teachers and teachers who are experiencing difficulty. Since I review the minutes from PLC meetings, I do not need to conduct a pre-observation conference with all teachers.
K.K.	I will place the date of the observation on my calendar. We conduct a pre-conference with new teachers and we expect them to provide us with a differentiated lesson plan.

L.L.	I try to schedule the pre-observation conference two days ahead of the observation. We will discuss the class I am going to observe and I review their lesson plan.
M.M.	For a mini-observation, it depends on which part of the lesson I am going to observe. I know where the teachers should be in their lesson or unit because I attend the CLT meetings. I do not always meet with teachers before a mini-observation. I only meet with them if there is a reason to meet with them or if it is a new teacher.
N.N.	I will meet with the teacher one-on-one and determine a date for the observation. The teacher will inform me what I should expect to see during the lesson and provide me with a copy of their lesson plan and walk me through that lesson plan.

### G.3

Question #3: What items do you require teachers to have prepared for the pre-observation conference?	
A.A.	Lesson plans should be posted on the shared drive two weeks prior to an observation. Since I attend CLT meetings where goal setting is discussed, I have a pretty good handle on what the lesson will be. I provide written feedback regarding the lesson plans and share the feedback during CLT meetings.
B.B.	If it is a teacher on formal cycle, they bring in a lesson plan. If the teacher is on informal cycle, there is no pre-observation meeting and the teacher does not need to submit anything to me. I will however review CLT lesson and unit plans before the observation and review notes taken during the CLT meetings.
C.C.	Teachers must have their lesson plan, the minutes from their PLC meetings, and whether they are on track with the pacing guide. I also ask them to provide me with anything in particular they want me to look for during the observation.
D.D.	They do not have to bring anything with them. We follow the SIOP lesson plan template. We do not collect lesson plans and we do not ask them to bring their grade book. We seek to have a conversation about what we are going to see during the lesson.
E.E.	They need to bring the pre-observation instrument that has specific questions such as what can I expect to see when I come in, what is the lesson you are going to be teaching, and what SOL's will you be covering that day, answered. The instrument is electronic and must be sent to me before the pre-observation conference.
F.F.	I do not hold a pre-observation conference. Teachers should provide me with a lesson plan when I arrive to conduct the observation.
G.G.	I am looking to see if the lesson is aligned with the objectives in the learning plan which is provided to teachers during the first week they return to school from the summer.
H.H.	The lesson plan. I may also review their planning form, especially if they are a new teacher. The lesson plan and planning form can be viewed electronically.
I.I.	I ask them to bring in a copy of the last observation they had completed. We will also discuss the lesson plan for the lesson I am going to observe. Teachers are required to turn in their lesson plan at the beginning of the week so I already have it when they arrive.
J.J.	The lesson plan, the pacing guide, if they are using any pre assessments, and any data that supports what I am going to observe during the lesson.
K.K.	We ask teachers to upload their lesson plan into the doc log so we can review it. Our discussion is going to focus on the desired outcomes for the lesson. We also want the teacher to provide us with the learning target for the lesson and how they post the learning target in student friendly terms.

L.L.	I like to have their lesson plan. I like to see any modifications they make for IEP students. If it is a co-taught class, I like to see notes pertaining to their planning with a co-teacher. We collect lesson plans from all teachers on Monday's.
M.M.	For a mini-observation, I do not require them to bring anything unless in a specific case-by-case basis. For longer observations, I will view lesson and unit plans which are submitted and stored electronically.
N.N.	The lesson plan and items to look for are what I require. We will then walk through the lesson plan together and the teacher will tell me what I can expect to see. They will also share their objectives and learning targets for the lesson.

## G.4

Question #4: What type of feedback do you provide to teachers during the pre-observation conference?	
A.A.	I provide specific, written feedback regarding the lesson plans which are posted on the shared drive. I try to provide immediate feedback. I usually work on it Friday night. The feedback is usually in the form of questions. I usually start with something nice then provide a question or two for them to reflect upon.
B.B.	The pre-observation conference is an opportunity for the teacher to walk me through the lesson plan they provided. What they are trying to accomplish in the lesson and how it ties into the bigger picture of the unit is also discussed.
C.C.	If there is something I think might be a concern when I review their lesson plan, we will discuss it. My feedback depends on what they bring to the conference. If I see something unusual in their lesson plan, I might ask them to explain it to me. I like to provide questions and comments during the pre-observation conference but I do not want to make them overly anxious.
D.D.	It is similar to cognitive coaching but we want the teachers to lead the discussion. We try to ask questions that will spur self-reflection rather than us telling the teacher what to do.
E.E.	I inform teachers what they should have prepared for me when I enter the classroom for the observation. I inform them that I will be in the classroom from the beginning bell until the end of class. I also inform them that I will be examining what they do at the beginning and end of the lesson.
F.F.	I do not hold pre-observation conferences.
G.G.	I don't really provide feedback during the first pre-observation conference. We will discuss what they are looking to accomplish during the lesson. During the second pre-observation conference, we would discuss what I observed during the first observation and any areas which were identified for growth.
H.H.	Our teachers create very good lesson plans and I rarely have to provide feedback during the pre-observation conference. When I do provide feedback during the pre-observation conference, it is usually positive.
I.I.	I would provide feedback regarding what I observed during prior walk-through observations. Things I noted or what I heard. I may recognize them for some cool idea or project they did as well. I may ask them some thought provoking questions such as inform me what rigor looks like in your classroom.
J.J.	Generally I do not provide a lot of feedback during the pre-observation conference. I do try to let them know if they are heading in the right direction with the activities they have planned for the lesson. I do not conduct pre-observation conferences with all teachers because I feel the PLC meetings already cover that information

K.K.	We provide feedback on the lesson plan and if it is a new teacher, what is the learning target and how do you know if the students learned it. We like to ask questions that will focus the teacher on identifying if the students learned what you wanted them to learn.
L.L.	I like to find out in their opinion where their students are with their learning. I also want to find out if there are specific glows or grows they want from the observation. I will ask questions such as are there specific things you want me to look for or are there specific things you want to accomplish during this lesson.
M.M.	We provide teachers with specific feedback on a case-by-case basis. We are direct and ask them what they want us to look for. We ask them how what they are teaching ties into our school improvement plan. We want to know strategies for closing the achievement gap and what skills a graduate should possess. We inform them that we are looking for communication, creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking opportunities for students during the lesson.
N.N.	None...other than discussing their lesson plan.

G.5

Question #5: How do you inform teachers about the observation process?	
A.A.	After personnel send the letter in August indicating which teachers are on informal or formal cycle, I then inform the teacher by sending a letter. I then conduct a large faculty meeting and explain the observation process. I then open up discussion. If teachers have a specific question or concern, or if they are a new teacher, I set a meeting date and time.
B.B.	Formal observations are made known in advance. I allow the teachers to set the date and time for their first formal observation. For those on informal cycle, they simply receive a write up of what occurred and the data is shared at the monthly data collection meeting.
C.C.	We meet at the beginning of the year. I call it a “nuts and bolts” conference. Teachers must complete a professional growth plan by mid-October and we will discuss their professional growth plan before the first observation. During that conference, we will discuss the observation process.
D.D.	We provide a window or timeline when we want to conduct observations. We email that information to the teachers and we allow them to select a date within that window. We also allow them to pick the period they want to be observed.
E.E.	Central office sends us a list of teachers who need to be formally observed. I then send an email to those teachers who need to be formally observed that they will be formally observed this year. I also inform them that I or one of the AP’s will be contacting them to schedule the pre-observation conference.
F.F.	I will send an email to the grade level CLT and provide them a window of dates when I will be conducting formal and informal observations. I allow them to pick the period but I encourage them to select an inclusion class.
G.G.	We have an electronic observation and evaluation instrument which automatically marks the date and period during the year when you get observed. In addition, I will send an email to the teacher and ask them when in the next two weeks I can conduct a mini-observation. I am going to try this year not to observe the teacher during the same block.
H.H.	I will personally inform teachers at the September faculty meeting if they are on the formal observation process. Teachers are required to complete a unit plan, one for every nine weeks and it is stressing them out. I allow them to work collaboratively to create the unit plan. I also provide an observation timeline to the staff at the start of each semester.
I.I.	Usually it starts with an email from me to the teacher. Occasionally I will send a follow up email reminding them of the pre-observation conference and observation date.
J.J.	We review the process with all teachers at the beginning of the year. I inform teachers that we are going on a treasure hunt, not a witch hunt. I inform teachers in September which administrator will be conducting their first observation, which must be completed by November 15 <sup>th</sup> . We also encourage teachers to invite us

	to their classroom. I believe a teacher should teach everyday like they are being observed.
K.K.	We have a standard memo we provide to teachers which informs them if they are on summative evaluation. We gather those teachers in the library during the second week of school and inform them who their lead evaluator will be. We provide in writing the timelines for the observation process and then schedule the dates on our calendars.
L.L.	We will send an email, personally tell them, and place a notification in their mailbox if they are on summative evaluation. I am in the hallways and in the classrooms and encourage teachers to ask if they have any questions regarding the observation process. I also encourage teachers to select a non-honors level course they would like me to observe.
M.M.	At the beginning of the year, the administrative team will divide up the departments. We will analyze our school improvement plan and discuss our vision for the school. Early in the school year, we will meet with the CLT, ask them what their goal is for the year, and inform them of the observation process. We then have individual conferences with the teachers and discuss their goals as part of the evaluation process. I also review what an observation will look like, what I am looking for, and how often I will observe their class.
N.N.	We receive a list from human resources who is on summative evaluation. Teachers must be notified by September 20 <sup>th</sup> if they are on formal observation and I usually inform them by email. I then share the observation process with them individually and review the timeline of what needs to be completed during the school year during our summative conference. I will inform them that I need to complete two formal observations during the year.

**G.6**

Question #6: What steps or processes do you follow when conducting a teacher observation?	
A.A.	I use my laptop and script notes into our electronic teacher observation instrument of what I observed during the lesson. I then review the notes before submitting the form electronically to the teacher.
B.B.	It depends on the form and the format. I would script notes into the comment section during the observation then cut and paste the comments into whichever standard they reflected. I used the county teacher observation form and would record my notes electronically on the form. There are certain things I am looking for during the observation. I read the walls. Student work that is visible, are the content learning objectives posted. I am looking at student work and whether they are engaged in the lesson. Specifically I am looking at strategies the teacher is using to increase student engagement.
C.C.	During a 90 minute lesson, I try to be in there as long as I can. There are a lot of important things that occur during the beginning and end of the lesson. If I have to leave the lesson for 15 minutes, I try to leave during the middle of the lesson. Closure is usually the biggest issue I notice during the observation. I believe teachers are getting better at closure but it is an easy one to forget about or let slide.
D.D.	We inform our teachers that we are mainly looking at what the students are doing. The focus has shifted from what the teacher is doing to what the students are doing. I want to see how students are responding to what is occurring in the classroom. I also like to talk to the students during the lesson and find out they can tell me what they are doing and why.
E.E.	I will list the time I am in the classroom, the number of students in the room, student demographics, arrangement of classroom furniture, and I take notes of everything I hear. I try to be present for the opening and closing of the lesson. I also try my best to not say anything to the teacher or students during the observation.
F.F.	I am a silent observer. I do not interact with the teacher or students during the lesson. I record a summary of what I witnessed during the lesson. It is pretty condensed and highly objective. I am looking for strengths and areas I deem as weaknesses. I then meet with teachers the day I conduct the observation when they are available. I try to observe all teachers in a PLC during a certain number of days so I can ensure they are all on the same page and addressing the same objectives. I hand write my notes then provide them to my secretary who will type them up for me in ten minutes. I proof it and then I am ready to meet with that teacher, usually the same day as the observation.
G.G.	The first observation usually lasts the first 40 minutes of the block. During the second observation, I will usually stay the first 60 minutes of the block. During the third observation, I will arrive during the middle of the lesson and stay until the end the block. I try to vary my observation between regular and advanced classes so I can see how teachers are teaching to different populations of students with different needs.
H.H.	After entering the class, I will pull up the electronic observation form on my laptop. I try to be specific and use time stamps to indicate how much how much time was spent on certain strategies during the lesson. I will also spend some time walking around the class and sometimes interact in activities with students. After participating in the lesson, I will go back to the observation form and record my notes. I usually try to be in

	the class for 50 minutes during a 90 minute block.
I.I.	We are transitioning from one electronic observation instrument to another. The instrument is broken into the six strands and has a few places for tick marks and text boxes. I like the old school way of keeping a running transcription of what is happening at different points in the same lesson. I also keep track of which students raise their hand and actively participate in the lesson. By keeping a running transcript of what occurred during the lesson, I am able to have more in-depth conversations with teachers during the post observation conference.
J.J.	I used to bring in my laptop and start typing what I observed. I have gone back to handwriting my notes, which provides me with more flexibility to walk around the classroom and participate in the lesson with the students. While I am in the classroom, I am looking for rapport and climate as well as if the SOL objective is posted on the board, if student work is displayed, student-teacher interactions, and what assessments the teacher is using. I do not collect lesson plans and I allow teachers to use whatever lesson plan template they want as long as it contains the elements I want to see in the lesson.
K.K.	During a mini-observation, we are usually in the classroom for 15 minutes and looking at a particular standard. I always record the learning target for the day, which is a requirement for our teachers. I record my observations regarding the co-teaching since 90% of our regular education classes are co-taught due to our high number of ELL students. We record what we see the students doing and if the students appeared actively engaged in the lesson. I usually hand write what I saw during the mini-observation and then return to my office and analyze what I wrote. I will then complete the electronic observation instrument. If I am making a judgment statement, I provide the evidence in writing on the observation form. During the mini's, I am taking notes by hand instead of using the laptop. During longer formal observations, I will take my laptop into the classroom and record notes. I will then record what I observed in each particular standard.
L.L.	I like to talk to students and ask them questions such as, "Tell me how this is relevant to your life" or "Where do you see this being used in the future." I am looking for the teacher to share with the students how what they are learning relates to and impacts their life. Once a student identifies a real world connection, they are more apt to become engaged in what they are learning. I do not just sit in the back of the classroom silently with a clipboard and write. When I am conducting a formal observation, I am in the classroom for the entire block.
M.M.	I will enter the classroom and identify how I can participate with the students. I will ask them what they are learning today and how they are learning. The student discussions are probably the most valuable part of the observation process. I am also looking for more general things such as the furniture arrangement, if students are asking questions or engaged in the lesson. I also ask myself if I see evidence that the teacher is trying to close the achievement gap or if they are just targeting our top tier students.
N.N.	Usually I'm just sitting in the back of the classroom. I am writing down what is posted on the blackboard, what the students are doing, and what the teacher is doing. I will time stamp when certain events or strategies occurred during the lesson. I will also spend some time talking with the students and asking them if they can explain to me what they are doing and why they are doing it. I will then return to my seat and continue taking notes about what is occurring during the lesson.

G.7

Question #7: What are the differences between the formal observation instrument and the classroom walk-through observation instrument utilized in your school division?	
A.A.	The walk through instrument is targeted towards the needs of our school while the observation form targets the needs of the teacher. The county observation form is like an umbrella for our walk through form
B.B.	The observation instrument looks similar to the formal evaluation instrument. We use two different walk through forms. One is the county walk through form that has similar elements to the observation form. It is much more specific than the observation form. The second walk through form we use is My Learning Walks which focuses specifically on whether students are actively engaged or passively engaged in the lesson.
C.C.	We use the same instrument for walk throughs as we do for observations. I will place a "W" in the box to indicate that a walk through was conducted. I am most interested in looking for good instruction occurring. We specifically track the progress of our ELL students and how well we teach them. We want to see the instructional vocabulary on the board, are the language goals posted somewhere. I will record that information regardless if it is during a walk through or an observation.
D.D.	We have a standard form we use for all observations. As a SIOP school, we also use the sheltered instruction observation protocol as part of our observation. When completing a walk through, we may adjust the SIOP protocol we are using. If we are completing a formal observation, we will use the county observation form. We do not have a specific walk through instrument.
E.E.	During a walk through, I may stay in the class for 3-5 minutes. I don't always provide feedback following a walk through. I may leave a quick note on a note card such as "good job" or "I enjoyed what I saw." The division has a walk through tool we could use but we are not required.
F.F.	During a formal observation, we use an electronic observation tool. I prefer to provide formal feedback, not just use the checklist provided. I would rather script my feedback during an observation. When I am conducting a walk through, I will use post-it notes. I will record my comments on the post-it note and then leave it on the teacher's desk. I do not want to interrupt during a walk through since I am only in the classroom for 3-8 minutes. Walk-through observations are not evaluative.
G.G.	Our school division has not provided us a specific form to conduct walk-through observations. We have created a chart where we record what it is we are looking for during a walk-through observation such as use of instructional technology or use of formative assessments. Each walk through begins with what we are looking for which are typically the three things we feel are most important to see during a lesson.
H.H.	This year, our school division has added a walk through template to our electronic observation instrument. We have taken the walk through template and placed it as a Google doc. We are able to make minor tweaks to the walk through instrument but we are looking for certain items such as objectives posted on the board, type of instruction occurring, level of Bloom's Taxonomy, and use of 21 <sup>st</sup> Century skills. We use the observation tool provided to us by the county for formal observations but can tweak the walk through instrument we use in Google docs.

I.I.	Really it is just the length of the form. We have added a few tick boxes to our walk through form. We use our laptops or iPads when we are conducting a walk through and are able to provide immediate feedback to teachers at the conclusion of a walk through.
J.J.	The school division does not have a universal walk through form. We have created our own which we use. The two non-negotiable we have are the lesson plan and the objectives must be posted on the board. The walk through instrument is not long and is pretty much open-ended. Walk-through observations last between 5-10 minutes and I do not always provide feedback. I will try to hit all the teachers teaching a particular subject on the same day or during the same period so I can do a comparison. I may leave a handwritten note for the teacher following a walk through if I do not have my iPad with me to send the feedback electronically. I use the walk through to gather bits and pieces of information, not for conferencing afterwards.
K.K.	There is no division walk through form. Each school has created their own. During a walk through, we are looking for specific things that are a specific focus for our school such as critical thinking, questioning strategies, and student engagement. The walk through form is in a Google doc and we are basically acknowledging what we saw when we were in the classroom. During walk-through observations we are checking a box and then providing an example. Following a walk through, we will print the form and provide it to the teacher. We do not need to conference afterward and walk-through observations typically last no more than 10 minutes
L.L.	There is not a tremendous difference. Both forms cover the seven standards. The formal observation form allows you more leeway when providing comments. The walk through form is for providing a quick snapshot of what is occurring during the lesson. Walk-through observations last no longer than 15 minutes and there might be things on the form that I do not mark off, not because the teacher doesn't do them, but because I did not see them while I was in the classroom. This is a difficult hurdle for teachers to overcome when they receive feedback from a walk through. The formal observation form provides you with more room to make comments. Both observation forms are electronic and cover the same standards.
M.M.	For evaluation purposes, the only thing we use is the formal observation form. We used to have a walk through form but since we are still adjusting to the new evaluation system, we do not use a standard walk through form. During a walk through, I may participate during the class, solve a few problems, and interact with the teacher. I used to leave a sticky note with a comment or two but I have stopped doing that as well. I prefer to have a face-to-face conversation with the teacher regarding what I saw. I am usually trying to find something positive during the walk through and may send them an email. Walk-through observations are very informal while the formal observation form is used for evaluation.
N.N.	The observation instrument is used division wide while the walk through instrument has been develop within our building. The format is different. The formal observation form allows for more open ended comments and is geared towards the individual teacher and how they are meeting five of the seven standards. The walk through instrument has more checkboxes and we are using the walk-through observations to gather data we can share with staff. Both the walk through and formal observation form are based on the state standards and we try to remain consistent with what we are looking for.

G.8

Question #8: What steps or processes do you follow when conducting a classroom walk-through observation?	
A.A.	I just pop in. I schedule the walk-through observations myself and try to accomplish five a day if my goal is 100 for the month. I do my best to get in the classroom. Teachers do not typically know that I am coming. The administrative team and deans are also responsible for conducting walk-through observations.
B.B.	Walk-through observations are scripted. We follow The Learning Walks protocol from the University of Pittsburgh. The staff is walking with us when we conduct walk-through observations. The staff was trained in the protocol before we conduct a walk through. There are four roles, one for each team member conducting the walk through. We have a person who is the timekeeper, another person who talks to students, another person who reads the walls, and one person who looks at student work. During the walk through, all roles relate back to student engagement.
C.C.	Usually I am in the class for no more than 15 minutes. I will time stamp when I enter and when I leave. Primarily I am looking for student engagement, if students know the objective for the lesson, what the goal is for the lesson. The students should know what they should be learning and what is expected from them. I am also looking at what type of instruction the teachers are providing. If students want to be in your class and enjoy being in your class, they are ready to learn.
D.D.	During the first few weeks of school the administrative team will conduct walk-through observations together then discuss what we saw and try to reach some type of consensus on what we are seeing. During the second month of school, we begin instructional rounds which include teams of teachers conducting walk-through observations with a member of administration. We will then have a follow up conference regarding what we saw. Instructional rounds are more uplifting than anything and are positive.
E.E.	Walk-through observations are a surprise visit. I just go into class and observe. I will just slip in and slip out. Usually I just stand at the door. The teachers may or may not receive feedback. It depends on what I saw.
F.F.	Walk-through observations are non-evaluative. I am usually in the classroom for 3-8 minutes and I do not think it provides a solid picture of what is occurring in the classroom which is why they are non-evaluative. I may leave a post-it note on the teacher's desk with a positive comment. I do not want to interrupt the flow of the lesson.
G.G.	I am usually in the classroom for 5-10 minutes. Teachers are aware of when we will be conducting a walk through and we try to visit all teachers who teach the same grade level subject such as math 8 to see if they have been planning together, if they are using common assessments, and implementing what they agree to implement in their lessons. A walk through can be hit or miss and we let the teachers know that. We also do not want to see a dog and pony show.
H.H.	The blank walk through template is shared with the staff early in the year. Notes from the walk through are immediately shared with teachers. We send the notes electronically. After analyzing the data from the walk-through observations, we will share what we are seeing at a faculty meeting.

I.I.	The admin team divides the faculty into four quarters. Each quarter, every teacher will have a different administrator conduct a walk through. A teacher will receive four walk-through observations a year minimum. The teacher receives feedback following the walk through. During walk-through observations, we want to be seen as a coach or mentor which is why walk-through observations are not used as evaluative measures. We provide feedback in paper form since we do not have iPads.
J.J.	The walk through will typically last 5-10 minutes. I try to complete a walk through on all teachers who teach the same grade level subject as a comparison to what it is I am seeing. I do not always provide feedback. Only if I see something outstanding or something that is unacceptable. Walk-through observations provide me with a snapshot of what is occurring in the classroom.
K.K.	Since we have a form and a template we created, we just try to fill out the form and record what we saw related to a specific focus area such as student engagement. Once the form is completed, we provide it to the teacher. Walk-through observations are just a quick snapshot of what we saw during our 10 minutes in the classroom. I type my notes on my laptop and then print the form with the notes for the teacher.
L.L.	I pretty much do the same thing I would do during an observation. I will record the time and what I see the students doing. During the week, I schedule one block each day when I do nothing but observations and walk-through observations. If my walk through is 3-4 minutes, I may leave a comment on a sticky note for the teacher.
M.M.	I will go into the class for 5-10 minutes and observe. I may send an email to the teacher with feedback. Walk-through observations are very informal. We do not have a walk through form and I have stopped leaving sticky notes. I have notice teachers hold onto the email I send them and place it in their portfolio. I will also conduct follow up face-to-face meetings with the teacher if I saw something amazing or concerning.
N.N.	Our walk through template is in Google docs. I take my iPad into the classroom and I am usually in there for 15 minutes. I will talk with students and look for certain items. I usually spend five minutes interacting with students and the rest of the time taking notes and recording what I saw.

**G.9**

Question #9: Are teachers made aware of when a classroom walk-through observation would be conducted? If so, how was the schedule of classroom walk-through observations communicated to them?	
A.A.	Teachers do not typically know when a walk through is going to be conducted. We have a schedule for the entire administrative team to follow. We try to rotate the schedule so we are not seeing the same teacher during the same block of time for every walk through.
B.B.	Yes. We inform the teachers one week ahead of time that we are going to be conducting walk-through observations on a specific day. We also tell the students when we will be conducting walk-through observations. If we conduct walk-through observations frequently enough, the teachers get used to us visiting their classroom and do not feel like they need to give us a “dog and pony show” when we walk in. The lens is always the student. We follow a ten minute walk through model and when the team leaves, we immediately meet and discuss what we saw. There are no negatives, no positives, only what we observed.
C.C.	For walk-through observations, I just pop in. If I have 45 minutes until the next thing I have to do, I will just start visiting classrooms.
D.D.	Nope
E.E.	No...walk-through observations are just a surprise visit. I am usually in the hallways and will just slip in and slip out of classrooms.
F.F.	No. Occasionally if central office personnel, school board members, or superintendent are going to be in the building I will inform the staff.
G.G.	Yes. The assistant principals and I keep a calendar of which classrooms we have visited. Before conducting a walk through, I will send an email to the grade level teachers within the CLT and inform them that I will be conducting walk-through observations on a certain day. What we would like to do this year is calibrate what we see by conducting walk-through observations on the same teacher and then meet afterward and discuss what we saw.
H.H.	No. Teachers are aware that we have zones which we are responsible for. Along with our zone responsibility is conducting walk-through observations. Every month we rotate which zone we will observe. Teachers will not know which day a walk through will be conducted but they do know which administrator would be conducting the walk through. Our goal is to complete at least two walk-through observations a day.
I.I.	Nope. We just walk in. Teachers know we will conduct walk-through observations and most are fine and comfortable during a walk through. We are usually in the classroom between 5-10 minutes for a walk through.

J.J.	Generally no. I have informed teachers that this year we will be conducting walk-through observations in general education, inclusion classes more than in our honors or gifted classes. I believe in doing little pop-in visits to see what is going on. We don't schedule walk-through observations as an administrative team unless we have a concern about a teacher.
K.K.	No. We do not have the big group walk-through observations. I will just pop-in and conduct the walk through for about 10 minutes. In order to ensure we are getting into all classrooms, as an admin team, we will discuss who we saw and who we need to see.
L.L.	No. I want teachers to be on their "A" game all the time. I do not want to see a dog and pony show. When I stop by for a walk through, it is what it is.
M.M.	Nope. I do not have a set schedule for pop-ins. My main focus is on conducting mini-observations. I do however try to complete at least one walk through a day.
N.N.	No. Teachers are aware we could come through for a walk through at any time. The administrative team has a schedule we follow for conducting walk-through observations but it is not shared with the teachers.

**G.10**

Question #10: What steps or processes do you follow after conducting a teacher observation?	
A.A.	Using the county teacher observation form allows teachers to view the comments immediately. I do not necessarily conduct a post observation conference. The teachers and I can comment back and forth electronically. If there was an area of concern or if I had a question, then I would schedule a post observation conference with the teacher
B.B.	There is feedback coming to the teacher. There is always written feedback and my expectation at the beginning of the year was to have the written feedback to the teacher within a week. However, I try to provide the written feedback during the next block or within the same day. Second, if the teacher is on formal observation, there is always a follow up conference where we talk about the observation. If the teacher is on informal, we may email each other back and forth with comments.
C.C.	I will just write up what I observed, we do not script anymore. I will write what I saw the students doing. I do not provide the teacher with the observation notes ahead of our post observation meeting, usually due to timing. I try to include formulate questions the teachers will answer when we meet about the lesson.
D.D.	Whether it is an informal or formal observation, there is a conference after the observation. I will try to engage in cognitive coaching, asking the teacher how they felt about the lesson, do you think students met the learning targets, how do you know. We ask the teachers to bring a four-square reflection form with them to the post observation conference which asks teachers to identify what went well during the lesson, what did you do to ensure the lesson went well, what didn't go so well, and what would you do differently. Teachers know to have the self-reflection form completed before they come to the post observation conference.
E.E.	I will send an email message to the teacher indicating when they should see me to discuss the observation. On the day of the post observation conference, I will ask the teacher how they felt the lesson went. Our discussion will go from there. I will inform the teacher what I saw, areas for improvement, and if it went well I tell them that as well. The post observation conference usually lasts 20 minutes.
F.F.	I will invite the teacher to the post observation conference. I ask them to tell me what they liked about the lesson or what they believe they did particularly well regarding those items I mentioned I would be looking for. Typically their responses will guide me where I want the discussion to go. Since our observation instrument is electronically submitted, the teacher can see the comments immediately and then will sign where required electronically. Even though they receive it electronically, I will still have our office manager place a paper copy in their mailbox.
G.G.	I prefer to script my notes during the observation then refine what I type into the electronic observation instrument. Before I meet with the teacher, they are able to view my notes and reflect on my comments. When we meet for the post observation conference, I will ask them what they thought went well, two things they would adjust, just to get at the reflection piece. I will then share what I saw and make recommendations if necessary.

H.H.	Usually I conduct the post observation conference within two days of the observation. Before I leave work on the day of the observation, I will review what I wrote in the observation and make tweaks if I need to. I do not want to have misspellings or grammatical mistakes. If I notice something in italics, this alerts me to something I want to discuss with the teacher during the post observation conference.
I.I.	First I will go back and review what I transcribed and ensure I have the correct boxes ticked off. I will then add comments to the six strands on the observation form. When I click submit on the electronic observation instrument, the teacher can see my observation notes immediately. I will then add a note indicating the date and time for our post observation conference. The amount of time I spend with the teacher depends on the observation. Sometimes we are finished in five minutes. If there were concerns, I may schedule a longer appointment with that teacher at the end of the day.
J.J.	Sometimes I will conference with the teacher before I have typed my observation notes. Sometimes we meet after I have typed my notes. I always have a sit down, fact-to-face conference with the teacher following an observation. The length of the conference can vary depending on what I observed.
K.K.	I will meet with the teacher and then provide them with some feedback. I will review the observation form and notes with them and share my recommendations. I try to provide the teacher with specific things they should try to incorporate into their lessons during our post observation conference.
L.L.	I meet with the teacher and we will basically review the observation notes together. I will ask them to tell me what they thought went well and they thought was a challenge during the lesson and if they were comfortable teaching the content they were teaching during the observation. I want to determine if their responses match my comments. We will then review the seven standards on the observation form and finally I have the teacher sign the observation form.
M.M.	I will establish a time to meet with the teacher and before we meet, I will drop off my comments for the specific standard I observed. When we meet, I will start asking questions such as, "How do you think the lesson went" or "Did you feel the students learned the material." After asking those leading questions, I will go back and share with them what I saw. The post observation conference is more like a joint exploration instead of me telling the teacher you did this right or you did this wrong. After the exploration, I will encourage the teacher to brainstorm ideas or strategies they could use next time.
N.N.	I will try to organize my notes from the observation before I place them in the electronic observation tool. My goal is to upload my notes into the tool before I meet with the teacher which is usually within 24 hours of the observation. Sometimes it happens and sometimes it doesn't but I try. Teachers are able to review my notes in the observation template before we meet. I always ask them how they felt the lesson went and if they could go back and change something, what would they change. We will then review the post observation agenda. The teacher does not have to have the post observation agenda completed when we meet but it does provide a framework for our meeting and allows the teacher to be engaged in a self reflective conversation.

**G.11**

Question #11: What type of feedback do you provide to teachers during the post observation conference?	
A.A.	We review the questions posed on the observation form. It is very reflective. Questions such as “What do you think went well” or “What are some things you think you could improve” and “How can I help you with that?” Some teachers may be uncomfortable answering some of those questions so I may be more direct with them. It depends on the person if they are self-reflective or if I have to be more direct.
B.B.	There is always written feedback. There are comments for each standard and I am looking at the indicators for each standard and I mark the ones which I observed. I will sometimes write a paragraph under each standard. There is specific feedback about specific pieces of the learning environment. In the overall comment box, I will list the strengths of the lesson and provide some areas for growth or just something for them to think about.
C.C.	We will talk about individual students and their data regarding student progress. I may ask them why they spent the amount of time they did on a certain part of the lesson. I want the teachers to grow from the observation and will ask them some self reflective questions. We will also discuss any students that concern them and what interventions they have put into place for these students. I will ask the teacher if they need an instructional resources or suggestions. I also like to try to have teachers involved in some type of leadership activities.
D.D.	I use cognitive coaching but it may vary from teacher to teacher. Some teachers need a more collaborative approach while other teachers need a more direct approach.
E.E.	We will discuss the observation. I ask them how they felt the lesson went. We take it from there. I may make some suggestions if there are areas for improvement. I want to make sure we agree on the same items. I may also ask the teacher to provide me with answers to questions I may have jotted down during the observation such as why did you do this or why didn’t you do this. If there is something they need to work on, I will make the suggestion and if it is something good, I will encourage them to share the strategy with their team members.
F.F.	I will begin by asking them how they felt the lesson went in regards to the things I listed I would be looking for. After they explain what they felt went well, I will ask them if there is anything they would do differently or think they could improve. I typically like to use questioning to guide areas they were weaker. Conversations that focus on the observation are usually the most beneficial.
G.G.	We want to provide teachers with feedback that is meaningful and actionable. We will discuss student engagement, best practices, and use of resources. I strive to provide feedback within 48 hours of the observation. During the conference I will ask them to tell me what went well, what they would like to adjust or do differently. I want my feedback to be actionable, specific, and timely.

H.H.	If I noted something in italics, then it is an item I want to discuss with the teacher during our post observation conference. Mainly my feedback consists of a dialogue between myself and the teacher about what I observed in the classroom.
I.I.	I begin by reading off the transcript of what I recorded, pointing out what they did during the lesson. I believe in providing praise first and then addressing any areas of concern. I try to hit my bullet points and keep the conversation as clinical as possible. I will review each standard. I also have a copy of the observation notes for them when they arrive. I really focus on six standards that can be observed. If it was a great observation and no areas of concern, the teacher will arrive, we may talk for a few minutes, they sign the observation form then leave. If there were areas of concern, then the conference will take a little longer. I want to provide the teacher with feedback that is meaningful to them.
J.J.	As soon as I type in my notes, the teachers can see it using the electronic observation instrument we use. I usually begin with some type of open ended question to gain from them how they felt the lesson went. I try to focus on positives and ask them if there is anything I can do for them. Mainly the conference is an open dialogue with the teacher. I will also ask the teacher if they feel there was anything I missed during the observation that they would like for me to include in my notes.
K.K.	I try to be very specific with my feedback. We don't want to leave the teacher guessing. I will inform the teacher what resources are available to them. Professional resources such as instructional coach, colleague, or CLT members. I try to provide specific things they should try to incorporate into their lessons.
L.L.	I begin by asking teachers how they felt the lesson went. I want to hear from the teachers because there might be some things I may not have been aware of during the lesson such as a new student who was just added to class. I have the instrument pre filled before I meet with the teacher but if something pops up during our discussion, I will make the adjustment. Nothing is final until we have the post observation conference. Teachers do not see the observation notes until we meet because I want to discuss the observation with them before placing it in their mailbox so there are no surprises. We use an electronic observation template but teachers do not see the notes until our conference.
M.M.	We provide written feedback on the form which is provided to us by the school division. Sometimes I may change what I initially wrote based on the conversation I have with the teacher during the conference. However, I do not provide the written feedback to the teacher until after our conference. I recognize there are things that are taught before I walk into the classroom and when I speak with the teacher, they are able to provide me with some background knowledge. I will provide my reflections from the lesson and what I saw.
N.N.	We will review the notes I took during the observation. I will first ask them how they felt the lesson went before I provide them with my feedback. We then follow the post observation agenda. I like for the post observation agenda to consist of talking points. I just want the teacher to come in and engage in a self reflection conversation.

**G.12**

Question #12: How long does it take you to provide feedback to teachers following a formal observation?	
A.A.	Usually teachers receive the feedback from the observation the very next day.
B.B.	My goal is 24 hours. We use our iPads during the observation to take notes. The electronic form can be sent to the teachers immediately. I do not want the observations to hang over my head. I rip it. It may take longer if you have to provide a lot of constructive feedback to a teacher who may be struggling. In those cases, I try to be thoughtful about what I am including in the observation form.
C.C.	We are told to have them completed in five days. The longer between the observation and post conference, the less valuable it becomes. I try to provide feedback within five days of the observation.
D.D.	I try to provide feedback the following day. Teachers will have a written copy of my notes the same day as the observation and we will meet the day after the observation. Usually our post observation conference lasts 30 minutes.
E.E.	It probably takes me a week to provide feedback. I hate that it takes me that long and it is a goal for me this year to provide the feedback in a timely manner. We have an electronic form but I opt to write out my notes and then go back and enter the information on the form. We then have to submit our observations to the district electronically.
F.F.	I usually meet with teachers and discuss my observation notes the same day as the observation. If the observation is during the last block of the day, I will meet with the teacher first thing in the morning. After the observation, I place my notes on my secretary's desk and she will then type them up.
G.G.	My goal is to provide feedback within 48 hours. Only the assistant principals and I can conduct observations. We will meet Monday morning and map out what observations we have to complete during the week and when we have to conference with the teachers. We help each other out with duties when one is engaged in observations.
H.H.	Typically I meet with the teacher within two days of the observation. I will share my notes from the observation and then we have a dialogue. I choose to share the notes with the teacher when they walk in for the post observation conference. I could provide the notes to them electronically before the conference but I do not want the teacher to become fixated on what I typed. I will ask them how they felt the lesson went and this usually begins our dialogue.
I.I.	I try to provide feedback to the teacher within 48 hours. If the teacher is strong, our post ob conference may only last 5 minutes. If there were any concerns or if it was a provisional teacher, the post ob conference may last 30-40 minutes.

J.J.	Usually it is between 3-5 days. If it extends beyond 5 days, then the feedback is no longer meaningful. Since I hand write my notes first, it takes me a little more time to format. Sometimes I will pull the teacher in and talk about the observation before I type up the notes. I tend to write a lot of notes during an observation.
K.K.	Usually I meet with the teacher one or two days after the observation. The post observation conference date is set when I send them the email regarding the observation process.
L.L.	I try to provide written feedback to them within 48 hours. I try to provide them with my observation notes the same day if possible. The longer without providing feedback, the more likely the teacher will forget what happened.
M.M.	Sometimes I will conduct the post observation conference the same day but I try to complete the post ob within 48 hours. I strive for a two day turn-around. Teachers appreciate it more when the feedback is presented to them sooner than later. Usually it takes me 30-60 minutes to draft my observation notes following a mini-observation. On average, my post observation conferences last somewhere between 15-20 minutes but could be longer on a case-by-case basis.
N.N.	I will provide verbal feedback to the teacher within 24 hours. The written feedback may be 3-4 days after the observation.

**G.13**

Question #13: How long does it take you to provide feedback to teachers following a classroom walk-through observation?	
A.A.	I usually provide it on the spot. Sometimes I may take an extra ten minutes outside the classroom if I conducted a walk through at the end of the block. Back the feedback is usually immediate.
B.B.	Walk-through observations are non evaluative and they are non-individual. Teachers do not receive the document back to them. It goes into a Google doc. After a week, I then send a feedback letter to the staff which includes evidence we noticed during the walk-through observations. We also ask questions about what we can do better. One week after receiving the letter, we then conduct a debriefing session at a faculty meeting. The debriefing session is always led by a teacher. The walk through data is all about staff development. Our three areas of focus were co-teaching, strategies for active student engagement, and posting of clear learning targets.
C.C.	Walk-through observations are the same day through email. I try to provide a copy of my notes to the teacher and try to include something positive. If they have a question about something I wrote, they are more than welcome to see me. We do not need to have a sit down meeting after a walk through. Sometimes I will place a copy of my notes in their mailbox or sometimes I may discuss what I observed with them in the hallway. Walk-through observations are very informal.
D.D.	When I leave the door, my notes appear on their computer. We utilize a division wide walk through form which can be completed and sent electronically to the teacher. Usually our walk-through observations last 5-10 minutes and there are not a lot of notes I share but I try to keep it positive.
E.E.	Usually it is the same day. It may be a brief verbal conversation. I also try to write notes immediately after the walk through and provide the teacher with feedback. If I leave a note, I notice teachers will place it in their instructional binder.
F.F.	If I am using post-it notes, the feedback is immediate, before I leave the classroom. If I see the teacher in the hallway, I will also provide positive praise and feedback. I try to make my comments specific to what I saw in class and positive.
G.G.	We do not provide feedback following a walk through. The walk through is more for us to gain a sense of whether the teacher is on point teaching the curriculum and for the administrative team to compare notes. It is too short of a time period to provide any substantial feedback unless we see something that is glaring.
H.H.	I send the feedback from the walk through to the teacher electronically. Usually when I leave the classroom I have provided the feedback.
I.I.	We used to use a triplicate form for walk-through observations and I would leave a copy in the classroom for the teacher. Now with the electronic walk through form, I try to send my feedback before I leave the classroom. Unless I see something that is incredibly concerning, they are going to receive a smiley face email informing them that they did a great job. The walk through process should be relatively quick. I like to see

	what the students are doing in the classroom and walk-through observations are great for that information.
J.J.	Sometimes I do not provide feedback following a walk through. I might tell them it was a good class or leave a little note. Once I have been in the classroom a few times, I will have an informal conversation with the teacher during their planning or in the hallway. One of our focus areas for this year is co-teaching so we try to conduct walk-through observations in those co-taught classes. We want to see what co-teaching model is being used.
K.K.	During a walk through, we are providing feedback the same day. We send the form electronically to the teacher and attempt to have a brief follow up conversation.
L.L.	The feedback is provided pretty quickly. We strive for the 48 hour window but usually I chat with the teacher in the hallway following the walk through if they are free. I prefer to meet informally with the teacher following a walk through instead of sticking the notes from the walk through in their mailbox.
M.M.	Usually less than five minutes after I leave the class I am sending the teacher an email. I will then try to follow up with them later. I try to keep the feedback positive. Teachers seem to like receiving an email after I have conducted a walk through. I keep track of which classrooms I visited and what was going on when I walked in.
N.N.	The feedback is immediate because the walk through form is in Google docs. I am typing my notes while I am in the classroom. Before I leave, I press send and my notes are sent to the teacher. If I need to have a face-to-face conversation with the teacher, I include "See me by this date to discuss..." when I send my notes.

## G.14

Question #14: What do you do with the data collected following a formal observation or classroom walk-through observation?	
A.A.	The walk through data is reviewed at faculty meetings. We take the information contained in the Google doc and then post the grid for all teachers to see. Our faculty meetings are based in professional development. We share the data from walk-through observations with the staff and point out areas in which we grew or got better. Sometimes I have to remind teachers about posting their content language objectives especially following time off from school. During walk-through observations we only focus on four things: co-teaching; higher level thinking questions; active student engagement; and content language objectives.
B.B.	We share the data with the entire staff. We will discuss the data and then we look for ways to build our staff development based on the data we obtain from our walk-through observations.
C.C.	We will use the data to identify any focus areas or staff development needs. At our administrative meetings we would discuss who we observed, what did we see, and did we see any issues. If we noticed some trends in the building as a whole, then we may mention it at a PLC or faculty meeting. Sometimes bad results are good results if we learn from them. If I see an area of concern such as noticing a lot of “drill and kill” in the classroom, I may mention it in the weekly newsletter I send out to staff. I address the data, what we observed, in that way but not naming any teacher individually in front of the staff.
D.D.	Information is collected in our professional growth plan. Trends and data are shared during the instructional rounds process in which they are provided by the teachers to each other. We do have certain non-negotiable which teachers are aware such as lesson plans should be on your desk, learning objectives should be posted on the board, and when I walk into the classroom, the teacher will stop-drop-present so I know where they are in the lesson
E.E.	We file our observation notes internally. The teacher receives a copy of the notes and I keep a copy. I do not share what I observed with the faculty. Only with the individual.
F.F.	I am not collecting any data formally. I guess informally I will engage in conversations with the teacher following a walk through. Last year we saw too many teachers guiding students through Cornell Note Taking. This year we wanted to focus on gradually releasing control so students were responsible for recording notes following the Cornell Note Taking method. If we see a trend during our observations and walk-through observations, we will share the information with the whole staff and make it a focus. I will then disseminate the date to the instructional leadership team. I guess I am collecting data from observations and walk-through observations...I didn't know I was.
G.G.	Following an observation, the data is going to be shared with the individual teacher. If I see the same thing in three different lessons I observed, I will meet with the PLC and discuss it with them. If it pertains to only one teacher, I will store that information in the back of my mind and maybe observe this teacher more often. When it is a walk through, I will share what I thought was good with the teacher or with the PLC.

H.H.	The observation data is between me and the individual teacher. The walk through data is shared with teachers during a faculty meeting each quarter. At the faculty meeting, we may do a little data check such as with Bloom's Taxonomy. During the faculty meeting we will mention what we observed during the walk-through observations, provide praise, and suggestions.
I.I.	I keep a spreadsheet and will mark off when we observed them or met with them. If there is an area of concern following an observation, we will mark that as well. During our weekly administrative meetings, I will share what I observed with my assistant principals and they will share what they observed with me. Sometimes there is no connection between what the teacher thinks and the reality of what really occurred in the classroom. This is one of the reasons why all four administrators conduct at least one walk through on every teacher during the year.
J.J.	I have a notebook that I keep my formal notes in from an observation. I have a place that I keep formal notes if the teacher is doing something particularly well or if there is an area they can work on. I also use the notebook to identify teachers I will send a note or letter over the summer and cite specific examples of exceptional practices I observed during the past school year. I may also share some of those exceptional practices I witnessed during professional development or in team meetings.
K.K.	The data and notes will go into the teacher's file following an observation. Following walk-through observations, we provide feedback to the teacher. We have also used the data from our walk-through observations to reflect with the professional development committee on what might be areas of focus for professional development. For example, we noticed many teachers struggling with co-teaching so we made that a focus for professional development last year.
L.L.	If it is something that I am finding within the whole school, then I would do a school wide professional development session on it. My faculty meetings focus on professional development. We might have four or five professional development things planned for the year. We have certain non negotiable such as learning objectives will be posted on the board. I do not address the entire staff because four people are not doing something. I would speak with those four teachers individually. I do not think it is good for staff morale to address the entire faculty when a situation only pertains to four or five individuals.
M.M.	We electronically store the observation forms and as an admin team, we will discuss what we are seeing in the classroom with specific teachers. If we are seeing something great, then it is something we will highlight at a faculty meeting. We may even ask the teacher to present it to the whole staff so they feel recognized. If there is a concern, then we ask how we can help. We will attempt to individually tailor what we are doing to support that teacher who is experiencing difficulty. We tailor our data to the individual teacher if there is room for improvement.
N.N.	We do not collect data from observations. I collect data from walk-through observations then pull that data from Google docs and then place it into an excel spreadsheet. I can then create charts and share information with the entire staff as to what we saw such as how many classrooms had the learning targets posted or how many classrooms had students actively engaged in the lesson. This data from walk-through observations is shared with teachers at faculty meetings. This allows us to provide praise or share what we expect to see in the future. The data used to be shared weekly with the teachers electronically but now we share the data monthly during our faculty meetings.

**G.15**

Question #15: Based on the data, what steps could you take to make the supervisory experience more beneficial for the teachers?	
A.A.	This was a quirky year due to the snow days. The snow days disrupted our walk through schedule and we were never able to catch back up. I did not want to walk into a teacher’s classroom and observe them the first day back after a snow day and it played havoc with our schedule for walk-through observations and formal observations. We had a total of 14 snow days last year.
B.B.	I find the forms to be very constricting. They forms are not super feedback friendly and are not very flexible. I could have used other walk through forms which I had used in the past but I wanted to use what the county provided to me. The sheer volume regarding the number of observations I was responsible for made authentic feedback difficult.
C.C.	The most important thing is to norm the practices of the administrative team. I am thinking about the three of us conducting some common observations and walk-through observations then comparing notes about what we saw. I think it is beneficial to the teachers if they know they will be observed and supervised in a similar fashion by the admin team. Following an observation, I try to make the conversation as comfortable as I can for the teacher. I don’t get caught up in the terminology but I want to see good teaching however you call it. I am trying to do better at cognitive coaching. When a teacher comes to me with a problem or concern, I want to talk the teacher through it so they understand what the key issues are so they can make a judgment on how to solve that problem.
D.D.	I would like to be allowed to be the principal. Allow me to be an instructional leader. I do not want to be overwhelmed with the other minutia I am made to do. My supervisor told me earlier this year that anymore, a principal’s job really isn’t doable. There is just too much that is expected.
E.E.	I need to provide feedback in a timely manner following an observation. I probably need to stop writing so much and just highlight certain areas. It is difficult for me to write just one word or phrase. I want to create a very clear picture of what I see during an observation. I want to try to meet with teachers the same day as the walk through. I also want to meet with the teacher and review the written observation during our post observation conference within two or three days of the observation.
F.F.	I would like to think what I am doing right now is beneficial to others. I feel I am giving teachers every opportunity to know what is expected from them. When I ask teachers what I can do to help them be more successful, it is wide open for discussion. I want to be aware of what their issues are so I can assist.
G.G.	I would like to have formative walk-through observations shared or debriefed more frequently at PLC meetings. I would also like to provide the opportunity for my AP’s to observe the observation process at another building. Whether it is a walk through or observation and have other AP’s come here. I do not think we allow our AP’s to get out enough to see what is happening at other schools.

H.H.	A book on different data collection tools would be very beneficial. A book on how principal's collect data. I end up creating my own tools. Our teachers need data so they can grow. Some data points could be how much wait-time to provide following a question, student engagement, or students working with technology. I believe our division has their act together with the standards so it is easy for administrators to conduct walk-through observations and formal observations that are tied to the standards.
I.I.	Honestly, I wish I could have every teacher go with me on an observation so they can see what we are looking for. Some teachers only want the glow portion and not the grow portion. When peers are observing each other, it is very powerful. For me the reflection part following an observation or learning walk is a powerful piece for teachers who observed their peers. It would be great for teachers to video themselves teaching a lesson and then view the video but I feel the teachers would be very self-conscious.
J.J.	What we have decided to do as a group of four administrators was to block out times during the day for observations and have the other administrators cover discipline or duties during that time. We have given ourselves quotas of how many walk-through observations we want to complete in a week but we have not reserved time for them. It is important to conduct an observation or walk through without be bothered or interrupted. If a discipline incident arises, one of the other AP's will step in if the AP in charge of that grade level is conducting an observation.
K.K.	The amount of time we spend in the classroom and the amount of time we spend providing face-to-face feedback are the two most critical areas. I believe that staff here wants feedback but they want to see feedback that is a little bit more personal. Teachers want to be recognized for what is occurring in their own classroom but do not want to be recognized overall at a staff meeting. We have 20 new staff members in our building this year so I will be spending a lot of time in their classrooms and providing personalized feedback.
L.L.	I thought things ran pretty well her last year. The key is providing feedback to them quickly. Teachers are familiar with the observation and walk through process but to make it more effective, the feedback has to be provided to them sooner. I want to make sure feedback is fresh and relevant to them.
M.M.	We are interested in having all teachers participate in instructional rounds. Having teachers observe each other and then provide feedback. I would like to get our best teachers together and have other teachers observe them. If a new teacher is struggling in a content area I am unfamiliar, I could send them to observe an outstanding teacher in their content area. I think in my role as a supervisor, I can do more to help our teachers grow professionally.
N.N.	I'm thinking walk-through observations. It would be more beneficial to teachers if we had more time to conduct face-to-face meetings after a walk through. I typically do not meet with a teacher after a walk through unless I see something that is a cause for concern. For walk-through observations to be more beneficial, it would be better to have more a conversation and question-answer period with the teacher.

**G.16**

Question #16: How do you track the number of formal observations conducted in the building? How do you track the number of classroom walk-through observations conducted in the building?	
A.A.	Walk-through observations are tracked through Google docs so we can see how many each member of the administrative team has accomplished. We keep the observations completed on a spreadsheet. However, we found out that electronic observation instrument will track the observations completed. The administrative team would also remind each other when observations were due.
B.B.	We created a spreadsheet to track the number of classroom visits. We log the information, the date and block, in the spreadsheet. The walk-through observations are tracked using Google docs.
C.C.	We have every teachers name on a plastic chart and we track the dates we were in their classroom. Myself and each AP has a different colored marker and when we complete a formal or informal observation or walk through, we will record the date next to the teachers name. It is a good visual tool for us to keep track of who we observed and who we need to observe. I am a visual person and if the chart is out in front of you, it is easier to remember to complete your walk-through observations or formal observations. The visual chart is a good conversation starter with my AP's and we can see who was observed last week and who we need to see.
D.D.	We do a couple different things. We have a monthly calendar which has all the teacher names on it. The teacher names are color coded based on their observation status. We then place a letter on the date we visited their classroom. Walk-through observations are coded as "W"; observations are coded as "O"; and if it is for a conference we mark "CO." As an administrative team, we will discuss whose classrooms we were in the past week and who we plan to see this week.
E.E.	We track observations by keeping a hard copy of the observation on file. During our weekly administrative meetings, myself and the two AP's discuss how many observations we have completed during the week. I really do not track the walk-through observations, only the formal observations. However, I do track my own walk-through observations by writing the date and teacher on an index card. I will then file the index card and share it with my AP's.
F.F.	I do not track walk-through observations at all. Our electronic observation tool keeps track of the date, time, and who was conducting the observation.
G.G.	Yes and yes. The electronic observation tool we use does track the date and time of the observation but I choose to create my own spreadsheet and place what is due on which date. I create the spreadsheet for myself and my AP's. On the spreadsheet, we will record who we have observed, how often, and on which dates. If I used the electronic observation tool, I would have to click through every teacher to find what I was looking for.

H.H.	The number of walk-through observations is tracked in a Google doc. For the number of observations, I can go into our electronic observation tool. I will also keep a paper copy of who I observed and when. During our weekly administrative team meeting, I will ask how everyone is doing on their observations.
I.I.	We keep a spreadsheet. I will refer to the spreadsheet from time-to-time to see how I am doing in regards to observations.
J.J.	We use an excel spreadsheet. I share the spreadsheet with my AP's during our weekly meeting.
K.K.	We have a tracker we share among our admin team which is on a shared folder. We can track the dates we have gone into the classroom and observed those teachers on summative evaluation. For those teachers on formative evaluation, we will track those dates in a Google doc log. Since our focus as a school is on co-teaching, we track the dates and times we were in co-taught classes on an excel spreadsheet. If we have a concern about a teacher, then we may start popping into their classroom more often.
L.L.	We use a Google doc that has every teacher's name as well as what observation cycle they are on. When you conduct an observation, you list the name and the date next to the teacher's name. This way we can ensure we are hitting at least the minimum number of observations during the observation period. We track our walk-through observations in the Google doc as well. We try to have all observations completed by the end of April.
M.M.	For the mini observations, we have a data collection sheet with the date and time. It is an excel spreadsheet which the admin team has access. For brief pop-ins, I do not feel there is a reason to keep track because we complete so many and we are only in the classroom for a short amount of time. I however track my own pop-ins because it is a big deal to some teachers when the principal visits their room. I try to pop-in to every single teacher's classroom at least once every 30 days. I have the staff list and I will place the date I was in the classroom next to their name. I keep the staff list on my desk as a reminder for me every single day.
N.N.	During our weekly administrative team meetings, I will ask where they are in the summative observation process with teachers. I want to find out if they are on schedule or if they need assistance. For walk-through observations, I can go into Google docs and see how many walk-through observations have been conducted and when. Our goal as an administrative team is to complete at least seven walk-through observations during the week.

**G.17**

Question #17: What factors control how many classroom walk-through observations you accomplish in a week?	
A.A.	Personally for me, I spend a lot of time translating. Since I speak Spanish and half of our student population is Hispanic, I would have to communicate with parents in incidents regarding health, discipline, or meetings. Since the nurse's office and main office are close to my office, I was often the first person notified if translating was necessary.
B.B.	Management processes such as managing a crisis, managing parents, managing student situations including discipline take time away from conducting walk-through observations. Menial paperwork tasks also flow through the principal's office. There are forms I have to sign or fill out or request forms I have to complete. These menial tasks eat the time I could be spending in the classroom. Being in CLT meetings also takes away potential time in the classrooms. Attendance at CLT meetings and conducting walk-through observations are important but are also competing interests. We have a systematic schedule we follow for attending CLT meetings which means I am not going to be able to spend a lot of time during that block or those couple of blocks in individual classrooms.
C.C.	Lack of predictability that occurs during a school day. I also handle a grade level of discipline as well. I like handling one level of discipline because it keeps me in touch with the students. We do not have deans and I only have two AP's. I just think it is fair I handle one grade level of discipline which allows my AP's to get into the classroom. The drawback of handling a grade level of discipline is it does impact your schedule. Handling a discipline incident takes time. The unpredictability of what comes into the building everyday also impacts the opportunity the principal has to conduct observations and walk-through observations.
D.D.	Supervising lunches. My admin team and I are in the cafeteria just about every lunch shift. We have 1200 students and run six lunches for a half-hour each...that is three hours a day supervising lunch. We have no one else to do it so we have to do it.
E.E.	"Do you have a minute?" I have an open door policy and when I am in my office or getting ready to leave, a staff member will ask "Do you have a minute." Unscheduled events such as an irate parent or a bus situation also impact me getting into the classroom. Sometimes the teacher will want me to see a student for discipline instead of sending them to an AP. Whenever I do see a student I keep a note on an index card so I can reference it if I see a student again. I do like talking and meeting with students but it does take time and impacts me getting into the classroom.
F.F.	I block out time during first bell to observe teachers. Everyone knows I am unavailable during first block...my teachers, the front office staff, the community, and parents. I also let parents know that when you visit without an appointment, you prevent me from doing what I am here to do which is to improve instruction for your child. Once the day gets going, other events may pull me from my checklist but never during first bell. If a teacher doesn't teach first block, I will observe them during third block.
G.G.	Things you cannot control. A special needs student who needs to be calmed down and it takes an hour to calm him. A fire drill. Those two things occurred yesterday and are beyond my control and force me to rearrange my day. I try to schedule as much as I can to keep myself on track. We do not have a specific

	number of walk-through observations we want to complete.
H.H.	Discipline, testing, meetings at central office. There are more meetings at the beginning of the year that impact how many walk-through observations I am able to accomplish. We spend time in planning meetings during the first quarter and also completing our School Improvement Plan by the end of September. We also have mandatory testing we must complete at the beginning of the year. Meetings, testing, and discipline.
I.I.	It is a combination of flexibility and necessity. If there is a teacher I am concerned about, I will conduct more walk-through observations on that teacher than I may on a more veteran teacher. Parent visits, central office visits also interrupt the flow of the day. In our division we also have a lot of off-site meetings or professional development sessions we have to attend. Unexpected events like a threat assessment. With meetings and professional development off sit, a five day week may turn into a three day week.
J.J.	I try to protect time during the day to accomplish walk-through observations. We have benchmark testing throughout the year and SOL testing at the end of the year. We also have SRI testing. The testing calendars really impact my ability to get into the classroom. We run a seven period day so time can get away from you quickly. When you incorporate testing into the day, it may take 2 or 3 days to complete testing for a grade level.
K.K.	The most important thing is planning out the week so you can go into classrooms, designate specific times to conduct walk-through observations, and then protect those times. The other factors that impede my time are on the negative side...crisis with students, issues with staff, and building infrastructure such as when heating or air conditioning fails or there is a strange smell in the hallway. These items suddenly become urgent and impact the day. I try to protect the time we designate to go into the classroom. I have a Monday afternoon meeting with the admin team to discuss when we will be in the classrooms during the week.
L.L.	The unknown...nothing can control the unknown. I try to block out at least one block every day to conduct walk-through observations. I try to make sure I have 70-80 minutes of uninterrupted time every day for observations and walk-through observations. Unexpected events happen during the day that need to be dealt with and I hope they do not occur during the block of time I have blocked.
M.M.	Building issues. We are currently in the middle of a renovation and things happen. Today we had a power outage. I have to meet with the design and construction team. I attend AVID meetings. Today I probably had 90 minutes total that were free. A lot of little things that have to be taken care of. I also wear a fit bit and count my steps. If I haven't been up and moving enough, I can look at my fit bit and see it's time for me to walk around and get into classrooms. I also choose to mentor students during lunch.
N.N.	Unexpected events. You never know what is going to happen in a middle school. We do place walk-through observations on our Outlook calendar but sometimes things pop up. Some factors might be if the teacher we planned to visit is absent, if an emergency arises in the building, a parent stopping by, or students in our office.

**G.18**

Question #18: Are there any questions I should have asked regarding practices employed by middle school principals during the supervisory process that I did not ask?	
A.A.	No. I think the questions were pretty thorough.
B.B.	I would ask how principals delegate yet keep their eye on the big picture. Assistant principals have to stay on top of their observations as well. How principals delegate tasks involving teacher observation is an important factor. Also, how the deans are used during walk-through observations is another area to consider.
C.C.	I like the last question we just discussed; the other stuff that gets in the way. It caused me to reflect on those things that eat away at my time. The principal is the captain of the ship and if something comes up, you just can't walk past it and give it to someone else and say "good luck." You want to support your staff and you want the parents to not be too ticked off when they leave.
D.D.	How is the teacher observation process geared towards teacher improvement? It should not be about evaluation but rather where we need to grow and improve. Observation data should be shared with principals in a non-threatening manner.
E.E.	No. I think you covered everything from beginning to end.
F.F.	We did not discuss the evaluation process. We talked about the observation process. I also noticed we did not talk about teacher goal setting and the process teachers go through at the beginning of the year related to their evaluation.
G.G.	I think you were thorough in your questions. Types of specific, timely, and actionable feedback and what does it look like in your school. The Commonwealth states you will provide it, but does not provide guidance on how to provide specific, timely, and actionable feedback. It would be neat to discuss those three types. We touched on it a little bit during the interview but more attention could be paid to those three items.
H.H.	Maybe the one thing you could ask is that are principals doing to make sure the admin team is doing what they should be doing in regards to conducting observations. How do you as the principal monitor if they are doing what they should be doing. Who do you include in the walk through process is another topic that could be discussed. This year we have a walk through form created by some of our staff members and these staff members will be conducting observations on each other and provide each other with positive feedback. The staff here wants to learn from each other.
I.I.	I would like to know what other schools are doing when they conduct the pre observation conference. Are the teachers completing some type of pre-self assessment? The power of reflection is very, very important. Also, does any principal do anything with some sort of post observation reflection? Every nine weeks, my teachers are engaged in some type of self-reflection. It is interesting to ask for reflection from adults

	because sometimes they do not want to go that deep into the reflection process.
J.J.	No...I don't think so...I think the instrument was pretty thorough.
K.K.	I guess you could have asked the process we use when we are looking at a teacher who is not meeting expectations. I also think you could have asked what the differences between the supervisory process for a teacher on summative than a teacher on formative.
L.L.	How does a principal's leadership style influence your formal observations and walk-through observations? Some principals may be more direct and to the point while others are more reflective. I think the differences in personality traits affect who you are as a leader. I guess I would like to know more on how certain leadership styles convey the information to teachers.
M.M.	What do you do when you have a teacher who is not performing well in the classroom? How do you handle that situation? A similar question may be, how do you highlight and showcase and recognize talented teachers? Those two stand out for me. Another questions may be what do you think is the most valuable part of the supervisory process? Is it the feedback piece? Is it being in the classroom?
N.N.	No...I don't think so...I think your questions covered everything.

**G. 19**

Question #19: What improvements or suggestions do you have regarding the interview instrument?	
A.A.	None
B.B.	I think it was pretty thorough. The questions seemed focused on what you were trying to accomplish. You were asking questions regarding practices of teacher observations during the evaluation process. The creation of a component to measure SMART goals has changed the evaluation process.
C.C.	None...I think it was fine.
D.D.	None.
E.E.	None. It appears you are trying to determine what middle school principals do during the teacher observation process. You asked a good number of open ended or situational questions.
F.F.	None. I thought the instrument was pretty thorough.
G.G.	I do not have any suggestions. I believe you have touched on all areas of the observation process.
H.H.	None. I believe it was very thorough.
I.I.	I believe it would be beneficial if you had access to everyone's observation forms and then share those observation forms with the principals you interview. I think it would be helpful for you to see what tool they are using.
J.J.	Just a suggestion. If you are going to publish parts of your work, some statement indicating why this topic is important somewhere in an introductory paragraph.
K.K.	Walk-through observations have a different meaning depending on the principal and what they are doing regarding observations in their school. I think the fact your questions are open ended and not too restrictive in terms of what the responses are supposed to be is helpful. If the interview only consisted of yes or no questions, then you may not have gained as much of an understanding of how things work in each school.

L.L.	I can't think of any. I thought the interview flowed well. I also liked the idea of it being more of a casual conversation.
M.M.	Question number two and six appeared to be similar questions. I have worked in four different middle schools in my career and the process for teacher observation seems to always change and I'm not sure if we have ever gotten it right.
N.N.	I don't know if I have any improvements or suggestions. If I provided an answer during a previous question to a future question, I would suggest skipping the question I had already answered and moving on to another question.