

The Perceptions of Principals Regarding the Formative Supervision of Teachers

By

Jason Dwaine Fuss

A Project submitted to the School of Counseling, Leadership, Advocacy, and Design,

at the University of Wyoming

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Education

in Educational Leadership

April 12, 2018

### Abstract

Educational scholars commonly identify teachers as the primary in-school influence for increasing student achievement therefore, principals need to focus on improving teacher effectiveness through formative supervision. The purpose of this study was to explore differences in perceptions towards the formative supervision of teachers between more experienced and less experienced principals. Formative supervision allows principals to monitor, assess, and systemically address teacher performance with the intent of improving their practice. Guided by current literature, different aspects of formative supervision were constructed, the analyses indicated that certain sets of formative supervision constructs had no significant differences when comparing the grouping variables of principal experience. However, principals with more than three years of experience had a significantly different perception about their abilities to improve teaching through formative supervision than principals with less than three years of experience. More experienced principals indicated a higher level of confidence in improving instruction, as well as a preference for written feedback typically found in performance evaluations and not necessarily in walkthroughs where the principal has the option for oral feedback.

*Keywords:* formative supervision, performance evaluations, walkthroughs, feedback

### Principals' Perceived Approaches for the Formative Supervision of Teachers

Educational scholars commonly identify teachers as the primary in-school influence for increasing student achievement (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Whalstrom, 2004); therefore, principals need to focus on improving teacher effectiveness through formative supervision (DuFour & Mattos, 2013). Formative supervision allows principals to monitor, assess, and systemically address teacher performance with the intent of improving their practice (DuFour & Mattos, 2013; Fessler & Burke, 1983; Zapeda, Jimenez & Lanoue, 2015).

How principals approached formative supervision in the past is complex. They have used and modified ideas for practical application many times (Bayler, 2012). Federal initiatives such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (United States Department of Education, 2013), and more recently Every Child Succeeds Act (ESSA) (ESSA, 2015), has brought an increase in school performance accountability. Principals now more than ever focus on improving teacher effectiveness in the classroom and look to increase their effectiveness using formative supervision approaches.

With improving student achievement as the emphasis in public education, the responsibility for enhancing teaching falls on principals (Hattie, 2012). This endeavor requires principals to have extensive knowledge about teaching practices and to possess the necessary leadership skills to provide meaningful coaching in order to help teachers grow (Gates Foundation, 2013). In addition, according to Leithwood et al. (2004), principals who are experienced at formative supervision see instructional practices improve and student outcomes improve almost immediately. Principals can approach formative supervision via teacher evaluations and classroom walkthroughs to include feedback derived from these supervisory functions (Downey, Steffy, English, Frase, & Poston, 2004; Goldhorn, Kearney, & Webb, 2013; Marzano, 2010; Stout, Kachur, & Edwards, 2013).

Principals have options when approaching formative supervision; however, researchers have shown that their perceptions of and commitment to their careers influence how they approach supervision (Fritz & Miller, 2003). Ultimately, the experience of principals plays a role in supervision, and principals approach supervision with varying levels of effort and skill, determined by certain points in their career (Chait 2010; Range, Duncan, Scherz, & Hains, 2012). This study examined formative supervision constructs among more experienced and less experienced principals.

### **Formative Supervision**

Initially, literature on formative supervision focused on defining the factors involved with the formative assessment of students (Black & Wiliam, 1998). After Scriven's (1967) introduction of the idea formative supervision, Bloom, Hasitngs, and Madaus (1971) were the first to use the terminology in its current meaning, thus improving teacher instruction. Several authors have provided definitions for formative supervision, but Range, McKim, Mette, and Hvidston (2014) found that there is still a lack of understanding surrounding formative supervision and how it applies to teacher supervision, especially among aspiring principals. Formative and summative approaches were named after their function and did refer to a developed assessment (Black & Wiliam, 2003). Formative supervision, however, required new thinking and assessment practices that began to focus on teacher pedagogy in hopes of affecting changes in instruction that would lead to improved student outcomes (Black & Wiliam, 2003). During the 1980s through the 1990s, the notion of changing teaching practices and developing new approaches gained attention, leading to ways to improve students' thinking and reasoning skills instead of merely measuring achievement (Black, 2015; Black & Wiliam, 2003; Gauntlett, 2007). In its initial stages, formative supervision was focused on improving students' academic achievement; the focus was on students' acquisition of content and how it could be improved, not necessarily on the teacher, in its

current form (Black, 2015; Black & Wiliam; 2003, Gauntlett, 2007; Ní Chróinín & Cosgrave; 2013).

Because of ESSA (2015), teacher performance has received increasingly more attention, and schools now use formative supervision in a wider sense to include improving teacher instructional effectiveness. ESSA redefines the term *professional development* among teachers as actions and functions that are not stand-alone, one-day, or short-term workshops. Instead, formative supervision activities are ongoing, often one-on-one in an effort to improve teachers' knowledge about teaching practices that are job-embedded and classroom-focused (Gates Foundation, 2013; Harris, Jones, Cheah, Devadason & Adams, 2017). The basic premise is that through formative supervision, teachers' instructional activities will improve upon receiving feedback from the principal (Gates Foundation, 2013). This implies that principals should have training and knowledge about teaching pedagogy and ways to communicate information intended to improve teaching (Louis et al., 2010).

Through the formative supervision movement, principals identified management processes such as performance evaluations and classroom walkthroughs as methods to both judge and improve teaching quality (Rettig, Lampe, & Garcia, 2000). Finally, formative supervision is most successful when there is a trusting relationship between the principal and teacher (Gates Foundation 2013; Hallinger, Heck & Murphy, 2014). When there is too much focus on summative evaluation and not enough on formative supervision, feedback to teachers may be inadequate and ineffective (Hallinger et al., 2014).

### **Performance Evaluations**

Although governed by state laws, teacher evaluation systems are generally operated at the district level. Usually, teacher performance evaluation systems rely heavily on scheduled classroom observations conducted by principals with the help of rubrics and checklists, samples of students' work, teachers' records, and lesson plans. Most teaching evaluation

systems require teachers to be formally observed once or twice a year. State and local policies determine such details and whether observations must be accompanied by pre- or post-observation conferences, and who conducts them (Margo, Benton, Withers, & Sodha, 2008).

Weisberg, Sexton, Mulhern, and Keeling (2009) reported that the majority of teachers received satisfactory or better marks on performance evaluations from their principals, yet student achievement remains average or unchanged. The result of such broad and inflated ratings on evaluations is that exceptional teachers go unrecognized, and teachers who need formative supervision the most do not receive it (Weisberg et al., 2009). In addition, it is difficult to improve instruction among teachers using a district evaluation system that is not aligned to district initiatives and practices (Dufour & Mattos, 2013; No, 2016). Nevertheless, to comply with state law and district policy, principals conduct performance evaluations on a regular basis in hopes of improving teacher performance (DuFour & Mattos, 2013).

In most cases, performance evaluation is a prescribed approach that typically involves pre-observation, observation, and post-observation meetings. In pre-observation conferences, principals and teachers plan and analyze data, and collaboratively focus on areas of the lesson. In the observation phase, a principal evaluates how a lesson is delivered according to the created plan (Ayeni, 2013). During the post-observation conference, the principal offers suggestions on how to improve the lesson and instruction based on observational data (Nzambi, 2012). The principal's formal write-up after the post-observation conference concludes the performance evaluation cycle (Ayeni, 2013). Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon (2014) noted that performance evaluations could benefit the teacher by providing specific feedback about performance in a formal setting. However, some have criticized the performance evaluation cycle as too lengthy and therefore impractical as an effective formative approach as it is too labor-intensive to be implemented effectively in most schools.

Additionally, formative supervision is only one part of the performance evaluation process, as principals are required to make summative assessments as well (Ayeni, 2013).

Glickman et al. (2014) pointed out that summative and formative supervision should be separate components of performance evaluations; most evaluation systems incorporate both a summative and formative phase. On performance evaluations, principals often carry out summative and formative supervision simultaneously. The unintended consequence of this approach reduces the effectiveness of the formative supervision process, as some of the ratings on evaluation tools have little or no impact on teaching practices (Stiggins & Bridgeford, 1984). One way to address this is to separate summative and formative supervision and make sure that each function is carried out at different times. The principal should indicate which approach, either summative or formative, he or she is utilizing when working with teachers (Glickman et al., 2014).

DuFour and Mattos (2013) discussed their experiences as award-winning principals, and pointed out that after all the efforts a supervisor puts into teacher performance evaluations, the teachers ultimately decide whether or not to implement the suggestions. In addition, they found that teachers were rather resistant to change with this approach. Although performance evaluations can be beneficial, principals should not use them as the main strategy to improve teacher instruction (Dufour & Mattos, 2013).

### **Walkthroughs**

Walkthroughs are a form of formative supervision that focus on coaching teachers and assessing the students' learning behavior in informal situations or those outside of the performance evaluation process (Goldhorn et al., 2013; Grissom, Loeb, & Master, 2013; Mendels, 2012). Principals use walkthroughs to increase their understanding of teacher practice, to collect data, and to focus on improving instruction through feedback (Pitler & Goodwin, 2008). Walkthroughs are un-announced classroom visits that can last from just a

few minutes to the entire class period. Over time, this approach enables the principal to identify patterns of beneficial teaching practices and to provide individualized feedback to teachers (Martinez-Miller & Cervone, 2008). The intent of walkthroughs is for the principal and teacher to engage in ongoing collaboration and systemic improvement (Downey et al., 2004).

According to Stout, Kachur, and Edwards (2013), the benefits of walkthroughs include improved communication between the principal and teachers, and also teachers and learners. This practice further promotes better communication between the principal and learners due to the potential interaction taking place during the walkthroughs. Moreover, the principal can act quickly in providing feedback in situations that need remediation. Systematic walkthroughs in the school enable the principal to stay informed of educational practices that need to be developed, student achievements, and to create a platform for feedback sessions directed at teachers as ongoing embedded professional development that is both timely and practical (DuFour & Mattos, 2013; Papay, 2012). Finally, by conducting unannounced classroom visits, principals can monitor teaching activities and immediately promote strategies that increase student success (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). The instructional discussions following unannounced classroom visits are essential, and have an impact on classroom practice (Goldhorn et al., 2013). After classroom visits, principals should suggest activities and modifications to pedagogy to improve teaching practices through feedback from the classroom observations, and ask teachers for their input, fostering collaboration (Papay, 2012).

In contrast, principals find walkthroughs more valuable than teachers do; they consistently report learning more when engaging in this process than do teachers (Marsh et al., 2005). Principals also report that the data from walkthroughs gave them a better understanding of how well teachers were instructing. This finding led them to adjust the



feedback and professional development they provided. Other researchers point to the value of district-designed walkthroughs in developing shared understandings of district initiatives when deciding what to look for during classroom walkthroughs (Supovitz & Weathers, 2004).

Last, walkthroughs carry some noteworthy risks. When the purpose is undefined and when confidence among teachers, principals, and central office staff is low, walkthroughs are likely to be perceived as summative and used for punitive reasons, increasing distrust and tension (Valli & Buese, 2007). District leaders must communicate sincerity about the constructive intent of walkthroughs. One way to do this is to focus walkthroughs on areas of which teachers and principals have had professional development opportunities, and the support to implement changes in instructional practices (Kerr, 2006).

### **Feedback**

The critical element in supervision is feedback. Feedback designed for formative supervision is the link for improving teaching practices. Teachers react differently to feedback intended for formative supervision; therefore, the same instructional feedback given to two different educators may elicit contrasting reactions (Frase & Sorenson, 1992; *Motivating Teachers*, 2009). Feedback can be verbal or written, and the perception of the person who gives the feedback is important (Goldhorn et al., 2013; Marshall, 2010). Generally, feedback has two purposes: (a) professional growth of teachers, or (b) to hold teachers accountable for their performance (Ovando, 2005). The overall goal of feedback in formative supervision is to suggest ideas, facilitate adjustments to practice, and create a desire to change thinking and instructional behaviors in the teacher for the purpose of improving teaching (Downey et al., 2004).

Some teachers are more conversational and prefer verbal feedback. Formative conversations that are oral in nature intended to facilitate self-analysis and elicit ideas for

improved practice foster collegial interaction and build principal-teacher relationships. This works particularly well with teachers who understand their area of focus (Marshall, 2010). Written feedback is a standard component of performance evaluations. Written comments on performance evaluations are usually discussed in a post-observation conference. Principals may also choose to use written feedback based on walkthroughs. For struggling teachers, written feedback may be more helpful, as they can serve as a resource to reference in their planning (Downey et al., 2004).

Written feedback tends to reinforce the supervisor-supervisee relationship, and may be counterproductive with some teachers if written feedback is the only approach a principal utilizes following a walkthrough. This finding can be especially difficult if a principal relies solely on performance evaluations for teacher improvement, or exclusively on written feedback from walkthroughs. Relying too heavily on written feedback may seem like punishment or criticism, and can be overwhelming to some teachers (Downey et al., 2004). Additionally, some principals may only provide meaningful feedback during the performance evaluation cycle, and neglect giving feedback associated with walkthroughs. Walkthroughs that are not followed up with feedback can be ineffective, therefore it is important to structure feedback intended for formative supervision around observed evidence in the form of suggestions for improved educational practices (Downey et al., 2004).

### **Principals**

Unlike teachers who are gradually exposed to various supervisory activities and roles during their careers, principals do not necessarily follow the same career path (Oplatka, 2012). Oplatka (2012) identified three stages that principals generally move through: (a) the induction stage of new principals, in which the main focus is getting acquainted with the new role, (b) the establishment stage when principals develop in their role, and (c) the maintenance/renewal stage. In the final stage, the principals are usually in the middle period

of their careers, which often leaves only a few growth opportunities, potentially leading to feelings of unproductivity (Oplatka, 2012).

In a MetLife, Inc. (2013) survey, more than three-quarters of school principals indicated that the job had become too complex. More than half the principals surveyed indicated feeling great stress for several days or weeks at a time. Although principals indicated they had autonomy over teacher hiring practices, they strongly felt that they had limited to no control over terminating teachers who were incompetent in their areas of instruction. Therefore, principals stressed the importance of improving instruction through formative supervision (Balu, Horng, & Loeb, 2010; Knight et al., 2012).

It is essential that principals understand the different stages of career development, including their unique needs during each stage, in order to adequately supervise teachers. Researchers have established that principals are charged with improving teacher performance, yet principals report that other administrative duties, such and management tasks, take up a large part of their time and sometimes all of their time (Shoho & Barnett, 2010). It follows logically that new principals (0-3 years of experience) do not have much experience in management or leading a school, making the task of formative supervision especially challenging (Oplatka, 2012). By the time principals have three or more years of experience, they exhibit more competence as leaders, and through experience and professional development are usually more capable to supervise teachers and their growth (Oplatka, 2012).

No matter their stage of development, principals often adopt a leadership style that suits their current situation, and as their skills are developed, their supervisory styles may change (Stevenson, 2008). Ironically, later in their careers, principals grasp the necessary management skills and are more equipped to focus on the formative supervision of teachers; however; they often report feelings of stagnation and a need for renewal (Daresh, 2007). In

supporting principals, these stages are important for central office leaders to recognize, as new principals (0-3 years of experience) and more experienced principals (3 or more years) should not be assessed with the same objectives and professional development needs in mind (Clifford, Hansem & Wraight, 2014).

### **Summary**

The principal's approach in the formative supervision of teachers does change with gender (Range, Hewitt & Young, 2014). Gender can affect the way principals approach formative supervision, as female principals more often preferred district evaluation cycles for formative supervision. Their male counterparts chose more informal formative supervision approaches such as situational feedback based on teacher need identified in unannounced walkthroughs (Range et al., 2014).

The impact of teachers and teaching ranks third and fourth, respectively, on Hattie's meta-analyses of effects on student achievement. Continued high-level teaching is dependent on principals' continued development of teachers. Teacher development rests upon formative supervision (Murphy et al., 2006) and federal law emphasizes teacher development, requiring increased efforts in professionally developing teachers to increase instructional skill for the purpose of increasing student achievement (Achilles & Tienken, 2005).

If the principal's goal is to improve instruction through formative supervision, more frequent observations than the traditional two times a year are needed, as typically observed in performance evaluations. Teachers need timely, consistent, and accurate feedback to improve their instruction (Else, 2013). Formative supervision takes commitment, and principals who are at different stages in their career and of differing levels of competency are faced with the challenge of making formative supervision a priority in their daily practice (Balu et al., 2010). Teacher supervision should be done with the intention to judge the quality of the teacher, but rather to improve the teacher (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2012). As a final point,

the increased unavailability of highly effective principals is causing school districts to place less experienced principals in leadership roles (Pijanowski, Hewitt, & Brady, 2009).

Furthermore, experienced and skilled principals are particularly in short supply for the schools that are in the greatest need of strong supervision (Hornig, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2009; Papa, Lankford, & Wyckoff, 2002; Clifford, Sherratt, & Feters, 2012).

### **Background**

The researcher conducted the study in a medium-sized Wyoming school district with approximately 240 certified teachers, and examined the formative supervision practices of 16 principals. The district currently uses the Mid-Continent Research for Educational and Learning or (McREL) teacher evaluation framework for performance evaluations, and each principal has been trained using the system. The McREL teacher evaluation system is in compliance with Chapter 29 rules, which require all Wyoming districts have an evaluation system that focuses on individual teacher improvement. Furthermore, the structure set forth in Chapter 29 mandates that a district's evaluation tool include elements of best practices and a method that allows principals to provide feedback for the purposes of professional growth (Wyoming Secretary of State, 2016).

The McREL evaluation instrument and process is designed to promote quality teaching and student learning while enhancing professional practice that leads to improved instruction (Willingham & Rotherham, 2009). The system is developed for summative and formative supervision functions intended to enhance professional growth. The McREL evaluation system supports the review of literature that includes Glickman et al.'s (2014) assertion that performance evaluations must have separate functions pertaining to formative and summative supervision. McREL's system has specific forms and rubrics intended for formative supervision to include written feedback. The principals who are participants in this

study must follow the McREL system; the school district's adopted evaluation model that is aligned with Wyoming's chapter 29 rules (Wyoming Secretary of State, 2016).

Participating principals also received ongoing professional development and training for classroom walkthroughs from the Wyoming Instructional Leader's Network (WILN) in partnership with the Center for Educational Leadership (CEL). Internal professional development resulting from the WILN training focused on principal walkthrough effectiveness and feedback cycles that align with the district's instructional framework.

The CEL approach for walkthroughs lead participating principals in a series of on-site professional development sessions concerning classroom walkthroughs. This process was intended to help deepen their understanding of instructional framework within the context of their own Wyoming district. Principals gathered evidence of teacher practice and student learning based on the district instructional model to assist in their analysis of classroom instruction and to guide the improvement of teaching and learning.

In the Wyoming district where the study took place, classroom walkthroughs focused on the district's instructional model. Principals were expected to focus on nine instructional domains during walkthroughs. Teachers were asked to develop professional goals surrounding two or three of the domains that they felt needed further development. Principals then focused on the specific goals of the teacher. This approach supported Supovitz & Weathers' (2004) recommendation that walkthroughs are most effective when the principal and teacher have a shared understanding of the elements evaluated during walkthroughs. The elements of focus included in the instructional framework for the Wyoming district were:

1. A positive and safe learning environment
2. Evidence of purposeful planning
3. Effective use of learning targets
4. Success criteria

5. Engaged students
6. Formative assessment
7. Differentiated instruction
8. Classroom management
9. Feedback (corrective, specific, and positive) (District Leadership, 2015).

These elements reflect the district goals and initiatives surrounding instruction, and serve as common thread providing a framework by which principals could approach formative supervision.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Theoretical support for this project is generated from researchers who state that similar to teachers, principals' effectiveness is influenced by experience, especially in their first three years (Clark, Martorell & Rockoff, 2009). Furthermore, principals still make supervisory improvements over time as they continue to develop, but tend to have feelings of stagnation (Loeb, Kalogrides and Horng 2010). Experience matters when it comes to principal performance (Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, & Lee, 1982). The amount of time spent serving as a principal has an influence on effectiveness both positively and negatively, including formative supervision functions (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004).

Principals need to support and develop their teachers (Balyer, 2012; Mendels, 2012). Principals who focus on formative supervision can positively affect student achievement if they have the skills (DuFour, Marzano, & Ebrary, 2011). Moir and Bloom (2003) explored the benefits of experience on principal leadership and formative supervision, and found that teachers who served as instructional mentors who were then appointed as principals were better equipped to perform formative supervision tasks. The knowledge gained from being a teacher mentor on curriculum, classroom practices, student learning, and experience in

helping others to improve their teaching served as an immense benefit. However, the authors did not explore experience as a principal and the impact experience had on formative supervision (Moir & Bloom, 2003). The multitude of tasks principals perform complicate conducting formative supervision, and principals acknowledge that they tend to neglect this aspect, even as their skills improve. It is therefore not clear whether experience as a principal would improve the ability to provide formative supervision (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine formative supervision perceptions of principals who were at differing points in their careers. The researcher placed participants into two categories: principals with more than three years of experience and principals with three or fewer years of experience. The researcher performed a comparative analysis using mean and standard deviation between the two groups of principals and their potential differing perceptions of formative supervision. The intent of the study was to further guide central office administrators in developing, supporting, and renewing principals for the purpose of increasing their effectiveness in the area of formative supervision; in other words, improving teachers.

The following questions guided this study:

1. How do principal perceptions concerning formative supervision differ based on experience?
2. How do principal perceptions concerning the formative elements of evaluations differ based on experience?
3. How do principal perceptions concerning formative classroom walkthroughs differ based on experience?



## Method

### Design

This study was a group comparison design or ex post facto research. There was no manipulation of the independent variables, principals with three or less years of experience and principals with more than three years of experience. Instead, the research compared the different groups of principal's perceptions of the dependent variable, formative supervision. The study used a survey research design to include two open-ended responses, three demographic questions and series of Likert scale questions (see Appendix C). The researcher, with committee and facility review designed the questionnaire with the intent of covering relevant queries pertaining to formative supervision conducted by principals. According to Khan (2009) surveys could be dispensed via through telephone, mail, e-mail, face-to-face, or handouts. In the case of this study, the surveys were accessed online, participants were able to complete the survey in an environment that was comfortable and safe (Ziegler, 2006). The following survey categories were developed from the study's research questions resulting from the review of literature.

**Principal Perceptions of Formative Supervision.** The review of literature brought to light the idea that principal leadership styles can change with experience. The researcher, therefore, developed statements using Likert scale responses to examine the perceptions of the two groups of principals regarding the topic of formative supervision. Examples of those questionnaire statements are listed below.

1. I struggle with formative supervision because I need additional professional development.
2. The task of improving instruction is difficult based on my experiences.
3. I struggle with formative supervision because other principal duties take most of my time.

**Formative Supervision Components of Teacher Evaluations.** Performance evaluations serve two purposes and can therefore be seen as consisting of two phases. The first purpose (or the formative phase) is to improve teachers. The second purpose (or summative phase) is to help districts make employment decisions. Some survey questions aimed to address this issue, seeking input regarding principals' perceptions of formative supervision components of the district's evaluation system. Examples of questionnaire items in this category are listed below.

1. Teacher evaluation improves instruction.
2. Formative feedback from teacher evaluations is effective.

**Classroom Walkthroughs.** Walkthroughs are a type of formative supervision. They focus on coaching teachers and assessing the students' learning behavior in informal situations and in situations that exist outside of the performance evaluation process. The survey questions in this category aimed at gathering principals' perceptions of classroom walkthroughs, with examples of the survey items are listed below.

1. Classroom walkthroughs improve instruction.
2. Formative feedback from walkthroughs is effective.

Questions requiring responses on a Likert scale provided choices ranging from 1 for "strongly agree" to 5 for "strongly disagree. The questionnaire also included the two open-ended questions listed below.

1. What are your greatest challenges as a principal, when it comes to formative supervision?
2. What support do you need as a principal to improve your effectiveness in formative supervision?

Lastly, the survey asked three demographic questions about the participants to include:

1. Your gender:
2. Experience: elementary (K-6) or secondary (7-12)?
3. Experience as a head principal: (3 or less) or (more than 3 years).

### **Participants**

Study participants consisted of elementary and secondary principals employed in a school district located in southeast Wyoming. Prior to making contact with the 14 potential participants, the researcher obtained permission from the district superintendent and from the University of Wyoming's Institutional Review Board (see Appendices E and F). Seven of the 14 participating principals had more than three years of experience, and seven of the 14 had three years of experience or less. Additionally, each principal had received training in the McREL teacher evaluation tool and in teacher walkthrough techniques that focused on the district's nine instructional domains.

### **Procedures**

Each participating principal received an online link that included an introductory cover letter inviting him or her to participate in the study (see Appendix A). Reminder emails were sent to the participants a week prior to the closing date of the survey link, and additional reminder emails were sent to them two days prior to the closing date (see appendix B). Participants self-administered the survey through an online website, with the survey process expected to take no more than 15 minutes to complete. There was no time limit for completion of the questionnaire. The completed surveys were collected digitally, with each participant receiving an automatically generated thank you letter upon submission of the survey (see Appendix D).

### **Data Analysis**

Surveys were compiled and analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, with a Cronbach's alpha performed to measure internal reliability of the

survey responses prior to comparing the two groups of principals. The researcher chose the Cronbach's alpha as a reliability measure because the research study was designed to measure several components or sets of items associated with, principal perceptions regarding formative supervision (Ross, Richler, & Gauthier, 2015). The researcher used descriptive statistics (e.g., mean, standard deviation, frequency, percentage) to summarize the data of the study variables. Independent sample t-tests were conducted to determine whether the perceptions pertaining to formative supervision were significantly different between the two groups of principals regarding the defined variables of (a) principal perceptions of formative supervision, (b) formative supervision components of teacher evaluations, and (c) classroom walkthroughs. The researcher also examined the potential presence of latent variables by conducting a factor analysis using the SPSS software. While latent variables were not measured directly in the design of this research study, the researcher did take note of the latent variables that were present in the participant responses in order to identify ways to help principals be successful. An independent sample t-test was conducted to determine significance among the latent variables yielded by the factor analysis.

The independent sample t-test was chosen since the dependent variable of principal perceptions around formative supervision was measured with different constructs. These constructs include: formative supervision perceptions, evaluations, walkthroughs and factors; while the independent variable of years of experience was categorically measured with two groupings (three or less years and more than three years of experience). A level of significance of 0.05 was used in the independent sample t-test, meaning there is a significant difference in the perceptions of principals pertaining to formative supervision between the grouping variable if the p-value is less than or equal to the level of significance value of 0.05.

## Results

### Introduction

This quasi-experimental quantitative study aimed to examine formative supervision perceptions of principals who are at different points in their careers. The researcher placed participants into two categories: (a) principals who had with more than three years of experience, and (b) principals who had three years of experience or less. The responses of the two groups to inquiries on a five-point Likert scale were compared to one another with the purpose of measuring several constructs regarding perceptions of formative evaluation. The sample for this study consisted of 14 elementary and secondary principals employed in one school district in southeast Wyoming. Research questions for this study investigated the differences in survey responses between the two groups of principals for six separate constructs or sets related to formative supervision, as listed below:

1. perceptions of formative supervision (questions 5,11,12,17,18,19),
2. formative supervision components of teacher evaluations (questions 1,6,8,15,20),
3. classroom walkthroughs (questions 2,7,9,14,21),

and the latent variables or loaded factors:

4. feelings towards formative supervision in general,
5. a preference for less formal walkthroughs,
6. and a degree of self-reliance among principals and their ability to improve teaching through formative supervision.

The researcher hypothesized that principals with more than three years of experience and principals with three or fewer years of experience would have significantly different attitudes regarding the formative supervision constructs.

This chapter reviews the descriptive and frequencies for each response item in the sample, and presents the results of the assessment using a traditional Cronbach's alpha. The researcher grouped participant responses on items that pertained to the defined researched variables – in this case, formative supervision perceptions, performance evaluations, and walkthroughs. Each of the group variables or sets were averaged to form a new variable for the group, with the resulting variable then used to test for significance using the grouping variable of principals' years of experience.

Following the initial group comparison of variables, an analysis was used to identify the factors or constructs present in the study's scale. The independent samples were evaluated by examining the distribution of responses for each group. Finally, independent sample t-tests were calculated to determine whether scale responses on the three constructs and factors (feeling towards formative supervision in general, a preference for less formal walkthroughs, and a degree of self-reliance among principals and their ability to improve teaching through formative supervision) differed significantly between the two groups of principals.

### **Descriptive Statistics**

The 14 participating principals were divided into groups based on their levels of experience, with seven of them (50%) having more than three years of experience, and seven of them (50%) having three years of experience or less. Demographically, six of the 14 principals had experience primarily in elementary schools, while eight of them had experience primarily in secondary schools. Ten of the 14 principals were men, and four of them were women. Frequency and descriptive statistics for each item of the 21-question survey are displayed below in Table 1.

Table 1

*Descriptive statistics for each item*

|  | 3 years<br>of experience<br>or less | More than<br>3 years<br>of experience |
|--|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
|  | Mean (sd)                           | Mean (sd)                             |
| Teacher evaluation improves instruction.   | 3.29 (1.38)                         | 2.29 (1.37)                           |
| Classroom walkthroughs improve instruction.  | 2.00 (0.00)                         | 2.14 (1.07)                           |
| Instructional feedback is more effective in written form.  | 2.86 (0.90)                         | 1.86 (0.38)                           |
| Instructional feedback is more effective when given orally.  | 2.29 (1.11)                         | 2.29 (0.95)                           |
| Principals can intentionally improve instruction.  | 1.86 (0.69)                         | 1.43 (0.53)                           |
| Formative feedback from teacher evaluations is effective.  | 2.57 (0.98)                         | 2.00 (1.00)                           |
| Formative feedback from walkthroughs is effective.   | 1.71 (0.49)                         | 1.86 (0.69)                           |
| Evaluations are best when trying to improve instruction.   | 3.29 (1.11)                         | 3.00 (1.15)                           |
| Walkthroughs are best when trying to improve instruction.  | 1.86 (0.69)                         | 2.71 (1.11)                           |
| I prefer walkthroughs over teacher evaluations.  | 1.57 (0.53)                         | 1.57 (0.79)                           |
| I am skilled at management tasks.  | 2.14 (0.38)                         | 1.43 (0.53)                           |
| I am knowledgeable about the ways principals can improve instruction.  | 2.14 (0.38)                         | 1.43 (0.53)                           |
| Principal feedback is similar across teacher evaluations and walkthroughs, in regard to improving instruction. | 3.14 (0.90)                         | 3.00 (0.82)                           |
| I am more honest with feedback from classroom walkthroughs.  | 2.57 (0.79)                         | 2.43 (1.27)                           |
| I am more honest with feedback on teacher evaluations  | 3.29 (0.76)                         | 3.00 (1.00)                           |
| I struggle with formative feedback because teachers are resistant to change.                                   | 3.00 (1.15)                         | 3.71 (0.76)                           |
| I struggle with formative supervision because I need additional professional development.                      | 2.57 (1.13)                         | 3.57 (0.53)                           |
| I struggle with formative supervision because other principal duties take most of my time.                     | 2.14 (1.21)                         | 1.71 (0.49)                           |
| The task of improving instruction is difficult based on my experiences.  | 2.86 (1.21)                         | 3.43 (1.13)                           |
| I have improved instruction using teacher evaluations.   | 3.00 (1.00)                         | 3.00 (1.00)                           |
| I have improved instruction using classroom walkthroughs.  | 2.00 (0.00)                         | 2.14 (1.00)                           |

*1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = neutral, 4 = disagree, 5 = strongly disagree*

A low standard deviation suggests little variance from the mean or average responses. However, a high standard deviation as seen below on multiple items suggests a high distribution of scores surrounding the mean among both groups of principals. Both groups of principals seemed to have a wide range of perceptions surrounding formative supervision.

### **Internal Consistency**

The internal reliability measure performed on the multiple Likert questions was a Cronbach alpha. When measuring all items, an overall reliability coefficient for the entire set of variables was .769. The researcher reverse coded the negatively worded items 16-19 on the instrument and determined a score of .769 is a generally-accepted consistency as it falls between .7 and .9 respectively.

### **Variable Calculations**

To address the research questions, independent samples t-tests were calculated. The first independent sample t-test compared formative supervision perceptions between the seven principals who had more than three years of experience and the seven principals who had three years of experience or less. The formative supervision perceptions for principals with more than three years of experience ( $M = 3.85$ ,  $SD = 0.29$ ) was not significantly different than those of the principals with three years of experience or less ( $M = 3.71$ ,  $SD = 0.46$ ). The average motivation score was  $t(12) = -0.682$ , and  $p = .508$ .

The next independent samples t-test compared formative supervision components of teacher evaluations between the group of principals with more than three years of experience and the group of principals with three or fewer years of experience. Perceptions of the formative components of teacher evaluation among principals with more than three years of experience ( $M = 3.40$ ,  $SD = .78$ ) was not significantly different than they were among principals with three years of experience or less ( $M = 2.91$ ,  $SD = 0.71$ ) with an average motivation score,  $t(12) = -1.208$ ,  $p = 0.250$ .



For the last independent samples t-test, classroom walkthrough averages were compared between the group of principals with more than three years of experience and the group of principals with three years of experience or less. Again, there was no significant difference between the group of principals with more than three years of experience ( $M = 3.74$ ,  $SD = 0.67$ ) and the group of principals with three years of experience or less ( $M = 3.97$ ,  $SD = 0.29$ ) regarding classroom walkthroughs, in average motivation score,  $t(12) = 0.827$ ,  $p = 0.425$ .

### **Latent Variables**

Latent variables are not measured directly in the design of this research study however; the unobserved, hidden, or latent variables that are present in the participant responses are ultimately of interest to the researcher in hopes of helping principals be successful. Using the common factor analysis function in SPSS, eight items loaded on the first factor, five items loaded in the second factor and six items loaded on the third factor. One item, "I am more honest with feedback from classroom walkthroughs" did not load on any of the three factors. For a list of which items loaded onto which factor, and their factor loadings, please view table 2.

Table 2

*Items and item loadings for each factor*

| Factor 1   | Factor 2  | Factor 3  |
|--|---|---|
| Instructional feedback is more effective when given orally (.448)  | Classroom walkthroughs improve instruction (.857)               | Teacher evaluation improves instruction (.670)                              |
| Reversed Principal feedback is similar across teacher evaluations and walkthroughs, in regard to improving instruction (-.427) | Formative feedback from walkthroughs is effective (.873)        | Instructional feedback is more effective in written form (.525)             |
| Reversed I have improved instruction using teacher evaluations (-.687)   | I have improved instruction using classroom walkthroughs (.729) | Principals can intentionally improve instruction (.513)                     |
| The task of improving instruction is difficult based on my experiences (.814)  | Evaluations are best when trying to improve instruction (.532)  | I am knowledgeable about the ways principals can improve instruction (.542) |
| I struggle with formative supervision because other principal duties take most of my time (.569)                               | I prefer walkthroughs over teacher evaluations (.575)           | I am skilled at management tasks (.832)                                     |
| I struggle with formative supervision because I need additional professional development (.627)                                |   | Formative feedback from teacher evaluations is effective (.685)             |
| I struggle with formative feedback because teachers are resistant to change (.703)   |   |   |

Factor one can be explained as degree of confidence for formative supervision in general. Low scores on Factor 1 were associated with skepticism towards performance evaluations and difficulties with formative supervision. Factor 2 can be explained as degree of preference for walkthroughs. Lower values in Factor 2 are associated with a general neutral view of performance evaluations and higher values indicate a preference for walkthroughs. Factor 3 can be explained as degree of self-reliance among principals and their ability to improve teaching through formative supervision. Low values on Factor 3 are associated with positive attitudes towards formative supervision and confidence in improving instruction effectively, as well as a preference for written feedback typically found in performance evaluations and not necessarily in walkthroughs where the principal has the option for oral feedback.

### Latent Variable Calculations

To address the research questions, three independent samples t-tests were calculated. The first independent samples t-test of Factor 1 compared degree of confidence for formative supervision between principals with more than three years of experience and principals with three years of experience or less. The degree of confidence of formative supervision for principals with more than three years of experience ( $M = 2.96$ ,  $SD = 0.54$ ) was not significantly different than the degree of confidence for formative supervision for principals with three years of experience or less ( $M = 2.68$ ,  $SD = 0.74$ ),  $t(12) = -0.829$ ,  $p = .423$ ).

The next independent samples t-test of factor 2, compared preference for walkthroughs between principals with more than three years of experience and principals with three years of experience or less. Preference for walkthroughs for principals with more than three years of experience ( $M = 2.14$ ,  $SD = 0.73$ ) was not significantly different than a preference for walkthroughs for principals with three or fewer years of experience ( $M = 2.11$ ,  $SD = 0.25$ ),  $t(12) = -0.098$ ,  $p = 0.924$ ).

For the last independent samples t-test of Factor 3, self-reliance among principals and their ability to improve teaching through formative supervision, compared principals with more than three years of experience and principals with three or fewer years of experience. Self-reliance among principals and their ability to improve teaching through formative supervision was significantly stronger for principals with more than three years of experience ( $M = 1.96$ ,  $SD = 0.48$ ) compared to principals with three or fewer years of experience ( $M = 2.71$ ,  $SD = 0.44$ ),  $t(12) = 3.083$ ,  $p = 0.009$ ).

### Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore differences in perceptions towards the formative supervision of teachers between more experienced and less experienced principals.

Guided by current literature, six sets of constructs regarding formative supervision was constructed using the questions from the survey and SPSS, as listed below:

1. perceptions of formative supervision (questions 5, 11, 12, 17, 18, and 19);
2. formative supervision components of teacher evaluations (questions 1, 6, 8, 15, and 20);
3. classroom walkthroughs (questions 2, 7, 9, 14, and 21);
4. feelings towards formative supervision in general;
5. a preference for less formal walkthroughs; and
6. a self-reliance among principals.

Results of the analyses indicated that the first five sets of formative supervision constructs had no significant differences when comparing the grouping variables of principal experience. However, principals with more than three years of experience had a significantly different perception about their abilities surrounding factor three: a degree of self-reliance and a perception that they possessed the ability to improve teaching through formative supervision. More experienced principals were significantly different on Factor 3 in their positive perception associated with formative supervision and their confidence in improving instruction effectively, as well as a preference for written feedback typically found in performance evaluations and not necessarily in walkthroughs where the principal has the option for oral feedback.

### **Discussion**

The current study was aimed at the examination of the formative supervision perceptions of principals who were at differing points in their careers. The researcher divided participants into two groups: principals who had more than three years of experience and principals who had three or fewer years of experience. The results of a comparative analysis revealed significant distinctions between the groups, while also revealing areas in which the

groups demonstrated no significant differences. In fact, no significant differences were found for the first five formative supervision sets:

1. perceptions of formative supervision (questions 5, 11, 12, 17, 18, and 19);
2. formative supervision components of teacher evaluations (questions 1, 6, 8, 15, and 20);
3. classroom walkthroughs (questions 2, 7, 9, 14, and 21);
4. feelings towards formative supervision in general;
5. a preference for less formal walkthroughs.

Stout, Kachur, and Edwards (2013) stated that walkthroughs improve communication between principals and teachers leading to increased student achievement. There was clear agreement from principals regarding the importance of walkthroughs in improving instruction with 71% of respondents indicating such. This suggests that walkthroughs are valued from the perspective of principals. The finding that the experience of the principals had no significant impact on such responses suggests that increasing experience may not significantly alter the values attributed to walkthroughs as a means to improve instruction.

Similarly, Marshall (2010) suggested that oral conversations regarding feedback are effective however, 71% of principals collectively believed written feedback was the best for instructors. Again, experience does not seem to positively or negatively impact this construct. It may be the case that principals have their minds made up regarding the effect of written feedback as they become principals. This may suggest that prior experience with written feedback from the position of instructor or even student may play a role in the development of how one attributes value to written feedback as a means of improving instruction. Furthermore, written feedback tends to reinforce the supervisor-supervisee relationship and it is worth noting that feedback on evaluations is always written but feedback on walkthroughs can be written or oral (Downey et al., 2004). Results show there may be an association

between written feedback as opposed to oral feedback with regards to the value that principals place on the different types of feedback. It may be the case that walkthroughs are considered most valuable when they include written feedback, while evaluations may be preferred because they always provide written feedback. The takeaway for institutions is to include both written and oral components for walkthroughs.

Range, McKim, Mette, and Hvidston (2014) indicated that there is still a lack of understanding surrounding formative supervision among less experienced principals. The current study showed that there is a degree of self-reliance among principals and their ability to improve teaching through formative supervision among more experienced principals. Generally, principals appear to view themselves as effective leaders, appropriately so; but an important component of principals improving at formative supervision is improving their leadership skills as they gain experience. After all, self-reliance is linked to motivation and independence, and improved leadership skills would improve their abilities to advance teaching through formative supervision (Oplatka, 2012).

Another major finding of the current study was that 93% percent of principals believed that instruction could be improved through formative supervision. This is important for understanding the importance of formative supervision in the improvement of educators from the perspective of principals. Previous research findings indicate that there are significant differences in the formative supervision of teachers between certain types and characteristics of principals. For example, Range et al. (2014) found that a principal's approach in the formative supervision of teachers depends in part on gender. Specifically, gender can impact the way that principals approach formative supervision. Female principals more often preferred district evaluation cycles for formative supervision, while male principals more informal formative supervision approaches such as situational feedback based on teacher need identified in unannounced walkthroughs (Range et al., 2014). While

gender was not a factor for the current study, no significant differences were found with regard to how experience impacted the perceptions of the ability of formative supervision to improve instruction. Rather, there was widespread agreement of the value of formative supervision. This suggests that female principals may find evaluation cycles particularly valuable, while male principals may find unannounced walkthroughs as particularly effective. This may also help explain why more participants found performance evaluations more significant improvers of teaching than found walkthroughs.

Despite this, only 64% principals believed teachers are open to change and, in particular, being influenced in such a way that would improve their teaching. This finding provides grounds for principals holding the position, that their efforts to improve teaching within an institution might be ineffective, regardless of the specific methods or approaches implemented. Perhaps this can be viewed as a shift in responsibility, away from the principals and towards the teachers; creating a contradiction from Hattie (2012) who suggests that the responsibility for improving teachers falls directly on the principal. In contrast this finding could also be interpreted, to reflect the experiences of the principals in the study, and their inability to make significant improvements among some teachers. The lack of any significant difference between the two groups with different levels of experience may indicate that prior experiences or even first-year principal experiences had major impacts on how principals perceive the willingness of teachers to change their behaviors in order to improve teaching.

The MetLife, Inc. (2013) survey found that more than three-quarters of school principals perceived that the job had become too complex, and principals were unable to fully commit to improving teachers. The current study found that 86% of principals indicated that various other duties prevented them from improving instruction through formative supervision. These additional duties seem to distract or obstruct the abilities of principals to improve instruction through formative supervision. In many cases, the principals may simply

not have the time to effectively supervise enough teachers. The 14% of respondents who indicated that other duties do not prevent them from improving instruction through formative supervision may not have quite the duties or the number of teachers at their institutions as the others. In any case, 86% is a large majority, suggesting that most principals likely face this issue. Especially principals with three or less years of experience, who as Oplatka (2013) suggests, may be lacking management and leadership skills.

Making the time for formative supervision can be very difficult at times. The duties of a principal include a certain responsiveness to unexpected events, which can disrupt formative supervision efforts. Time management, then, is a very important skill for principals, especially those with a wide range of duties. Finding the time to be in classrooms and the time to give feedback has been a struggle for many of the respondents.

As Else, (2013) states, having the time available to conduct meaningful formative supervision is necessary for improving teaching. Even when principals have the perfect schedule outlined, the respondents indicated, disruptions cause major problems for ensuring all observations and supervisions are met. Student discipline, parent concerns, other managerial duties come up unexpectedly and become the priority as they occur. As one respondents indicated, a common difficulty in being principal is simply:

“Having the time to give timely feedback. Feedback is the easy part but getting back into the classroom consistently to have those growth conversations between managing the rest of the school is problematic. My greatest challenge regarding formative supervision is the extra tasks I have perform and lack of experience. Time is always going to be a challenge. I also struggle with the fact that the teachers that tend to need the most help are usually the ones who are resistant to feedback. Consistency of available time due to other duties and/or issues that come up suddenly.”



These responses were quite typical among the sample and indicate the potential need for institutional changes of principal duties. They also indicate a need for principals to improve their time management skills. It seems however, as principals make improvements and develop as managers, they tend to have feelings of stagnation (Loeb, Kalogrides and Horng 2010). This finding is supported by Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom, (2004) who indicate that experience also has a negative impact on principal performance.

The significant difference between the two groups involved the third factor, the sixth variable, or latent variable associated with principal self-perception and self-reliance. Participants who had more than three years of experience had a significantly varied view of their abilities to improve teaching through formative supervision constructs such as teacher evaluation. The factors in this variable indicated a greater independence and confidence from the less experienced group. The more experienced principals had more confidence in improving instruction effectively and also demonstrated a preference for written feedback through formative performance evaluations. This finding adds to Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon's (2014) conclusion, that performance evaluations could benefit the teacher by providing specific feedback about performance in writing.

In answering the research questions, an aggregation of the findings should be considered. The first question is how do principal perceptions concerning formative supervision differ based on experience? No significant differences were found in the current study on this combination of measures. Most principals across all groups viewed formative supervision favorably. The second question is how do principal perceptions concerning the formative elements of evaluations differ based on experience? The answer is that more experienced principals tend to prefer written forms of feedback, such as what is found in evaluations, over oral forms, such as walkthroughs that include oral recommendations. The third question is how do principal perceptions concerning formative classroom walkthroughs

differ based on experience? Less experienced principals seem to favor walkthroughs significantly more than more experienced principals, though more research is needed to confirm this finding.

### **Limitations**

The primary limitation of this study was the relatively small sample size. With only 14 participants, the study was unable to foster the sort of statistical support to find some of the differences observed to be significant. A larger sample size is desirable for future studies and would be more likely to produce significant results where such differences existed. The sample was also limited to a particular set of principals within one school district. The results then, may be not highly generalizable.

Another limitation of the study is that the conditions and characteristics of the specific district were not included in the study. While such conditions and characteristics cannot be controlled, accounting for them may help explain some of the distinctions or lack of distinctions between the two groups. Future studies may concentrate on how the conditions and characteristics of certain school systems may impact the duties and efficacy of principals. For example, the current study revealed that more than 80% of the participants had difficulties managing time because of duties that are unrelated to improving teaching. This may be indicative of differences in the duties of the principals across the school systems and the delegation abilities of the principals in these positions, to include principals who have no assistants.

Finally, given the small sample size, only two groups could be categorized in the current study. A study with a larger sample size may have been able to further categorize the participating principals into more groups. For example, there may have been increments of two years up to ten years, providing five research groups instead of two. This may create

additional opportunities for significant differences to be discovered between the various experience levels.

### **Recommendations**

Time management is a major function of principals effectively improving the teaching at a school through formative supervision. The position of principal carries with it many duties unrelated to improving teaching. As a result, principals have to be particularly skillful at managing time and scheduling (and rescheduling) supervisions, walkthroughs, and feedback associated with both.

A related recommendation regards district structures. Allowing principals to delegate certain tasks and duties would likely increase the abilities of principals to manage their time and improve teaching through supervision and assessment. By offering greater support to principals, such as personnel to deal with only special services issues or student discipline could improve the conditions for principals to improve teaching.

Principals should pay additional attention to improving the methods and approaches surrounding formative supervision. Both written and oral forms of instruction and evaluation can be improved through workshops and similar means of professional development. Given that more experienced principals seem to prefer written forms of evaluation, it may be worthwhile for institutions to ensure that principals receive annual training in the written evaluation of teachers. The combination of this and freeing up more time for principals to engage in supervision and evaluation may contribute substantially to improvements in teaching.

A final area of concern regards the perception of teachers as being resistant to change. Institutions can seek to create an organizational culture that promotes constant professional and educational growth, from both its principals and teachers. There may be other effective

means to promote the willingness of teachers to change. Improving the charismatic leadership of principals may be one of them.

### **Summary**

The results of the current study provide support for experience playing a limited role in the perceptions of principals on the means to improve teaching at their institutions. Most of the sets of constructs showed no significant differences of grouped variables of principal experience. This finding suggests that experience may not play a significant role in shaping how principals view formative supervision in relation to improving teaching. There was widespread agreement that formative supervision improved teaching, but there was somewhat less agreement on the unwillingness of teachers to make the necessary changes to improve and what approaches to take.

On the other hand, the results did indicate that principles with more than three years of experience had a significantly different perception about their abilities on the degree of self-reliance and the perception that their abilities to improve teaching through formative supervision. In fact, the results suggest that the more experienced group was significantly different in their positive perception associated with formative supervision and their confidence in improving instruction effectively. These results suggest that more experienced principals are more independent and have more confidence in their abilities to improve teaching through formative supervision. Written evaluations were also favored more by more experienced principals. Given that the sample size of the current study was small, future research may seek a greater sample size and further differentiate the experience levels of principals to pinpoint the impacts of experience.

### References

- Achilles, C. M., & Tienken, C. H. (2005). Professional development and educational improvement? In L.W. Hughes (Ed.), *Current issues in school leadership*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaun Associated, Publishers.
- Ayeni, A. J. (2012). Assessment of principals' supervisory roles for quality assurance in secondary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria. *World Journal of Education*, 2(1), 62-69. doi:10.5430/wje.v2n1p62
- Balu, R., Horng, E. L., & Loeb, S. (2010). Strategic personnel management: How school principals recruit, retain, develop and remove teachers. *School Leadership Research, Working Paper*, 10-6. Stanford, Calif.: Institute for Research on Education Policy and Practice.
- Balyer, A. (2012). Transformational leadership behaviors of school principals: A qualitative research based on teachers' perceptions. *International Online Journal of Educational Sciences*, 4(3), 581-591. Retrieved from <http://www.acarindex.com/dosyalar/makale/acarindex-1423904284.pdf>
- Bambrick-Santoyo, P., & Peiser, B. M. (2012). *Leverage leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Black, P. (2015) Formative assessment – an optimistic but incomplete vision, *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 22(1), 161-177, doi:10.1080/0969594X.2014.999643
- Blase, J. (1987). Dimensions of effective school leadership: The teacher's perspective. *American Educational Research Journal*, 24(4), 589-610. doi:10.3102/00028312024004589
- Bloom, B. S.; Hastings, J. T. & Madaus, G. F. (Eds.). (1971). *Handbook on the formative and summative evaluation of student learning*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

- Bossert, S. T., Dwyer, D. C., Rowan, B., & Lee, G. V. (1982). The instructional management role of the principal. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 18(3), 34-64.  
doi:10.1177/0013161X82018003004
- Clark, D., Martorell, P., Rockoff, J., & Urban Institute, National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research (CALDER). (2009). *School principals and school performance. working paper 38* Distributed by ERIC Clearinghouse.
- Clifford, M., Hansen, U. J., & Wraight, S. (2014). Practical Guide to Designing Comprehensive Principal Evaluation Systems: A Tool to Assist in the Development of Principal Evaluation Systems. *Center on Great Teachers and Leaders*. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED555668.pdf>
- Daresh, J. C. (2007). Mentoring for beginning principals: Revisiting the past or preparing for the future? *Mid-Western Educational Researcher*, 20(4), 21-27.
- Downey, C. J., Steffy, B. E., English, F. W., Frase, L. E., & Poston, W. K. (2004). *Three-Minute Classroom Walk-Through*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- DuFour, R., Marzano, R. J., & Ebrary. (2011). *Leaders of learning*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.
- DuFour, R., & Mattos, M. (2013). How do principals really improve schools? *Educational Leadership*, 70(7), 34-40. Retrieved from <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educationalleadership.aspx>
- Else, D. F. (2013). *The role of principal leadership in achievement beyond test scores: An examination of leadership, differentiated curriculum and high-achieving students* (Order No. 3563844). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1400478307).

- Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015, Pub.L. 114-95 (2015). Retrieved from [http://edworkforce.house.gov/uploadedfiles/every\\_student\\_succeeds\\_act\\_-\\_conference\\_report.pdf](http://edworkforce.house.gov/uploadedfiles/every_student_succeeds_act_-_conference_report.pdf)
- Faul, F., Erdfelder, E., Buchner, A., & Lang, A. G. (2009). Statistical power analyses using g\*power 3.1: Tests for correlation and regression analysis. *Behavior research methods*, 41(4), 1149-1160.
- Fessler, R., & Burke, P. J. (1983). The regions and zones of teacher behavior. *Educational Leadership*, 40(7), 70-72. Retrieved from [http://www.ascd.com/ASCD/pdf/journals/ed\\_lead/el\\_198304\\_fessler.pdf](http://www.ascd.com/ASCD/pdf/journals/ed_lead/el_198304_fessler.pdf)
- Frase, L. E., & Sorenson, L. (1992). Teacher motivation and satisfaction: Impact on participatory management. *National Association of Secondary School Principals' Bulletin*, 76(540), 37-43. doi:10.1177/019263659207654007
- Fritz, C., & Miller, G. (2003). Supervisory options for instructional leaders in education. *Journal of Leadership Education*, 2(2), 13-27. Retrieved from [http://aole.memberlodge.org/Resources/Documents/jole/2003\\_winter/JOLE\\_2\\_2.pdf#page=17](http://aole.memberlodge.org/Resources/Documents/jole/2003_winter/JOLE_2_2.pdf#page=17)
- Gates Foundation. (2013). *Measures of effective teaching (MET)*. Retrieved from <http://www.gatesfoundation.org/united-states/Pages/measures-of-effective-teaching-fact-sheet.aspx>.
- Gauntlett, N. (2007). *Literature review on formative assessment in higher education*. Middlesex University. Retrieved from [http://www.proiac.uff.br/sites/default/files/feedback\\_assessment\\_higher\\_educ.pdf](http://www.proiac.uff.br/sites/default/files/feedback_assessment_higher_educ.pdf)
- Glickman, C., Gordon, S., & Ross-Gordon, J. (2013). *The basic guide to supervision and instructional leadership*. Boston, MA: Pearson.

- Goldhorn, J., Kearney, W., & Webb, M. (2013). Classroom walkthrough practices: Lessons learned from 10,000 observations. *National Forum of Educational Administration and Supervision Journal*, 30(3), 20–27. Retrieved from <http://www.nationalforum.com/Journals/NFEASJ/NFEASJ.htm>
- Grissom, J., Loeb, S., & Master, B. (2013). Effective instructional time use for school leaders: Longitudinal evidence for observations of principals. *Educational Researcher*, 42, 433–444. doi:10.3102/0013189X13510020
- Hallinger, P., & Murphy, J. (1985). Assessing the instructional management behavior of principals. *The Elementary School Journal*, 86, 217–247. doi:10.1086/461445
- Hallinger, P., Heck, R. H., & Murphy, J. (2014). Teacher evaluation and school improvement: An analysis of the evidence. *Educational Assessment Evaluation and Accountability* 26(1), 5–28. doi:10.1007/s11092-013-9179-5
- Harris, A., Jones, M., Cheah, K. S. L., Devadason, E., & Adams, D. (2017). Exploring Principals' Instructional Leadership Practices in Malaysia: Insights and Implications. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 55(2). doi:10.1108/JEA-05-2016-0051
- Hattie, J. (2012). *Visible learning for teachers: Maximizing impact on learning*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Hornig, E., Kalogrides, D., & Loeb, S. (2009). *Principal preferences and the unequal distribution of principals across schools*. Washington, DC: National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research and the Urban Institute.
- Kerr, K. A., Marsh, J. A., Ikemoto, G. S., Darilek, H., & Barney, H. (2006). Strategies to promote data use for instructional improvement: Actions, outcomes, and lessons from three urban districts. *American Journal of Education*, 112(4), 496–520.



- Knight, S., Edmondson, J., Lloyd, G., Arbaugh, F., Nolan, J., & Whitney, A. (2012). Examining the complexity of assessment and accountability in teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 63, 301–303. doi:10.1177/0022487112460200.
- Kuchah, K. (2016). ELT in difficult circumstances: challenges, possibilities and future directions. In: *49th Annual Conference, International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language - IATEFL, 2015*, 2015-04-11 - 2015-04-14. Retrieved from [http://opus.bath.ac.uk/49130/1/IATEFL\\_Conference\\_Plenary\\_HK.pdf](http://opus.bath.ac.uk/49130/1/IATEFL_Conference_Plenary_HK.pdf)
- Leithwood, K., Seashore Louis, K., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). *How leadership influences student learning*. New York, NY: Wallace Foundation.
- Loeb, S., Kalogrides, D., & Horng, E. L. (2010). Principal preferences and the uneven distribution of principals across schools. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 32(2), 205-229.
- Louis, K. S., Leithwood, K., Wahlstrom, K. L., Anderson, S. E., Michlin, M., & Mascall, B. (2010). Learning from leadership: Investigating the links to improved student learning. *Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement/University of Minnesota and Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto*, 42, 50. Retrieved from [http://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu.documents/8530141/learning-from-leadership\\_final-report](http://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu.documents/8530141/learning-from-leadership_final-report)
- Margo, J., M. Benton, K. Withers and S. Sodha (2008), *Those Who Can?*, Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) Publications.
- Marsh, J. A., Kerr, K. A., Ikemoto, G. S., Darilek, H., Suttorp, M., Zimmer, R. W., & Barney, H. (2005). *The role of districts in fostering instructional improvement*. Santa Monica, CA: Rand.

- Marshall, K. (2010). *Rethinking teacher supervision and evaluation*. Professional development workshop presented at the Massachusetts Elementary School Principals' Association, Marlboro, MA.
- Martinez-Miller, P., & Cervone, L. (2008). *Breaking through to effective teaching: a walk-through protocol linking student learning and professional practice*. New York, NY: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Marzano, R. J. (2010). *Formative assessment & standards-based grading*. Bloomington, IN: Marzano Research Laboratory.
- Mendels, P. (2012). The effective principal: Five pivotal practices that shape instructional leadership. *Journal of Staff Development*, 33(1), 54-58. Retrieved from <http://www.bwschools.net/view/2352.pdf>
- Minnear-Peplinski, R. M. (2009). Principals' and teachers' perceptions of teacher supervision. *Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Nevada Las Vegas*. Retrieved from <http://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/thesesdissertations/69/>
- Motivating teachers to improve instruction. (2009, July 14). Retrieved from [http://www.osba.org/Resources/Article/Employee\\_Management/Motivating\\_Teachers\\_to\\_Improve\\_Instruction.aspx](http://www.osba.org/Resources/Article/Employee_Management/Motivating_Teachers_to_Improve_Instruction.aspx)
- Murphy, S. E. (2010). *The American recovery and reinvestment act of 2009: Growing a stronger workforce: The experience of the Yuma private industry council highlights notable opportunities for creating organizational renewal and growth within the workforce*. American Society for Training & Development, Inc.
- National Council of Teachers of English (n.d.) *Formative Assessment That Truly Informs Instruction* [http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/formative-assessment/formative-assessment\\_full](http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/formative-assessment/formative-assessment_full)

- Ní Chróinín, D., & Cosgrave, C. (2013) Implementing formative assessment in primary physical education: teacher perspectives and experiences, *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 18(2), 219-233, doi:10.1080/17408989.2012.666787
- No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), Pub.L. 107-110 (2002).
- No, U. Ê. (2016). 2 Teacher evaluation in a nutshell. In S. J. Zepeda (Ed.), *The Leader's Guide to Working with Underperforming Teachers: Overcoming Marginal Teaching and Getting Results*, (pp. 14-32). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Nzambi, N. P. (2012). *Role of the Headteacher in Instructional Supervision as Perceived by Teachers in Secondary Schools in Kitui District*. Kitui County-Kenya. Kenyatta University.
- Oplatka, I. (2004). The principal's career stage: An absent element in leadership perspectives. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 7(1), 43–55.  
doi:10.1080/1360312032000154540
- Ovando, M. N. (2005). Building instructional leaders' capacity to deliver constructive feedback to teachers. *Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education*, 18(3), 171-183.  
doi:10.1007/s11092-006-9018-z
- Papa, F., Lankford, H., & Wyckoff, J. (2002). *The attributes and career paths of principals: Implications for improving policy*. Albany, NY: University at Albany, State University of New York. Retrieved from  
[http://www.teacherpolicyresearch.org/portals/1/pdfs/Career\\_Paths\\_of\\_Principals.pdf](http://www.teacherpolicyresearch.org/portals/1/pdfs/Career_Paths_of_Principals.pdf)
- Papay, J. P. (2012). Refocusing the debate: Assessing the purposes and tools of teacher evaluation. *Harvard Educational Review*, 82, 123–141.  
doi:10.17763/haer.82.1.v40p0833345w6384
- Pijanowski, J., Hewitt, P., & Brady, K. (2009). Superintendents' perceptions of the principal shortage. *NASSP Bulletin*, 53(2), 85-95. doi:10.1177/0192636509343963

- Pitler, H., & Goodwin, B. (2008). Classroom walkthroughs: Learning to see the trees and the forest. *The Learning Principal*, 58, 9–11. Retrieved from <http://learningforward.org/publications/learning-principal#.VfRuKfSGNS0>
- Poirier, D. O. (2009). A principal's and teachers' perceptions and understandings of instructional leadership: A case study of one school. *Electronic Theses*. Retrieved from <https://ecommons.usask.ca/handle/10388/etd-10272009-205525>
- Range, B. G., Duncan, H. E., Scherz, S. D., & Haines, C. A. (2012). School leaders' perceptions about incompetent teachers: Implications for supervision and evaluation. National Association of Secondary School Principals. *NASSP Bulletin*, 96(4), 302-322. doi:10.1177/0192636512459554
- Range, B., Hewitt, P., & Young, S. (2014). Principals' perceived supervisory behaviors regarding marginal teachers in two states. *Administrative Issues Journal*, 1(7), 1-12. Retrieved from ERIC (EJ1058486).
- Range, B. G., McKim, C., Mette, I. M., & Hvidston, D. J. (2014). Aspiring principals' perspectives about teacher supervision and evaluation: Insights for educational leadership preparation programs. *Educational Leadership Review*, 15(1), 1–17.
- Rettig, P. R., Lampe, S., & Garcia, P. (2000). Department chair online resource center supervising your faculty with a differentiated model. *The Department Chair*, 1(2), 1-21. Retrieved from: [http://www.middletowncityschools.org/cms/lib7/NY01913810/Centricity/Domain/58/rettig\\_lampe\\_garcia.pdf](http://www.middletowncityschools.org/cms/lib7/NY01913810/Centricity/Domain/58/rettig_lampe_garcia.pdf)
- Ross, D. A., Richler, J. J., & Gauthier, I. (2015). Reliability of Composite Task Measurements of Holistic Face Processing. *Behavior Research Methods*, 47(3), 736-743. <http://doi.org/10.3758/s13428-014-0497-4>

- Shoho, A. R., & Barnett, B. G. (2010). The realities of new principals: Challenges, joys, and sorrows. *Journal of School Leadership, 20*(5), 561-596.
- Stein, M. K., & Nelson, B. S. (2003). Leadership content knowledge. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 25*(4), 423-448.
- Stevenson, D. A. (2008). *Mentorship and the challenges of novice school principals A study of the views of selected elementary school prinicpals*. (Order No. MR53082). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.
- Stout, J., Kachur, D., & Edwards, C. (2013). *Classroom walkthroughs to improve teaching and learning*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Supovitz, J. A., & Weathers, J. (2004). *Dashboard lights: Monitoring implementation of district instructional reform strategies*. Philadelphia: Consortium for Policy Research in Education, University of Pennsylvania.
- Valli, L., & Buese, D. (2007). The changing roles of teachers in an era of high-stakes accountability. *American Educational Research Journal, 44*(3), 519-558.
- Weisberg, D., Sexton, S., Mulhern, J., & Keeling, D. (2009). *The widget effect: Our national failure to acknowledge and act on differences in teacher effectiveness*. Brooklyn, NY: The New Teacher Project. Retrieved from <http://widgeteffect.org/downloads/TheWidgetEffect.pdf>
- William, D. (2014). The formative evaluation of teaching performance. *Center for Strategic Education, Occasional Paper, 137*. East Melbourne, Australia: Centre for Strategic Education.
- Willingham, D., & Rotherham A. (2009) *www.ASCD.org*. Retrieved 1/20/11 from <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/sept09/vol67/num01/21st-century@-The-Challenges-Ahead.aspx>

Wyoming Administrative Rules (2016). Retrieved from:

<https://rules.wyo.gov/chapter29/wyoming/secretaryofstate.aspx>

## Appendix A

### Introductory Email to Principals

Initial Email Letter

Dear (name of principal),

I am requesting your help in completing a research study as part of the University of Wyoming's course work connected with my doctoral program. I am interested in your perceptions and knowledge surrounding formative supervision. Remember, formative supervision allows principals to monitor, assess, and systemically address teacher performance with the intent of improving instruction. One of the possible benefits for you in participating is your own reflection on formative supervision.

I am asking you to please complete a short survey surrounding formative supervisor and feedback. Only staff members who (a) serve as a building level principal or assistant principal and (b) work regularly with the formative supervision approaches on performance evaluations and classroom walkthroughs are being invited to participate. Participation in this survey is not required or may be ended at any time by closing the web browser.

Safeguards are in place, your responses will remain anonymous and the potential risk of participating in this study is minimal. The survey will be online and your responses will not be shared, and any information that maybe identifiable to you will be deleted.

Thank you in advance, your input and knowledge is much appreciated. I will be happy to answer questions at any time. Please click the link below:

Sincerely,

Jason D Fuss  
Doctoral Candidate  
University of Wyoming  
[fussj@sw2.k12.wy.us](mailto:fussj@sw2.k12.wy.us)  
307-872-8813

You may also contact:  
David Hvidston, Ed.D.  
College of Education  
307-766-3145

Courtney McKim, Ph.D.  
Educational Research  
307-766-4803

**Again thank you for participating!**

**Appendix B**

**Reminder Email**

Dear Principal,

This is a reminder that the deadline is approaching for you to potentially complete the survey as part of my research for the University of Wyoming's course work connected with the doctoral program.

Again thank you very much for helping.

Sincerely,

Jason D Fuss  
Doctoral Candidate  
University of Wyoming  
[fussj@sw2.k12.wy.us](mailto:fussj@sw2.k12.wy.us)  
307-872-8813

David Hvidston, Ed.D.  
College of Education  
307-766-3145

Courtney McKim, Ph.D.  
Educational Research  
307-766-4803



**Appendix C**

**Survey**

Questionnaire to principals regarding their perceptions of formative supervision

*Instructions:* Please respond to the following by choosing how much you agree with each statement.

|   | Strongly Disagree     | Disagree              | Neutral               | Agree                 | Strongly Agree        |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Teacher evaluation improves instruction.                              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Classroom walkthroughs improve instruction.                           | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Instructional feedback is more effective in written form.             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Instructional feedback is more effective when given orally.           | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Principals can intentionally improve teacher instruction.             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Formative feedback from teacher evaluations is effective.             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Formative feedback from walkthroughs is effective.                    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Evaluations are best when trying to improve instruction.              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Walk throughs are best when trying to improve instruction.            | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I prefer walkthroughs over teacher evaluation.                        | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I am skilled at management tasks.                                     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I am knowledgeable about the ways principals can improve instruction. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

|  |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Principal feedback is similar across teacher evaluations and walkthroughs, in regard to improving instruction. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I am more honest with feedback from classroom walkthroughs.  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I am more honest with feedback on teacher evaluations.   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I struggle with formative supervision because teachers are resistant to change.                                | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I struggle with formative supervision because I need additional professional development.                      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I struggle with formative supervision because other principal duties take most of my time.                     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| The task of improving instruction is difficult based on my experiences.  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I have improved instruction using teacher evaluations.   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I have improved instruction using classroom walkthroughs.  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

20. What are your greatest challenges as a principal, when it comes to formative supervision?

21. What support do you need as a principal to improve your effectiveness in formative supervision?

Demographic Questions

Your Gender: Male\_\_\_ Female\_\_\_

More experienced at:  
 \_\_\_ Elementary \_\_\_ Secondary

Experience as a Head Principal:  
 \_\_\_3 or less years \_\_\_more than 3 years

**Appendix D****Automatic Thank You Email**

Dear Principal,

On behalf of the Committee and myself, I would like to express my appreciation for your participation in my Ed.D. Project. I very much hope that we can all benefit from this work and the ideas we may have about improving teacher effectiveness.

Once again, I would like to convey my deepest appreciation for your contribution and wish you good health and happiness in the years ahead. The greatest work we can do is preparing our children for the future.

Sincerely,

Jason D Fuss  
Doctoral Candidate  
University of Wyoming  
[fussj@sw2.k12.wy.us](mailto:fussj@sw2.k12.wy.us)  
307-872-8813

David Hvidston, Ed.D.  
College of Education  
307-766-3145

Courtney McKim, Ph.D.  
Educational Research  
307-766-4803

**Appendix E****Permission to Conduct Research**

October 15, 2017

Mrs. Donna Little Kaumo, Ed.S.  
Superintendent of Schools  
Sweetwater County School District #2  
325 Monroe Avenue  
Green River, WY 82935

RE: Permission to Conduct Research Study

Dear Mrs. Little Kaumo:

I am writing you to request permission to conduct a research study on building principals in Sweetwater County School District #2. I am currently enrolled at the University of Wyoming in the Ed.D. Program for educational Administration. The study will be titled: The Perceptions of Principals Regarding the Formative Supervision of Teachers. Your approval would allow me to survey the principals. Their participation would be strictly voluntary and pose a minimal risk to those who participate. The survey results will be analyzed and will remain absolutely confidential and anonymous. In the event that this study is published only the results and averages will be released. There is no cost to the participants as a result of the study.

Your consideration and approval is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions or concerns please contact me at: [fussj@swcsd2.org](mailto:fussj@swcsd2.org)

Sincerely,

Jason D. Fuss, Ed.S.

Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

cc: David Hvidston, Ed.D. (Committee Co-Chair)  
Courtney McKim, Ph.D. (Committee Co-Chair)

**Appendix F**  
**IRB Approval**

UNIVERSITY  
OF WYOMING

Vice President for Research & Economic Development  
1000 E. University Avenue, Department 3355 • Room 305/308, Old Main • Laramie, WY 82071  
(307) 766-5353 • (307) 766-5320 • fax (307) 766-2608 • [www.uwyo.edu/research](http://www.uwyo.edu/research)

December 8, 2017

Jason Fuss  
Student  
Education  
University of Wyoming

David Hvidston  
Assistant Professor  
Professional Studies  
University of Wyoming

***Protocol #20171208JF01801***

Re: IRB Proposal "*The Perceptions of Principals Regarding the Formative Supervision of Teachers*"

Dear Jason and David:

The proposal referenced above qualifies for exempt review and is approved as one that would not involve more than minimal risk to participants. Our exempt review and approval will be reported to the IRB at their next convened meeting.

Any significant change(s) in the research/project protocol(s) from what was approved should be submitted to the IRB (Protocol Update Form) for review and approval prior to initiating any change. Further information and the forms referenced above may be accessed at the "Human Subjects" link on the Office of Research and Economic Development website: <http://www.uwyo.edu/research/human-subjects/index.html>.

You may proceed with the project/research and we wish you luck in the endeavor. Please feel free to call me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

*Nichole Person*

Nichole Person  
Staff Assistant, Research Office  
On behalf of the Chairman,  
Institutional Review Board

