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Teacher and Administrator Perceptions of the Teacher Excellence and Support System (TESS) in Arkansas

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate differences in Arkansas teachers' and building-level administrators' perceptions regarding the purpose of the Arkansas TESS teacher evaluation system, whether TESS authentically assesses teacher effectiveness, how teacher evaluation data are used, and how the TESS process supports learner-centered professional development. Additionally, the relationship of teacher and administrator demographics on their perceptions of TESS was explored. The results of this study highlight the differences in perceptions in all areas questioned along with misalignment in perceptions among teachers. Overall, the study points toward the need for clear communication and the cultivation of relationships among building administrators and teachers.

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Chapter One - Introduction

Public school reform efforts address everything from student learning standards and school choice to methods for evaluating schools. However, when asked to evaluate their local public schools, Americans give much more positive feedback than when asked about the nation's schools (Henderson & Howell, 2014). Regardless of this phenomenon, national and state legislators continue to pass legislation to reform what some consider to be our failing schools.

Teacher evaluation is central to the public school reform movement. According to a report published by the National Council on Teacher Quality (2015), where teacher policy has been tracked for a decade, no policy has seen such dramatic transformation as the teacher evaluation policy. One of the factors widely used as a determinant of school success is a quality teacher (Grant, Stronge, & Popp, 2008). The education community has seen an explosion in seeking ways to define and measure effective teaching, to reward that effectiveness, and to retain quality teachers (Bryk, Harding, & Greenberg, 2012).

Many definitions of teacher effectiveness exist. Range, Duncan, Scherz, and Haines (2012) write that effective teachers have fewer classroom disruptions, have better classroom management skills, and exhibit better rapport with students than ineffective teachers. They also vary their instructional strategies, have high student engagement, and employ various levels of thinking when questioning students. Harris, Ingle, and Rutledge (2014) offer a view arguing that effectiveness is generally interpreted to mean an influence on student outcomes, and the value a teacher adds to a student's success. When comparing United States teachers with Korean teachers, Kim and Youngs (2016) found that teachers and principals in the United States placed more emphasis on instruction, content knowledge, and data than their Korean counterparts. With

varying interpretations of teacher effectiveness, it is no surprise that evaluating a teacher for his/her effectiveness offers challenges.

Teacher Evaluation Reform

States have autonomy to design and implement teacher evaluation systems that identify effective and ineffective teachers independent of federal influence because of the implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in December of 2015 (Steinberg, 2016). ESSA was signed by President Obama and was a bipartisan federal act that reauthorized the fifty-year-old Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Prior to 2015, schools followed federal prescriptions enacted in the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), which was the reauthorization of ESEA signed in 2002. The NCLB assessment focus was on standardized testing and testing every student yearly (Jennings, 2015).

Another influence on the renewed focus for reform in teacher evaluation were the guidelines for Race to the Top (RttT) Program funding, also initiated by President Obama in 2009. The RttT initiative provided $4.35 billion for a competitive grant program designed to encourage states to create conditions for innovation and reform (USDOE, 2009). One component of RttT was “great teachers and leaders” for which states and districts were required to reform teacher evaluation systems to better capture teacher effectiveness so that effective teachers were rewarded and ineffective teachers were supported in their improvement or removed (Lavigne & Chamberlain, 2014). Steinberg (2016) stated that since 2009, 88% of states and 89% of the largest 25 districts and the District of Columbia redesigned and implemented new teacher evaluation systems. Arkansas was one of many states that redesigned the teacher evaluation system.

Teacher Evaluation in Arkansas

Students in Arkansas, the state in which this study was conducted, have historically underperformed on national standardized exams. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) which is the only nationally-representative continuing assessment in America, is administered periodically to a sample of students in grades four, eight, and twelve in core subjects (ADE, 2017). According to the 2015 Nation's Report Card (2017), Arkansas had 27% of Arkansas eighth graders scored at or above proficient in reading compared to the national average of 33% scoring at or above proficient. These results placed Arkansas 43rd in the nation. In math, Arkansas eighth grade students were 7% under the national average, giving Arkansas a ranking of 42nd in the United States.

Accumulated research evidence over the past decade suggests that teachers have an impact on student learning (Charalambous, Komitis, Papacharalambous, & Stefanou, 2014). Research relating student achievement to teaching effectiveness and school effectiveness has a long history (Turkan & Buzick, 2014). Traditionally, "good" teaching was determined by evaluations completed by the administrator using checklists that were not representative of shared values and assumptions about good teaching (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). These checklists might have included items such as the teacher is neat and well-groomed or desks are usable and in good condition.

In 2011, the Arkansas General Assembly passed the Teacher Excellence and Support System (TESS) that outlined a system to support effective teaching and learning in Arkansas schools. Prior to adopting the TESS model, almost 90% of Arkansas school districts were using different evaluation instruments that often included a vague checklist of classroom practices (TESS Handbook, 2016). Additionally, the standards and protocols for completing the checklists

and evaluation systems were nonexistent prior to the implementation of the TESS model. According to the TESS Handbook (2016), evaluation expectations were unclear and did not incorporate rubrics for objective measurement. This subjective and ambiguous system provided little targeted feedback from administrators for teachers to improve their professional practice to enhance student learning. However, with the adoption of the Framework for Teaching, Arkansas legislators attempted to make teacher evaluation more robust and relevant (TESS Handbook, 2016).

The TESS model borrows heavily from Danielson's (2007) Framework for Teaching. The Framework for Teaching identifies aspects of a teacher's responsibilities that have been documented through empirical studies and theoretical research as promoting improved student learning. The Framework for Teaching contains four domains upon which educators are evaluated. These domains include planning and preparation, the classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities. Each of these domains consists of components with descriptors clarifying further the domain. Providing educators with a system that defines and supports effective teaching and promotes professional learning was among the many objectives of the Arkansas General Assembly when adopting this model.

Problem Statement

Research that supports using teacher evaluation to strengthen schools exists (Murphy, Hallinger, & Heck, 2013). Additionally, the literature largely supports the assumption that teachers' willingness and ability to improve their practice over time is essential to making gains in teacher effectiveness (Kraft & Gilmour, 2016). However, evaluation feedback is unlikely to result in professional growth if a teacher is unwilling or unable to co-construct with guidance and enact changes. Furthermore, using the evaluation process to promote professional learning

requires building administrators to confront perceptions among teachers who believe that evaluation is punitive and primarily intended to dismiss low-performing teachers. If teachers and administrators are not aligned in their understanding of the evaluation system teaching and student learning will be marginalized (Kraft & Gilmour, 2016).

Since the inception of TESS in Arkansas, no study has explored the degree to which administrators and teachers are aligned in their understanding of the purpose of teacher evaluation, the authenticity of the process, the use of teacher evaluation data, the process of how TESS supports learner-centered professional development, and if teacher and administrator demographics relate to divergent perceptions. If a perceptual gap exists, administrators and educational leaders in the state could use the results of this study to create systems that better meet teacher needs in the evaluation process. Because administrators play a critical role in developing a school-wide culture of high expectations for all, awareness of this gap is essential to future planning (Kraft & Gilmour, 2016).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative non-experimental study was to investigate differences in Arkansas teachers' and building-level administrators' perceptions regarding the purpose of the Arkansas Teacher Excellence and Support System (TESS), whether TESS authentically assesses teacher effectiveness, how teacher evaluation data are used, and how the TESS process supports learner-centered professional development. Additionally, the relationship of teacher and administrator demographics on their perceptions of TESS was explored. The researcher sought to determine the relationship among teacher and administrator alignment regarding the TESS evaluation model and a teacher's self-efficacy in improving his/her professional practice. A

quantitative study was conducted where a survey was administered for teachers and administrators in the state of Arkansas.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide this study:

Research Question One Is there a difference between how building administrators and teachers perceive the TESS model as an authentic process for assessing teacher effectiveness?

Research Question Two Is there a difference between how building administrators and teachers perceive the data collected during the TESS process is used?

Research Question Three How do building administrators and teachers differ in their perceptions that the TESS model assures participation in learner-centered professional development?

Research Question Four How do perceptions of building administrators and teachers differ based on demographics (years of experience, gender, age, grade level taught, size of district, regional location of district)?

Theoretical Framework

Charlotte Danielson (2007) developed a framework for teaching that contains four domains which encompass components for a teacher's professional practice. The domains include planning and preparation, the classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities. Within each domain are components that further describe the desired behaviors. Descriptors of teacher actions are outlined and include unsatisfactory, basic, proficient, or distinguished categories. According to Danielson (2007), the framework aims to describe all of teaching. It refers to what occurs in the classroom and what happens beyond the classroom walls. Danielson (2007) described the domains in the following way:

> Domain 2 (The Classroom Environment) and Domain 3 (Instruction) are demonstrated principally through a teacher's interaction with students. But many other components, including all of Domain 4 (Professional Responsibilities), are manifested in the interactions a teacher has with families; colleagues, both within the school and district and in larger groups, such as professional organizations and university classes; and the community of business and civic leaders. Domain 1 (Planning and Preparation) is revealed through a teacher's plans for instruction. Although the success of those plans is only fully demonstrated in the classroom and primarily through what happens in Domain 3 (Instruction), the success of the instructional design *as a design* is revealed through unit and lesson plans. (p. 19)

Building administrators make observations of both students' and teachers' behaviors and make inferences that relate to the standards of conduct established in the class (Danielson, 2007). For instance, if there are no noticeable misbehaviors by students, a principal might infer that teacher-driven standards are in place for how students conduct themselves.

Danielson (2012) suggested one purpose of creating this teacher evaluation framework is to ensure quality teacher actions. This framework gives a consistent definition of good teaching and allows for a shared understanding of the definition. Additionally, having a common language to describe practice increases the value of the conversations that ensue from classroom observations. To have significant conversations about quality teaching practices, a school must have skilled evaluators that recognize examples and evidence of the different domain components and can engage with teachers in productive conversations about their practice. Evaluators must also have a differentiated approach that considers the need of beginning teachers versus experienced teachers.

The other purpose Danielson (2012) had in creating the framework for teaching was to promote professional development. The evaluation process allows for collaborative professional conversations between teachers and observers that are purposeful. A commitment to improving instructional practices and professional learning is not important simply because teachers are

poor at their practice, but rather teachers have the responsibility to be involved in a career-long quest to improve their practice.

Importance of This Study

The Arkansas Department of Education responded to the 2011 Arkansas General Assembly's passage of legislation that sought to standardize teacher evaluation systems. TESS provides statutory direction for reform of teacher and leader evaluation systems. TESS serves as an initial blueprint to operationalize standardized, valid, and reliable evaluation and support systems which focus on the professional growth of educators as measured by professional practice and student growth (Arkansas Department of Education website, 2017). The Arkansas Department of Education (2017) asserted that the teacher and leader evaluation system is a critical area of reform if educational systems are to improve the effectiveness of instruction to ultimately close achievement gaps and ensure access to College and Career Readiness Standards for all students.

This study investigated Arkansas teachers' and principals' perceptions regarding the purpose of teacher evaluation, how the current evaluation system authentically assesses teacher effectiveness, how evaluation data are used, and how the TESS model supports learner-centered professional development. Principals can explore whether variance in perceptions exist and determine appropriate actions to address gaps in teacher and principal perception. This could have implications for how principals achieve a culture of continuous learning and providing meaningful professional development. Principals cannot be solely responsible for developing the systems and structures, but they must support teachers and other stakeholders in a way that encourages their active engagement and participation in decisions about professional development (DeMatthews, 2015), and their sense of self-efficacy. Erdem and Demirel (2007)

state “a teacher’s sense of self-efficacy not only affects the expectations of a teacher having success or failure, but self-efficacy influences motivation through goal setting” (p. 574). Teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs influence decisions that are evaluated with the TESS model, like classroom management, teaching and motivating students for learning (Erdem & Demirel, 2007). Additionally, state leaders can use this teacher evaluation information to gauge the alignment of implementation practices across the state.

Delimitations

1. In this study, the perceptions of principals and teachers in Arkansas were studied. The TESS rubric was referenced. There are multiple versions of the Arkansas TESS rubric for different teaching positions. Only surveys completed by teachers evaluated with the Arkansas Teacher rubric will be used. Library media specialists, instructional specialists, gifted and talented coordinators, speech language pathologists, and counselors were excluded.
2. Only public school systems in Arkansas were involved in the study. Open enrollment public charter schools and private schools may use the evaluation system but were not included in this study.

Assumptions

According to Pyrczak and Bruce (2011), an assumption is “a condition this is believed to be true even though the direct evidence of its truth is either absent or very limited” (p. 73). This study focuses on teachers’ and principals’ knowledge of the Arkansas TESS teacher evaluation tool. The following are the assumptions of this study:

1. All teachers and administrators in this study have been exposed to or have participated in the TESS evaluation system and therefore have some knowledge of the system.

2. All administrators in this study, which in Arkansas are typically building principals and assistant principals, have been trained on evaluating teachers and using the TESS system.
3. Participants' responses to the survey were honest, had integrity, and their willingness to respond had an impact on the responses.

Definition of Key Terms

Teacher Effectiveness

Teacher effectiveness in Arkansas is measured with a rubric based on Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching (2007). An annual overall rating is assigned to teachers using four performance ratings, distinguished, proficient, basic, and unsatisfactory. Teacher effectiveness is defined as a teacher scoring proficient or distinguished on his/her overall rating.

Evaluator

An evaluator is any person in Arkansas that is licensed by the State Board of Education as an administrator, is designated as the person responsible for evaluating teachers, and is an employee of a school district. Evaluators must successfully complete all training and certification requirements set forth by the Arkansas Department of Education before they can conduct summative evaluations. For this study, the terms "administrator" and "building administrator" are used synonymously which include principals and assistant principals.

Teacher Excellence and Support System (TESS)

TESS is statewide teacher evaluation system in Arkansas that provides support, collaboration, feedback and targeted professional development opportunities aimed at ensuring effective teaching and improving student learning. The system is based on Danielson's (2007) framework for teaching.

Learner-centered Professional Development

Learner-centered professional development are activities that a teacher participates in after collaboration with an evaluator identifies areas on which a teacher should focus. Additionally, the activities are identified and developed in a teacher's professional growth plan.

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is demonstrated confidence in an individual's own capacity and the capacity of teaching in general impacting students' learning, a commitment to his/her own professional growth, enthusiasm for teaching, and operating within a framework of care and concern for others (Rice, 2014).

Authentic Assessment

Authentic assessments are realistic in nature and require judgment and innovation to assess. It asks the learner to "do" the subject rather than regurgitate it, replicates or simulates real context, and assesses the learner's ability to integrate and synthesize knowledge (Merriam & Bierema, 2014).

Summary

In conclusion, differences in perceptions of administrators and teachers will be examined and whether demographics impact those perceptions. Arkansas has adopted the TESS model for teacher evaluation based on Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching. Identifying differences in perceptions about this new system could help building and district leadership foster a culture of continuous learning and improve their ability to provide meaningful professional development. In the next chapter, literature surrounding the topic of teacher evaluation and adult learning will be reviewed.

Chapter 2 - Review of the Literature

The purpose of this quantitative non-experimental study was to investigate Arkansas teachers' and principals' perceptions regarding the purpose of the Arkansas Teacher Excellence and Support System (TESS), whether TESS authentically assesses teacher effectiveness, how teacher evaluation data are used, and how the TESS process supports learner-centered professional development. Additionally, the relationship of teacher and principal demographics on their perceptions of TESS was explored. The researcher seeks to determine the relationship among teacher and principal alignment regarding the TESS evaluation model and a teacher's self-efficacy in improving his/her professional practice. A quantitative study was conducted where a survey for teachers and principals in the state of Arkansas was administered and the collected data used for analysis.

This chapter presents a review of the literature related to defining an effective teacher, teacher evaluation including the purpose, methods, and the role of the instructional leader in evaluation. Adult learner needs and motivators, professional development for increasing teacher effectiveness, evaluation reform, challenges to teacher evaluation implementation, and perceptions of principals and teachers on teacher evaluation are also explored. Each of these themes builds a foundation for the need to determine if the Arkansas teacher evaluation system, TESS, improves teacher efficacy.

Defining an Effective Teacher

Hattie (2012), through his research found that the single-most influential factor in a child's successful education is the teacher. Hattie explained that a student in a high-impact teacher's classroom has almost a year's advantage or gain in learning over his or her peers in a lower-effect teacher's classroom. Furthermore, according to *The Widget Effect*, a report that

spanned twelve districts in four states, including Arkansas (Weisberg, Sexton, Mulhern, & Keeling, 2009), a teacher's instructional effectiveness, or the ability to deliver satisfactory instructional performance, is the most important factor for schools in improving student achievement. The school districts from Arkansas that participated in the study were El Dorado Public Schools, Jonesboro Public Schools, Little Rock Public Schools, and Springdale Public Schools. The demographics of these districts, according to the Office for Education Policy at the University of Arkansas, in 2016, defined Little Rock and Springdale as the two largest districts in the state having approximately 71% of their students participating in the free and reduced meal program. In contrast, Jonesboro and El Dorado had approximately 5,000 students. El Dorado had about 64% of their students participating in free and reduced meal program while Jonesboro had more than the other three districts at 75%.

The report was written after analyzing approximately 15,000 surveys given to teachers and 1,300 administrators and was funded primarily by the Robertson Foundation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Joyce Foundation. Each participating group was asked questions regarding their experiences with and perceptions of their district's evaluation system, evaluators, and remediation program. The report examined "our pervasive and longstanding failure to recognize and respond to variations in the effectiveness of our teachers" (Weisberg, et. al. 2009, p. 4).

The authors of *The Widget Effect* argued that the United States is failing to acknowledge and act on differences in teacher effectiveness until it becomes time to remove a teacher. The report found that virtually all teachers were rated as good or great, and excellence in teaching went unrecognized. The failure to assess variations in instructional effectiveness then precluded districts from identifying specific development needs in teachers, which meant there was

inadequate professional development. Other findings indicate that special attention was not given to novice teachers and if poor performance of a new teacher was identified it went unaddressed (Weisberg, et. al., 2009). According to Derrington (2011), improving classroom teaching becomes a matter of enhancing teacher thinking and reflection to promote meaningful professional development.

Hattie (2012) observed that the practice of teaching has no fixed recipe for ensuring that teaching has the maximum possible effect on student learning and that no set of principles applied to all learning for all students. However, the most effective teaching, according to Rice (2014) appeared to endure beyond the year of teaching by that effective teacher and the gains by students were potentially cumulative after that year. In a study conducted by Rice (2014), effective teachers were those deemed to demonstrate confidence in their own capacity and the capacity of teaching in general to impact students' learning. They were committed to their own professional growth, showed enthusiasm for teaching, and operated within a framework of care and concern for others. Darling-Hammond (2008) stated the teachers that hold the greatest promise for enabling student learning possess a combination of attributes, such as knowing how to instruct, motivate, manage, and assess diverse students. These individuals demonstrate strong verbal ability, have a sound understanding of subject matter, and implement effective methods for teaching that subject matter. According to Danielson (2000), multiple factors are involved that make teaching highly complex, with skills that overlap and intertwine; it is impossible to identify discrete aspects of it and sometimes performance level descriptions may not apply in the same way in all settings, making teacher effectiveness a very complicated concept to define.

Teacher Evaluation

Danielson and McGreal (2000), revealed that there is a lack of precision in evaluating teacher performance with terms such as “satisfactory” or “needs improvement” used in the process. Additionally, there is a typical top-down communication system that is one-way in nature in which evaluators share information with those being evaluated and no dialogue ensues. Furthermore, there is no differentiation between novice and experienced teachers. Doherty and Jacobs (2015) argue the reason there is little differentiation in teacher’s ratings is that few states use multiple observations or multiple observers in the teacher evaluation process. Also, the results of student performance outcomes are not used to discern between successful and less successful teachers.

Four reasons listed by Tuytens and Devos (2014) for why teacher evaluations fail were incompetent teachers being granted good ratings, meaningful feedback not being provided to teachers to improve their practice, professional development not being in line with teachers’ needs identified through teacher evaluation, and school administrators being reluctant to invest in teacher evaluations.

Traditional performance based evaluations are those that rely on observations and clinical supervision of teacher behaviors (Beck, 2016). According to Doherty and Jacobs (2015), the real power in performance-based evaluations lies in using teacher ratings to recognize and encourage effective instruction as well as prepare and value highly effective teachers. In 2015:

- Five states still have no formal policy requiring that teacher evaluations take objective measures of student achievement, such as standardized test data, into account in evaluating teacher effectiveness.

- Fifteen states use effectiveness data in layoff decisions.
- Fourteen states use evaluations to impact compensation.
- Twenty-nine states require improvement plans for ineffective teachers.
- Twenty-five states use the results from teacher evaluations to inform professional development. (Doherty & Jacobs, 2015, pp.5-6)

In Arkansas, where this study was conducted, annual teacher evaluations were required of all teachers. Evaluators were certified to conduct evaluations of employees, which required training and passing certification tests. An online training portal was created to deliver the training in which administrators watched videos of teachers in the classroom and wrote mock evaluations, assigning ratings to those teachers. After completing the practice modules, administrators then took an online certification test. Multiple opportunities to score a value indicating an understanding of the process were allowed for administrators. Teachers are also trained by district administrators about the TESS model so all involved understand the rubrics and descriptors.

Teachers are provided feedback in the evaluation process from the evaluator. Again, there is an online portal that teachers and administrators use to collect this data. Teachers and administrators share the data and information collected along with artifacts, observation notes, and teacher rating data. Arkansas has four teacher rating categories, that include ‘unsatisfactory’, ‘basic’, ‘proficient’, and ‘distinguished’. Thirty states, including Arkansas, provide the criteria or framework for the four-category evaluation system so there is consistency of evaluation criteria. However, there is a significant variation among other states regarding teacher evaluation categories, evaluation criteria, and evaluator training (Doherty & Jacobs, 2015).

Purpose of Teacher Evaluation

Robert Marzano (2012) indicated that there are essentially two purposes for teacher evaluation. One purpose is to measure a teacher's effectiveness or ineffectiveness, while the other is to develop a highly skilled teacher workforce. Seventy-six percent of teachers surveyed in Marzano's study believe that evaluations should be used for both purposes, and that development should be the more important purpose. Woulfin, Donaldson, and Gonzales (2016) describes these two purposes as accountability and development. Teacher evaluations should yield objective, defensive information about teacher performance as well as descriptive information that illuminates a source of difficulty and a viable course for change.

Mielke and Frontier (2012) asserted that the most effective evaluation systems empower teachers to accurately assess their own practice and self-diagnose areas for growth. This idea is confirmed; Su, Feng, and Hsu (2017) suggest that a good teacher evaluation mechanism can provide information and thus stimulate teachers' professional growth. They reiterate that professional development and teacher evaluation are two leadership functions that historically have not been done well.

Models that exist for teacher development share three characteristics. According to Marzano (2012), the first characteristic includes comprehensive and specific, which allows for measurement on all aspects of teaching. The second includes a developmental scale or rubric which teachers can use to track or guide skill development. Lastly, evaluations meant for teacher development acknowledge and reward growth. A teacher would have targets to meet throughout the year based on identified goals and would get commendations for meeting established targets.

Methods for Evaluating Effectiveness

The traditional teacher evaluation might be described as a standards-based approach in which a principal or school administrator conducts observations and rates a teacher using a rubric or set of standards to determine effectiveness. During classroom observations principals collect data pertaining to teachers' explicit behaviors so they can provide feedback to the teacher. This collective data obtained during observations can be used to create a summative rating for the teacher (Young, Range, Hvidston, & Mette, 2015).

Di Carlo (2012) explained that another type of state evaluation is a value-added model, which is a specific type of growth model that relies on using student test scores over time. States are also creating diverse groups of statistical techniques to isolate a teacher's impact on his or her students' testing progress while controlling for other measurable factors like student demographics and school characteristics which are out of a teacher's control. Value-added estimates are based exclusively on scores from standardized tests. Some of these models require that student test scores from annual large-scale state assessments across two or more years be linked to each student's current classroom teacher (Turkan & Buzick, 2014). Di Carlo (2012) argued that there is virtually no empirical evidence as to whether using value-added or growth models in evaluations can improve teacher performance or student outcomes. A study conducted by Harris et al. (2014) indicated that an administrator's role in evaluation is necessary. Administrators have information about parent requests and inquiries, students, and their own observations that relying exclusively on a value-added model cannot provide. The results conclude that "incorrect" decisions about employment made from the standpoint of student achievement are likely to emerge using only value-added data.

The Houston Independent School District located in Texas signed a five-year contract to use a proprietary value-added assessment system to judge Houston teachers' performance. Holloway-Libel, Amrein-Beardsley, and Collins (2012) asserted that even a superficial look reveals that value-added numbers are inconsistent with the other indicators such as planning and preparation, the classroom environment, instruction, or professional responsibilities (Danielson, 2007). There have been many unintended consequences in Houston to the value-added model, such as teachers being reluctant to teach English language learners (ELLs) and even gifted students because of a concern that students would demonstrate limited growth and negatively impact their ratings.

Peer review models are also proving to be controversial in schools (Johnson & Fiarman, 2012). Peer review models involve a peer teacher observing a teacher and offering evaluative information to the teacher. Peer reviewers can encroach on the domain of the principal as instructional leader. Others argue that, because peer evaluators are fellow teachers, they may be biased or unwilling to make hard decisions. Many teachers find the prospect of peer evaluation bothersome because it violates the professional norm of egalitarianism – the assumption that "we're all equal." Some traditional teacher unionists reject peer review because it sets teachers against one another. In contradiction, Smagorinsky (2014) notes that peer evaluation of teachers is advocated by some because it gives teachers a voice in who does and does not belong in their faculty.

The South Korean government adopted a peer review teacher evaluation system in 2010 which was required of all teachers. In this system, evaluations were conducted by multiple evaluators, which included at least three teachers and the school principal. The system also called for surveys to be completed by students and parents. Approximately seventy percent of teachers

said the new system did not help identify strengths and weaknesses, improve teaching, or plan further steps. Parents and students, in contrast, said that teachers put more effort into teaching since the new system was adopted (Seo, 2012).

Arguments exist for the positive and negative attributes of these models, standards-based, value-added, and peer review systems. Arkansas has developed a standards-based model, in which the principal as the instructional leader oversees the evaluation process.

Role of the Instructional Leader in Teacher Evaluation

The responsibility of the teacher evaluation process rests with the school leader. Some argue that an outstanding teacher evaluation system is of little meaning if the school leader is not supportive (Tuytens & Devos, 2014). Meaningful teacher feedback provided through a quality teacher evaluation can lead to significant improvement in classroom performance (Tuytens & Devos, 2017). It remains unclear whether principals have the time, training, and support necessary to implement observation and feedback cycles effectively (Kraft & Gilmour, 2016). Recent studies revealed that the average principal spends approximately 18% of his or her time in curriculum and instruction and around 3% total time on teacher evaluations. These numbers are largely unchanged after thirty years of concentrated efforts to increase the percentages (Murphy, Hallinger, & Heck, 2013). Principals must schedule and carry out the task of teacher evaluations, including analyzing instruction, providing feedback, and initiating personnel actions if warranted (Donaldson, Woulfin, LeChasseur, & Cobb, 2017). Derrington (2011) argued that negative unintended consequences of an evaluation may result when principal support is low and expectations for results are high. Studies have shown that when principals provided feedback, it often lacked specifics and failed to promote deep reflection or analysis by teachers (Donaldson et

al., 2017). Districts must provide support, resources, and sufficient authority to building principals to lead effectively an evaluation process.

Adult Learner Needs and Motivators

Adult learning theories clarify how the process of learning can support change in organizations and in skills and behaviors of adults (Steyn, 2017). Steyn cites that successful development of teachers requires more than increasing their knowledge and skills which is information learning. The challenges in schooling require changes in the way adults know, that is, transformational learning. Transformational learning is about change which can be at the individual as well as the social level. The individual learner is at the heart of the process (Merriam & Bierema, 2014). Social transformation begins with the individuals. Some learning is about change in perspective usually at the individual level, but sometimes with an added goal of changing an organization. Merriam and Bierema (2014) suggest several underlying components of instruction necessary to facilitate transformative learning. They argue the importance of critical reflection cannot be overlooked along with the practice of dialogue or discourse and social interaction. To foster transformative learning supportive relationships must be in place. There is a need to create a space that is safe, open, supportive, and where learners can listen to others' experiences without judgment. By its very nature, transformative learning is hard to capture, plan for, or evaluate (Merriam & Bierema, 2014).

Motivation also plays a significant role in adult learning. A central construct to transformation learning is the desire to change. The desire to change and to act refers to the step individuals are required to take as they shift from reflection to transformation. A crucial component of transformative learning is the necessity to act (Steyn, 2017). Learners must see how the learning relates to their individual interests and values to be motivated. Carpenter and

Linton (2016) recognize that educators' professional development motivations are multi-faceted, and include factors such as interest in improving teaching, external validation, internal validation, financial gain, and collaboration opportunities. Additionally, teachers are more intrinsically motivated because of limited professional perks (Carpenter & Linton, 2016).

Pink (2009) maintained that people are motivated more intrinsically than extrinsically and that people need autonomy, mastery, and purpose. Autonomy is synonymous with self-directedness, in the case of teachers, they can formulate their own learning needs and consequently direct their learning (Louws, Meirink, Veen, & Driel, 2017). Researchers found that teachers want to learn about a self-selected learning domain because they experience it as interesting and find it important to learn. The assumption is that if teachers are treated as responsible individuals in control of their own learning, they are more likely to be engaged in learning. Also, viewing teachers as capable of self-direction means that teachers are treated as professionals, which would mean they are active participants in designing their own professional learning (Louws et al., 2017).

This idea of self-directedness aligns with heutagogy, which is a recent extension of andragogy (Carpenter & Linton, 2016). In adragogy an instructor is still involved in planning, or controlling and structuring the learning experience. In heutagogy, "learning is largely self-directed and prioritizes not just the acquisition of knowledge, but also the development of skills, competencies, and capabilities, such as self-efficacy, metacognition, teamwork, and creativity" (Carpenter & Linton, 2016, p. 98).

Adult learning theory offers a framework to guide instructional leaders as they support teachers in their professional development needs. In summary, transformational learning in adults happens best when learners are intrinsically motivated and self-directed in their studies.

Professional Development for Increasing Teacher Effectiveness

Danielson and McGreal (2000) wrote that a set of guiding principles has emerged in the past decades that strongly support teacher evaluation programs that are directly linked to professional development enhancement. Furthermore, the most effective programs should be designed to support teacher growth and development which an emphasis on formative evaluation techniques. This position is supported by Looney (2011) who found that professional development is most effective when it aligns with identified needs for development and encourages the development of communities of practice within and among schools.

Kraft and Gilmour (2016) wrote that efforts to leverage the evaluation process as a professional development tool are centered on the classroom observation process. Observation rubrics provide teachers and evaluators with a common framework for planning, enacting, and discussing classroom instruction. The observation and feedback process can develop teachers' habits and abilities to reflect on their own practices and evaluators can provide specific and actionable feedback on how teacher practices can be improved. This observation and feedback process also provides a formal structure for teachers to set goals and track progress (Kraft & Gilmour, 2016).

Badri, Alnuaimi, Mohaidat, Yang, and Rashedi (2016) emphasized that "quality professional development can lead to important qualitative outcomes such as the creation of a positive school culture, citizenship, improvement in individual teacher skills, and development of opportunities for peer learning" (p. 2). Moreover, that teachers are required to become life-long learners and they learn best through professional development that meets their needs. They should be empowered to further develop expertise in subject matter content, technologies, and other elements that lead to high quality teaching.

Evaluation Reform

Many states began reforming teacher evaluation practices primarily to remove themselves from the burdens of what used to be No Child Left Behind (2002) or to apply for the Race to the Top funds (Young et al., 2015). When President Obama took office in 2009, his administration took on teacher evaluation as an important public-policy matter (Aldeman, 2017). The Race to the Top program allotted $4.35 billion for competitive state grants that encouraged states and districts to revamp their teacher evaluation systems. Race to the Top also encouraged states to make personnel decisions based on evaluation results. States and districts were encouraged to evaluate teachers and principals using multiple measures including student growth. Student growth was defined to mean the change in student achievement as measured by statewide assessments and other measures that were "rigorous and comparable across classrooms" (Aldeman, 2017, p. 6).

Aldeman (2017) argued that although there were many good things about these reform efforts, many things were not good. During the competition for grant funding, states were pushed to create multi-tiered evaluation systems to "differentiate" among educators based significantly on a teacher's contribution to student growth, which was a rigid definition. States and districts began to create new pre- and post-test measures to track student achievement over time. Using student growth data to measure a teacher's "value-added" contribution to student achievement became a popular way to measure teacher effectiveness. Problems with this type of evaluation score is they are complicated to interpret and do not provide teachers with guidance on how to improve. Behrstock-Sherratt, Rizzolo, Laine, and Friedman (2013) argue that teachers should be engaged in the evaluation reform process as well. Teacher engagement in the evaluation process will influence the eventual success of evaluations systems by promoting sound design, effective

implementation, and sustainability. Additionally, teachers are in the best position to envision how the details of a new system will play out. “Well-intentioned policies can create perverse incentives, which in turn lead teachers to prioritize personal gain over the needs of students by working in competition rather than in collaboration with colleagues, or to cheat on a test” (Behrstock-Sherratt et al., 2013, p.8).

Challenges to Implementing Teacher Evaluation Systems

Research suggests that in most settings there are barriers to the quantity and quality of teacher observations, feedback, and the professional learning teachers receive in the context of teacher evaluation (Donaldson, et al., 2017). These authors state research suggests that good feedback helps teachers improve their practice, but that evaluations tend to not provide high quality feedback to teachers. Lavigne and Chamberlain (2014) argue this might be because of the vast amount of tasks and limited time that principals have to provide feedback. They found that principals devote 17% of their time to evaluation and supervision. Principals must be able to coach, teach, and help teachers grow and improve. It is expected that principals will shift their responsibilities to allow even more time for this work (Lavigne & Chamberlain, 2014). Furthermore, they found that principals in their study may have been providing feedback based on instruments that have low correlations to student achievement outcomes.

Evaluations must also be contextualized considering the school population. Some schools have students that are more ready to learn and those schools that do not should not be punished or rewarded based on student characteristics (Smagorinsky, 2014).

Administrators’ and Teachers’ Perceptions of Teacher Evaluation

According to Kim and Youngs (2016), in policy setting, teachers and administrators are expected to take an active role in improving teaching. When teachers and administrators refuse

to assume an active role, the policy is less meaningful, therefore it is important to examine teachers' and administrators' perspectives about policy and factors that contribute to the perceptions. In this same study, the authors found that teachers' and administrators' perceptions of new evaluation policies were affected by their logics regarding "effective teachers", the teachers' experience levels, job status, and administrative leadership.

Building administrators and district leaders' perceptions of teacher evaluation policy matter. According to Woulfin et al. (2015), regardless of how a policy is written, district leadership will frame the evaluation policy either in terms of promoting professional growth in teachers or in terms of monitoring their performance. The way the evaluation model is framed has consequences for educators at a school level. Other barriers described by Woulfin et al. (2015) were lack of time, lack of evaluator skill, or administrator inability to identify the tenants of good instruction and deliver constructive feedback. Lack of the evaluator to implement the process was given as another barrier, said another way, this is a principal's resolve to differentiate among teachers and carry out the evaluation as prescribed.

Summary

As one can see, there are many perspectives on how effective teacher evaluations look and for what purpose they serve. Building administrators are ultimately responsible for the success of the students, upon which teachers have direct impact. Literature suggests that teachers, as adult learners, should have a role to play in what they need to improve their teaching practices and the teacher evaluation process should inform those decisions. In the next chapter, the methodology to conduct research about the perceptions of teachers and administrators on the Arkansas TESS model will be outlined.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

In Arkansas, the Teacher Excellence and Support System (TESS) model is used as the teacher evaluation system (Act 295 of 2017). The purpose of this study was to investigate differences in teachers' and principals' perceptions of the TESS model as it relates to teachers' and principals' perceptions of what the purpose of teacher evaluation is, how authentically TESS assesses teacher effectiveness, how evaluation data are used, and its contribution to learner-centered professional development. The relationship of teacher demographics on teacher perceptions was explored as well as barriers that exist for implementing the TESS model. The researcher sought to determine the relationship between the TESS model and a teacher's self-efficacy in improving his/her professional practice. A quantitative study was conducted using a survey administered to teachers and principals in the state of Arkansas.

Research Design

The study was designed to identify the perceptions of teachers and principals regarding their experiences with TESS. This study followed a quantitative non-experimental research design where survey data were used. The perceptions of teachers and principals were compared to identify any differences between perceptions regarding TESS. The research design of the study included the dependent variables of teachers' and principals' perceptions of the process, utility, resources, and barriers of the TESS evaluation model. Demographic data collected included the independent variables of number of years completed as a teacher or administrator, grade level that is taught, gender, age, and size of the school district. All demographic data were collected at the time the participants completed the survey.

Site and Demographics of Arkansas

Arkansas is a state made of 53,179 square miles of land. Arkansas has two hundred and thirty-five school districts. This excludes charter schools, correctional facilities, and schools exclusively serving students with disabilities. All the districts are members of one of fifteen educational service cooperatives, which in turn divides the state into fifteen regions. Enrollment in these districts range from 370 students to 22,759 students, with a total state enrollment of 479,258 students (ADE Data Center, 2017). The graduation rate was at 88% in the 2016-17 school year. In 2017-18, 8% of the students were English learners, although those students are concentrated in specific districts rather than evenly distributed. One hundred and twenty-three of Arkansas's districts have over 70% of the students receiving free or reduced price meals. The state average for students receiving free or reduced meals is 68%.

According to the Arkansas Department of Education Data Center (2017) there are 33, 203 certified teachers in Arkansas. The average teaching experience is eleven years. Only 10% of certified teachers are a race other than white. Twenty-four percent of Arkansas teachers are male and 76% female.

Population and Sampling

Responses were elicited from the entire population of public school building principals excluding public charter schools through convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is when participants are studied based on willingness and availability (Creswell, 2015). There were 1002 school buildings in the population of public schools. Together these buildings represent 235 school districts in Arkansas.

Instrumentation

The research questions that guided this study include:

Research Question One Is there a difference between how building administrators and teachers perceive the TESS model as an authentic process for assessing teacher effectiveness?

Research Question Two Is there a difference between how building administrators and teachers perceive the data collected during the TESS process is used?

Research Question Three How do building administrators and teachers differ in their perceptions that the TESS model assures participation in learner-centered professional development?

Research Question Four How do perceptions of building administrators and teachers differ based on demographics (years of experience, gender, age, grade level taught, size of district)?

Data were gathered to gain information about teacher and administration perceptions on the Arkansas teacher evaluation system using an existing survey that was modified and validated. The survey consisted of twenty-seven questions and was developed based on a survey written by the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE). The NCEE survey was used in a report prepared for the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) under Contract ED-IES-12-C-0002 by Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) West at WestEd (Makkonen, Tejwani, & Venkateswaran, 2016).

The original survey instrument was used to examine the perceptions of teachers and administrators in five Arizona school districts about the teacher evaluation system used in each district. Each of these districts had a unique teacher evaluation system, whereas Arkansas has one common teacher evaluation system. In this study, the researchers also conducted interviews with district officials and instructional coaches.

The survey used for this research study was modified by the researcher to allow information pertaining to participant demographics to be gathered. Additionally, short answer questions were added to the NCEE survey to collect anecdotal information about TESS and perhaps provide insight into perception scores.

The first question in the survey asked the participant to identify him/herself as a principal/assistant principal or a teacher. Depending on the response to this question the participant was directed to the rest of the survey aligned to his/her current job. The next five questions for both types of participant asked for demographic information including years completed in profession, grade level currently serving, gender, age, and size of the district based on the number of students enrolled in the district. Demographic survey questions were an integral part of the survey allowing an accurate picture of the participants to be drawn. This demographic information was collected to answer research question four.

The seventh question in the survey is a set of sixteen statements that are rated using a five point Likert-scale including the descriptors of strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, and strongly agree. A value of 1 was assigned to strongly disagree through five, which was assigned to strongly agree. According to Croasmun and Ostrom (2011), Likert scales are useful in social science and research projects where attitudes and perception data were being gathered. Likert scales are assumed forced-choice questions where a statement is made and a degree scale is used. The study's survey uses this form; however, the statements were carefully chosen to elicit an agreement or disagreement with the statement. Of the sixteen statements, statement one, two, three, ten, and sixteen corresponded with research question one on how the TESS model is used for assessing teacher effectiveness. Statements four through nine correspond to research question two regarding the perceptions of how TESS data are used. Finally,

statements four, and ten through fourteen correspond to research question three regarding learner-centered professional development.

The last four questions on the survey (questions 8-11) required a short answer response. Short answer responses allowed the participants to respond in greater detail and were used to explore the research question in more depth. Question eight contributes data to research question one, question nine contributes data to research question two, and questions ten and eleven on the survey contribute data to research question number three.

Validation Process for the Survey Instrument

Since additional questions were added to the NCEE survey instrument for this research study a field test was conducted to verify face validity of the survey. The survey was examined by three individuals: a current practicing administrator, an instructional coach, and a superintendent. The three educators were asked to provide feedback on clarity of the statements, structure of the survey instrument, relevance of the statements of the survey, and format of the survey. This feedback was used to modify one question on the survey. In addition, questions six and seven were added to support the demographics information involved in this study.

Data Collection and Procedures

To conduct the study, a University of Arkansas Institutional Review Board request was submitted and approved. To distribute the survey to principals, assistant principals, and kindergarten through twelfth grade general education teachers the building principals were emailed directly and asked to complete the survey along with forwarding it to the faculty of his/her building. A letter was drafted and sent using email to each principal so that he/she might forward the survey link of the online survey tool to the assistant principals and teachers in the building.

The survey was administered using Google Forms. The introductory part of the survey included the purpose of the survey, the estimated time to take the survey, an assurance of anonymity, and brief directions. Consent was either obtained or denied; if denied the survey was terminated. The participants had the right at any time to stop taking the survey or withdraw from the study at any time. The survey took approximately five minutes to complete and included an option for participants to write an email address if they wanted to receive the results of the survey.

The survey was left open for fourteen days. The goal was to obtain three hundred and eighty-five surveys completed by teachers and one-third the number of completed surveys from principals and assistant principals. When the goal was obtained no more follow-up emails were sent.

The information from the study's survey was collected in Google Forms and downloaded into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Excel allows for the data to be collected, organized, and sorted with ease so that an analysis can be conducted. Figure 1 depicts the research process.

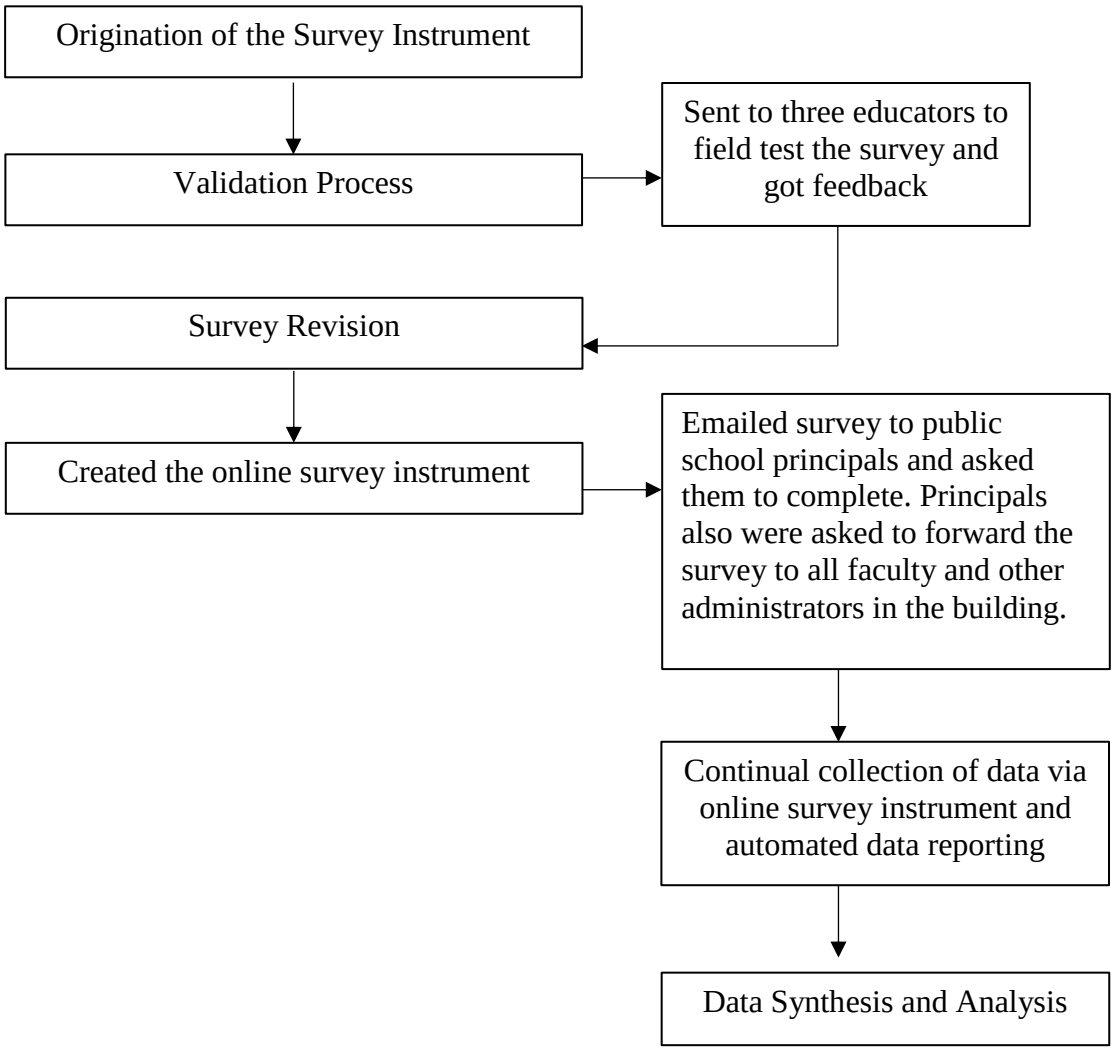

Figure 1. Flow chart for dissemination of the survey and collection of the data

Data Analysis

The design of this study used survey data to examine and report the perceptions of teachers and administrators regarding the Arkansas TESS evaluation system. A statistical analysis of the data was used to report and analyze the information about teacher perceptions, principal and assistant principal perceptions, and how they compare. To report demographic data, descriptive statistics were used. Research questions one, two, and three used Pearson's Chi-square tests to ascertain whether there were significant differences between the responses of the two groups. The Pearson's Chi-squared test is a statistical test applied to sets of categorical data to evaluate how likely it is that any observed proportions differ significantly from what was expected (Glass & Hopkins, 1996). Research question number four used an independent-sample *t* test to determine the relationship between gender and the perceptions of administrators and teachers. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to evaluate the relationship between perceptions of the TESS model and the demographics of the years of experience, age of participants, age of students in the building, and size of the district. Measures of correlation are used to describe the relationship between two variables (Glass & Hopkins, 1996). Figure 1 illustrates the workflow of the process used to conduct research for this study.

Summary

The collection and analysis of data was purposefully planned to elicit the maximum number of responses. This data allowed for analysis using descriptive statistics along with the nonparametric procedure of a Chi-square test to obtain how proportions of data compare. Research questions one, two, and three compared perceptions of administrators to teachers. Research question four compared demographic data to determine if differences occurred.

Chapter 4 - Results

The goal of this study was to investigate differences in Arkansas teachers' and building-level administrators' perceptions regarding the purpose of the Arkansas TESS teacher evaluation system, whether TESS authentically assesses teacher effectiveness, how teacher evaluation data are used, and how the TESS process supports learner-centered professional development. This study followed a quantitative non-experimental research design where an electronic survey was administered and the data were gathered and then reported collectively. This chapter presents the findings from the data collected using descriptive and inferential statistics.

The survey was distributed through email to every building principal working in a public non-charter school in Arkansas after approval was obtained from the University of Arkansas Institutional Review Board to conduct the study. A letter regarding the purpose of the study, directions for survey distribution, and a link to the survey was drafted and sent using email to each principal so that he/she might forward the survey link of the online survey tool to the assistant principals and teachers in the building. Responses were collected for fourteen days after the initial email was sent to principals.

The survey was administered using Google Forms. The introductory part of the survey included the purpose of the survey, the estimated time to take the survey, an assurance of anonymity, and brief directions. Participation in the study was requested from each participant and consent was either denied or obtained. If denied the survey would be terminated and participants would stop taking the survey. If consent was obtained the participant would be directed to the survey which took approximately five minutes to complete and included an option for participants to provide an email address if they wanted to receive the results of the survey. The information from the study's survey was collected in Google Forms and downloaded into a

Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Excel allows for the data to be collected, organized, and sorted with ease so that an analysis could be conducted.

Analysis of the data resulted in Likert statement number four being eliminated for duplication purposes, and Likert statement 13 was eliminated to increase the internal consistency and reliability of a set of items. Additionally, answers to the open-ended questions were analyzed for common themes and used to inform the statistical analysis.

Seven hundred and ninety-seven surveys were collected. Of those, 225 were completed by an administrator and 567 were completed by teachers. Seventeen of the participants results had to be omitted. Consent was not obtained for five of the surveys. Ten surveys that were completed by special education teachers, counselors, reading interventionists, librarians, or technology specialists and did not meet the purpose of the study, and two of the surveys had incorrectly entered data. Likewise, 15 teacher surveys and four administrator surveys were omitted for non-completion of information. The remaining 761 participant surveys were used to answer the research questions. The survey results of the descriptive statistics for the remaining participants are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Information for Participants of the Study

	Administrator		Teacher	
Characteristic	*n*	%	*n*	%
Number of Years in Role				
0-5	79	36	112	21
6-10	54	25	81	15
11-15	44	20	97	18
16-20	24	11	82	15
21+	14	6	153	28
Grade Level of Students				
Elementary (PK-5)	88	40	262	49
Middle School (6-8)	19	9	76	14
Elementary & Middle (PK-8)	45	20	48	9
Middle School & High School (6-12)	24	11	34	6
High School (9-12)	38	17	97	18
All Grades (PK-12)	4	2	20	4
Gender				
Male	89	40	73	14
Female	127	58	454	85

Table 1 (Cont.)

	Administrator		Teacher	
Characteristic	*n*	%	*n*	%
Age				
20-25	0	0	21	4
26-30	3	1	70	13
31-35	17	8	71	13
36-40	37	17	67	12
41-45	41	19	75	14
46-50	39	18	73	14
51-55	38	17	73	14
56-60	23	10	55	10
61+	19	9	30	6
Number of Students in District				
0-500	14	6	37	7
501-1000	41	19	128	24
1001-2000	46	21	113	21
2001-5000	53	24	91	17
5000+	64	29	145	27

Any discrepancies in the percentages totaling 100% are due to incomplete data sets. The demographics were well-distributed among all categories. Administrators must have at least five years of teaching experience before they can obtain an administrator's license, which resulted in no administrators represented in the 20-25 age category.

Research Question 1

Frequencies, percents, and Chi Square tests were conducted to answer research question 1: Is there a difference between how building administrators and teachers perceive the TESS model as an authentic process for assessing teacher effectiveness? A Cramer's V effect size was included where a value of .1 was small, .3 was medium, and .5 or above was considered large, according to Cohen (1988). A Fisher's Exact Test was used on statement 1 where a large sample approximation is inappropriate due to numbers less than 5 in categories of agreement and neutrality.

All the Likert statements showed significant differences between administrator and teacher perceptions except for the statement "Principals have adequate guidance/training/understanding to complete TESS evaluations". This statement had a medium effect size. Table 2 displays the results of the questions used to measure research question 1.

Table 2

Perceptions of Administrators (N = 220) and Teachers (N = 537) Regarding the Effectiveness of TESS

	Administrator		Teacher				
Statements	*n*	%	*n*	%	$X^2(1)$	*p*	*Cramer's V*
I know what types of information are collected during the teacher evaluation process in my district.							
Strongly Agree/Agree	213	93	467	80		[1].000	
Neutral	3	6	30	13			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	2	1	40	7			

Table 2 (Cont.)

Statements	Administrator *n*	Administrator %	Teacher *n*	Teacher %	$X^2(1)$	*p*	*Cramer's V*
Strongly Agree/Agree	192	88	360	67	26.5	[2].000	.200
Neutral	15	7	78	15			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	11	5	99	18			
TESS has improved instructional practices.							
Strongly Agree/Agree	110	50	231	43	6.85	[2].009	.113
Neutral	65	30	151	29			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	43	20	155	28			
After evaluations, teachers clearly understand next steps they need to take for professional growth.							
Strongly Agree/Agree	169	78	336	63	13.45	[2].000	.149
Neutral	34	16	116	22			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	15	7	85	16			
Principals have adequate guidance/training/understanding to complete TESS evaluations.							
Strongly Agree/Agree	184	84	419	78	.592	.441	.030
Neutral	23	11	85	16			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	11	5	33	6			

Table 2 (Cont.)

Statements	Administrator *n*	Administrator %	Teacher *n*	Teacher %	$X^2(1)$	*p*	*Cramer's V*
Overall Perception							
Strongly Agree/Agree	655	75	1346	63	39.72	[2].000	.127
Neutral	137	16	430	20			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	80	9	372	17			

[1] Percentages revealed significantly more agreement from administrators (93% versus 80% respectively, $p < 0.005$, Fisher's exact test).
[2] A value of .000 represents a significant difference in administrators and teachers.

Additionally, answers from question eight revealed discrepancies in the way administrators and teachers define teacher effectiveness. The responses for this question were coded and nine themes were revealed. The themes were personalization, student growth and success, preparing for the future, student engagement, what TESS scores are, relationships with students, professionalism, assessment data, and uncertainty. Student growth and student engagement were at the top of both lists with 35% of administrators and 28% of teachers defining effectiveness by student growth. Student engagement was mentioned by 29% of administrators and 14% of teachers. The other two largest categories from teacher answers were related to teachers knowing the content and being able to teach the content (11%), and students learning content and meeting standards (12%). These categories were almost non-existent in the administrator answers.

Research Question 2

Frequencies, percents, and Chi Square tests were conducted to answer research question 2: Is there a difference between how building administrators and teachers perceive the data collected during the TESS process is used? A Cramer's V effect size was included where a value of .1 was small, .3 was medium, and .5 or above was considered large, according to Cohen (1988). Four of the six Likert statements used to answer research question 2 showed significant differences between perceptions of administrators and teachers. Table 3 displays the results of the questions used to measure research question 2.

Table 3

*Perceptions of Administrators (*N = *220) and Teachers (*N = *537) on How Data is Collected and Used*

	Administrators		Teachers				
Statements	*n*	%	*n*	%	$X^2(1)$	*p*	*Cramer's V*
TESS data are used to determine professional development options in a school.							
Strongly Agree/Agree	159	73	238	44	17.96	*.000	.183
Neutral	31	14	188	35			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	28	13	111	21			

Table 3 (Cont.)

	Administrator		Teacher				
	n	%	*n*	%	$X^2(1)$	*p*	*Cramer's V*
Evaluations are used to assign teachers to a particular school.							
Strongly Agree/Agree	7	3	44	8	17.29	*.000	.199
Neutral	41	19	278	52			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	170	78	215	40			
Evaluation results are used to assign teachers to particular classrooms, subjects, or grade levels.							
Strongly Agree/Agree	46	21	78	15	.154	.695	.019
Neutral	48	22	266	50			
StronglyDisagree/Disagree	124	57	193	36			
Poor performing teachers are designated for remediation based on their evaluation results.							
Strongly Agree/Agree	151	69	170	32	25.02	*.000	.238
Neutral	42	19	272	51			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	25	11	95	18			

Table 3 (Cont.)

Statements	Administrator *n*	Administrator %	Teacher *n*	Teacher %	$X^2(1)$	*p*	*Cramer's V*
Districts use evaluation results to make decisions like whether to retain a teacher or not.							
Strongly Agree/Agree	136	62	78	15	72.02	*.000	.422
Neutral	41	19	310	28			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	41	19	149	58			
Districts use evaluation results to promote teachers.							
Strongly Agree/Agree	21	10	53	10	2.59	.108	.077
Neutral	60	28	263	49			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	137	63	221	41			
Overall Perception							
Strongly Agree/Agree	520	40	661	21	23.81	*.000	.094
Neutral	263	20	1577	30			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	525	40	984	49			

*A value of .000 represents a significant difference in administrators and teachers.

Additionally, answers from question nine were coded into themes and 13 themes were revealed from the answers. The artifacts that were mentioned were observations and notes, the post observation conference and professional growth plan in TESS, student engagement, teacher reflections, student behavior, nothing is collected, strategies used in the classroom, relationships with students, student growth data, lesson plans and rubrics, student work, and classroom management. There were several teachers that answered they did not know what artifact most

influenced the evaluation. Teachers and administrators ranked classroom observations as the most important artifact collected in the evaluation process. Fourteen percent of teachers responded that they did know what artifacts were important during the TESS evaluation process. Lesson plans were mentioned in 19% of administrators' answers while they were mentioned in only 12% of teachers' answers. Furthermore, administrators' perceptions indicate they value student work more than teachers at 11% and 6% respectively.

Research Question 3

Frequencies, percents, and Chi Square tests were conducted to answer research question 3: How do building administrators and teachers differ in their perceptions that the TESS model assures participation in learner-centered professional development? A Cramer's V effect size was included where a value of .1 was small, .3 was medium, and .5 or above was considered large, according to Cohen (1988). Three of the 5 Likert statements given to address research question 3 showed significant differences between administrators and teachers. Table 4 displays the results of the questions used to measure research question 3.

Table 4

*Perceptions of Administrators (*N = *220) and Teachers (*N = *537) on TESS and Learner-Centered Professional Development*

	Administrator		Teacher				
Statements	*n*	%	*n*	%	$X^2(1)$	*p*	*Cramer's V*
TESS data is used to determine professional development options in a school.							
Strongly Agree/Agree	159	73	238	44	17.96	*.000	.183
Neutral	31	41	188	35			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	28	13	111	21			
After evaluations, teachers clearly understand next steps they need to take for professional growth.							
Strongly Agree/Agree	169	78	336	63	13.45	*.000	.149
Neutral	34	16	116	22			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	15	7	85	16			
Teachers engage in professional development directly linked to needs identified in the evaluation.							
Strongly Agree/Agree	182	83	330	61	29.22	*.000	.220
Neutral	29	13	120	22			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	7	3	87	16			

Table 4 (Cont.)

	Administrator		Teacher				
	n	%	*n*	%	$X^2(1)$	*p*	*Cramer's V*
Administrators oversee and guide teachers' professional development in a helpful way.							
Strongly Agree/Agree	153	70	312	58	6.03	.014	.1024
Neutral	42	19	138	26			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	23	11	87	16			
The district does a good job of linking needs of teachers with professional development offerings.							
Strongly Agree/Agree	103	47	222	41	1.69	.194	.057
Neutral	62	28	167	31			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	53	24	148	28			
Overall Perception							
Strongly Agree/Agree	766	70	1438	54	53.46	*.000	.137
Neutral	198	18	729	27			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	126	12	518	19			

*A value of .000 represents a significant difference in administrators and teachers.

Additionally, responses collected on open response question 10 demonstrated a definite difference in administrator and teacher perspectives of what domains need the most support. The four domains were planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities. Fifty percent of administrators responded that teachers need the most support in the third domain, which is instruction, while only 32% of teachers said this is

where they needed the most support. Teachers ranked domain one, preparation and planning, as the second domain needing support at 27%, but this was for a different reason than administrators selected domain one. Teachers overwhelmingly responded that they did not need help in learning how to plan good instruction, they needed support by simply needing more time for planning. Administrators, on the other hand, responded that teachers need solid lesson plans, are sometimes not prepared, need to do more research for planning, have changing frameworks, and need to plan better for the 21st century learner.

When asked in question 11 about what learner-centered professional development was attended 11 themes emerged. They were literacy, mathematics, science, professional development hosted by professional organizations, social and emotional needs sessions, teaching and learning strategies, professional learning communities, planning instruction and planning for questioning, using assessments, interventions and differentiation, and technology. Administrators indicated 51% of the workshops were about literacy and 30% were about math. Teachers reported that sessions on literacy (37%) and technology (29%) were learner-centered. The category of technology was almost non-existent in administrator answers.

Research Question 4

Data collected for question four was combined creating a continuous data set. An independent-samples *t* test was conducted to evaluate whether administrators and teacher perceptions differ based on gender, one significant difference was found. A Cohen's D effect size was included where a value of .2 was small, .5 was medium, and .8 or above was considered large, according to Cohen (1988). Table 5 displays the results.

Table 5

Differences in Perceptions Based on Gender

	Female		Male					
Question/Population	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*df*	*t*	*p*	Cohen's *d*
Perception that the TESS model is an authentic process for assessing teacher effectiveness								
Administrators	20.44	2.48	19.76	2.84	212	1.84	.066	.255
Teachers	18.46	3.62	17.07	3.73	525	3.03	*.003	.378
Perception about how the data collected during TESS is used								
Administrators	17.73	3.32	17.13	3.96	212	1.21	.227	.164
Teachers	17.12	3.79	16.64	3.80	525	1.00	.317	.126
Perception that TESS model assures participation in learner-centered professional development								
Administrators	18.79	2.74	18.18	2.91	212	1.54	.124	.216
Teachers	17.03	4.07	16.23	3.96	525	1.55	.122	.199

*Represents a significant difference at <.05

When comparing gender there was a significant difference in teachers' perceptions that TESS was an authentic process for assessing teacher effectiveness. This was the only significant difference noted concerning the gender of the participants. Lower agreement was consistently demonstrated with male participants.

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to evaluate the relationship between perceptions of the TESS model and the demographics of the years of experience, age of

participants, age of students in the building, and size of the district. The independent variable, years of experience, included five levels: 0-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20, and 21 and over. The independent variable, age of the participants that took the survey, included five levels as well: 20-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60, and 61 and over. There were six levels of students in the buildings where participants worked, these were: elementary (K-5), middle school (6-8), elementary and middle (K-8), middle and high school (6-12), high school (9-12), and schools that all grades (K-12). Finally, the levels for the independent variable of the size of the district were: 0-500 students, 501-1,000, 1,001-2,000, 2,001-5,000, and over 5,001 students. Tables 6, 7, 8 and 9 show the results.

Table 6

One-Way Analysis of Variance Summary Table for the Perceptions of Administrator and Teachers on Years of Experience

Source	*df*	*SS*	*MS*	*F*	*p*	η^2
Perception that the TESS model is an authentic process for assessing teacher effectiveness						
Administrators						
Between-group	4	33.15	8.29	1.20	.312	.02
Within-group	210	1450.8	6.91			
Total	214	1483.9				
Teachers						
Between-group	4	57.19	14.30	1.08	.365	.01
Within-group	368	4861.6	13.21			
Total	372	4918.8				

Table 6 (Cont.)

Source	*df*	*SS*	*MS*	*F*	*p*	η^2
Perception about how the data collected during TESS is used						
Administrators						
Between-group	4	83.77	20.94	1.62	.169	.03
Within-group	209	2694.5	12.89			
Total	213	2778.3				
Teachers						
Between-group	4	89.20	22.30	1.61	.171	.01
Within-group	520	7217.8	13.88			
Total	524	7307.0				
Perception that TESS model assures participation in learner-centered professional development						
Administrators						
Between-group	4	45.31	11.33	1.43	.224	.03
Within-group	210	1660.7	7.91			
Total	214	1706.0				
Teachers						
Between-group	4	89.48	22.37	1.38	.241	.01
Within-group	520	8458.7	16.27			
Total	524	8548.2				

When analyzing demographic data for years of experience, the results indicate that there were no significant differences for administrators or teachers.

Table 7

One-Way Analysis of Variance Summary Table for the Perceptions of Administrator and Teachers on Age

Source	*df*	*SS*	*MS*	*F*	*p*	η^2
Perception that the TESS model is an authentic process for assessing teacher effectiveness						
Administrators						
Between-group	4	58.7	14.67	2.14	.076	.04
Within-group	217	1485.1	6.84			
Total	221	1543.8				
Teachers						
Between-group	4	142.6	35.64	2.50	*.042	.02
Within-group	545	7768.5	14.25			
Total	549	7911.1				

Table 7 (Cont.)

Source	*df*	*SS*	*MS*	*F*	*p*	η^2
Perception about how the data collected during TESS is used						
Administrators						
Between-group	4	67.6	16.90	1.27	.281	.02
Within-group	217	2878.1	13.26			
Total	221	2945.7				
Teachers						
Between-group	4	92.1	23.01	1.55	.186	.01
Within-group	545	8075.7	14.8			
Total	549	8167.7				
Perception that TESS model assures participation in learner-centered professional development						
Administrators						
Between-group	4	28.3	7.09	.83	.505	.02
Within-group	217	1844.7	8.50			
Total	221	1873.0				
Teachers						
Between-group	4	171.3	42.8	2.42	*.047	.02
Within-group	545	9643.0	17.69			
Total	549	9814.3				

*Represents significant difference in age groups at the .05 level.

When comparing perceptions based on age groups there was a slightly significant difference for teachers regarding TESS being an authentic evaluation model and whether it

contributes to learner-centered professional development. Teachers between the ages of 20-30 responded the most favorably in both cases.

Table 8

One-Way Analysis of Variance Summary Table for the Perceptions of Administrator and Teachers on Age of Students in the Building

Source	*df*	*SS*	*MS*	*F*	*p*	η^2
Perception that the TESS model is an authentic process for assessing teacher effectiveness						
Administrators						
Between-group	5	30.7	6.14	.86	.511	2.26
Within-group	212	1519.9	7.17			
Total	217	1550.6				
Teachers						
Between-group	5	358.0	71.6	5.51	*.000	2.23
Within-group	531	6903.8	13.00			
Total	536	7261.8				

Table 8 (Cont.)

Source	*df*	*SS*	*MS*	*F*	*p*	η^2
Perception about how the data collected during TESS is used						
Administrators						
Between-group	5	128.0	25.6	1.97	.084	2.26
Within-group	212	2754.1	12.99			
Total	217	2882.1				
Teachers						
Between-group	5	129.6	25.93	1.81	.108	2.23
Within-group	531	7590.2	14.29			
Total	536	7719.8				
Perception that TESS model assures participation in learner-centered professional development						
Administrators						
Between-group	5	73.9	14.79	1.84	.106	2.26
Within-group	212	1706.6	8.05			
Total	217	1780.5				
Teachers						
Between-group	4	329.5	82.37	5.15	*.000	2.39
Within-group	512	8182.5	15.98			
Total	516	8512.0				

*Represents significant difference in different size building groups at the .05 level.

Data were compared in groupings by the age of the students served in the building. Again, teachers were significantly different in their perceptions that TESS was an authentic teacher evaluation process and whether TESS assures participation in learner-centered professional development. Teachers at the elementary level favorably that these were true statements while middle and high school level teachers responded less favorably.

Table 9

One-Way Analysis of Variance Summary Table for the Perceptions of Administrator and Teachers on District Size

Source	*df*	*SS*	*MS*	*F*	*p*	η^2
Perception that the TESS model is an authentic process for assessing teacher effectiveness						
Administrators						
Between-group	4	12.5	3.14	.43	.785	2.41
Within-group	211	1528.3	7.24			
Total	215	1540.9				
Teachers						
Between-group	4	79.3	19.82	1.49	.204	2.39
Within-group	509	6775.7	13.31			
Total	513	6855.0				

Table 9 (Cont.)

Source	*df*	*SS*	*MS*	*F*	*p*	η^2
Perception about how the data collected during TESS is used						
Administrators						
Between-group	4	182.6	45.64	3.58	*.008	2.41
Within-group	211	2691.2	12.75			
Total	215	2873.8				
Teachers						
Between-group	4	93.0	23.27	1.59	.175	2.39
Within-group	509	7446.0	14.63			
Total	513	7539.1				
Perception that TESS model assures participation in learner-centered professional development						
Administrators						
Between-group	4	40.7	10.18	1.26	.289	2.14
Within-group	210	1703.0	8.11			
Total	214	1743.7				
Teachers						
Between-group	4	350.7	87.68	5.50	*.000	2.39
Within-group	509	8116.2	15.95			
Total	513	8466.9				

*Represents significant difference between district size groups at the .05 level.

As district size increased there was less agreement among administrators as to how the data collected was used, demonstrating a significant difference. Teachers in districts having between 500 and 2,000 students were the most favorable toward the TESS model assuring learner-centered professional development.

Aside from one instance, the significant differences found were between teacher groups. Administrators are more aligned in their perceptions of the TESS evaluation system. While teachers' data reflected significant differences in multiple calculations.

Summary

The findings of the statistical analyses were essential in deriving answers to the research questions. Chi-square tests, frequencies, and percentages were used to analyze data for research questions, 1, 2, and 3. The results indicated that there was a significant difference in the perceptions of administrators and teachers in the analysis for all three research questions. Research question 4 was answered by analyzing demographic information. An independent sample *t* test was used to analyze gender data and ANOVA tests were used to compare data collected for years of experience, age, building level, and size of district. The results indicated that there were significant differences between teacher groups but only one significant difference was found between administrators when comparing the size of districts. Chapter 5 expands on the analysis of data and makes connections to the literature and includes suggestions for further research.

Chapter 5 – Summary and Overview of Results

The purpose of this quantitative non-experimental study was to investigate differences in Arkansas teachers' and building-level administrators' perceptions regarding the purpose of the Arkansas TESS teacher evaluation system, whether TESS authentically assesses teacher effectiveness, how teacher evaluation data are used, and how the TESS process supports learner-centered professional development. Additionally, the relationship of teacher and administrator demographics on their perceptions of TESS was explored. The researcher sought to determine the relationship among teacher and administrator alignment regarding the Teacher Excellence Support System (TESS) evaluation model and a teacher's self-efficacy in improving his/her professional practice. A quantitative study was conducted in which a survey was administered for teachers and administrators in the state of Arkansas. This chapter provides a summary of the procedures used, a discussion of the findings, conclusions, recommendations for practice, policy, and future research.

Summary of Procedures

After obtaining permission from the University of Arkansas Institutional Review Board (Appendix A), an electronic survey was distributed to all public school principals in the state of Arkansas. The email asked for them to complete the survey and forward it to the faculty and other administrators in the building. Seven hundred and ninety-seven surveys were collected during a 14-day window that the survey was open using a convenience sampling technique. The survey instrument (Appendix B) was administered using Google Forms. The introductory part of the survey included the purpose of the survey, the estimated time to take the survey, an assurance of anonymity, and brief directions. Consent was either obtained or denied; if denied the survey was terminated. The participants had the right at any time to stop taking the survey or withdraw

from the study at any time. The survey took approximately five minutes to complete and included an option for participants to write an email address if they wanted to receive the results of the survey. Finally, a statistical analysis of the data was used to report and analyze the information about teacher perceptions, principal and assistant principal perceptions, and how they compare. To report demographic data, descriptive statistics were used.

Discussion and Conclusions

Findings for the survey demonstrated significant differences in administrator and teacher perceptions of the TESS evaluation model. This indicates a gap in belief that TESS is an authentic process for teacher effectiveness, understanding how data is used, and belief that TESS assures learner-centered professional development.

Research Question 1

Is there a difference between how building administrators and teachers perceive the TESS model as an authentic process for assessing teacher effectiveness?

Responses to five Likert survey statements related to TESS being an authentic process for assessing teacher effectiveness revealed a significant difference in overall perceptions between administrators and teachers. Of the five statements, four of them revealed a significant difference in perception. Research shows that ratings for performance-based teacher evaluations can be used to recognize and encourage effective instruction and prepare and value highly effective teachers (Doherty & Jacobs, 2015). However, if a gap persists in the belief that the TESS model is effective and authentic, the opportunity for improvement of instruction and motivation for teachers to learn is potentially absent.

As the literature suggests (Kim & Youngs, 2016), it is very difficult to define what makes an effective teacher. This was verified by analyzing answers to the open response question.

Teachers were shown to place value on content, how it is delivered, how well the standards are taught, or how well students retain information given to them. This was in direct opposition to administrators. The theme of knowledge retention or content delivery was non-existent in the administrators' answers. This suggests a misalignment on the attributes that make an effective teacher.

Research Question 2

Is there a difference between how building administrators and teachers perceive the data collected during the TESS process is used?

Six Likert scale statements were used to answer this question revealing a significant difference in perception. Of interest were the statements that poor performing teachers are designated for remediation based on their evaluation results. Sixty-nine percent of administrators either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement while 32% of teachers agreed. Similarly, the statement that districts use evaluation results to make decisions like whether to retain a teacher showed that 62% of administrators agreed, while only 15% of teachers agreed with this statement. A lack of understanding regarding how this data is used might contribute to low self-efficacy in teachers to improve based on the feedback given. Likewise, if principals must support teachers and other stakeholders in a way that encourages their active engagement, an understanding of how the data is used would be critical.

Research Question 3

How do building administrators and teachers differ in their perceptions that the TESS model assures participation in learner-centered professional development?

As stated in Chapter 2, Looney (2011) found that professional development is most effective when it aligns with identified needs for development and encourages the development

of communities of practice within and among schools. Danielson, the individual whose work on which TESS is based, and McGreal (2000), argue that the most effective teacher evaluation systems are those that support and enhance teacher professional development. Teachers and administrators in Arkansas significantly disagree on the role TESS plays to inform professional development options. Only 61% of teachers agree that they engage in professional development directly linked to needs identified in the evaluation. Even less, 44% of teachers believe that administrators use TESS to determine professional development offerings.

This disagreement on appropriate professional development being provided based on TESS data becomes apparent when there is disagreement on which domain the most growth is needed. When asked which domain teachers needed the most support there were statements that indicated an internal locus of control, but also many indicated an external locus of control regarding the domain of planning and preparation with statements such as, “planning and preparation – we are not given enough time to plan”. Statements like this indicate needing additional supports, but not a need for self-improvement in the skills necessary for effective planning and preparation.

Internal motivation is important for effective professional development (Carpenter & Linton, 2016), and teachers need to feel as though they have control over their learning. The responses for both teachers and administrators ranked domain 3, instruction, as the highest. However, only 32% of teachers thought instruction needed the most support while 50% of administrators thought this area needed the most support. Principals that make decisions based on TESS evaluations may be providing professional development that they see as relevant, but which may not be aligned with their teachers’ views.

Research Question 4

How do perceptions of building administrators and teachers differ based on demographics (years of experience, gender, age, grade level taught, size of district, regional location of district)?

Analysis of demographic data revealed that administrators are closely aligned in their perceptions about TESS regardless of age, years of experience, gender, or the age of students they serve. The one significant difference found among administrators was when analyzing variance between how TESS data is used in relation to the size of the district. Teachers, on the other hand, had significant differences in relation to the age of the teacher, the age of the students in the building, and in the size of the district.

As detailed in Chapter 2, administrators were trained similarly across the state of Arkansas. Their understanding of the system and ability to rate teachers was calibrated through a series of practice exercises and a test that was required to be passed before being able to conduct TESS evaluations. The training of teachers in the TESS evaluation system was left to the districts and building leadership. If districts aligned their training models for teaching the TESS evaluation system there could be up to 235 various methods of delivery, as this is the number of school districts in Arkansas. With over 1,000 building administrators in Arkansas, if each building conducted training differently, there could be that many different models. This is evident by the significantly different perceptions of TESS by teachers. Teachers do not always agree between their groups and as the previous three research questions have shown, they do not align with administrator perceptions.

Limitations of the Study

One limitation of the study was the brevity of the survey. The survey had a limited number of Likert statements to answer each research question. A longer survey with more

specific questions in each area might provide more insight into the differences measured in this study.

Another limitation of this study was not having specific information on what content the teacher instructs. It is possible that participants in the study were indeed counselors, library media specialists, instructional facilitators, special education teachers, or technology specialists. When possible, the surveys were removed if those characteristics were observed, but there was no guarantee that these educators were eliminated completely.

Recommendations

Future Research

Given the significant differences pervasive in this study, further research should be conducted to establish the scope of training for the teachers. A standardized training system is in place for administrators throughout the state of Arkansas, which might explain the alignment of perceptions for administrators. A standardized state-wide training system to inform teachers of the evaluation system is not in place; this is left to the districts. Teachers must find value in the evaluation system for it to provide motivation and meaningful data to inform their practices. According to Xu, Grant, and Ward (2016), effective evaluation systems evaluate teacher skills that have a direct impact on learning outcomes and improve the quality of instruction by ensuring accountability for classroom practices. Without proper training in TESS regarding what data is important to inform the process, what artifacts administrators value, how the data is used, and why professional development is being provided, teachers will likely not give credence to the results or use the information to improve instruction.

Research examining the priority that teacher evaluation is in a principal's scope of work and the amount of time a principal spends on teacher evaluation and professional growth

compared to the desired time should be considered. Mette, Anderson, Nieuwenhuizen, Range, Hvidston, and Doty (2017) noted that successful principals in their study had a significant presence in classrooms. These informal observation data, in turn, were used to inform the eventual identifiers for each teacher's summative evaluation. An examination of data regarding amount of time principals are in the classroom correlated with teachers' perceptions of the TESS could provide insight into the bridging of supervision and evaluation.

Likewise, a qualitative study consisting of interviews with teachers and administrators in the same building would offer more insightful information about why their might be a gap in perceptions. To pair administrator and teacher results by school, investigate training practices, and further explore answers from this survey with dialogue would offer a unique and somewhat deeper understanding of the data.

Recalling the "Widget Effect" (Weisberg et al., 2009), where 1% of teachers were rated as below satisfactory, other studies have been conducted (Xu, et al., 2016) that examined whether there is truly a connection between student outcomes and teacher evaluation scores. A study could be conducted and published in Arkansas in which TESS evaluation scores were compared to student achievement scores to determine if these data correlate.

Implication of Practices

Arkansas has followed the national trend of revising the teacher evaluation system and given educators a consistent rubric by which to evaluate teachers. In theory, this rubric will help hold administrators and teachers accountable to a higher standard of practice and it will inform all parties of necessary professional development for improvement. The reality, as demonstrated by this study, is that teachers and administrators do not hold the same perceptions of the evaluation system and may not value the information equally, thereby perpetuating a disjointed

misaligned system of evaluation. Xu, et al. (2016) suggested that an administrator's subjective interpretation of teacher effectiveness, views on teacher evaluation, and training in teacher evaluation affect the actual quality and execution of teacher evaluation. The leadership beliefs of administrators inform them on when they need to provide more specific direction to struggling teachers and when they should let teachers drive their own learning opportunities (Mette, et al., 2017). Principals must be transparent on their views of what effectiveness looks like and what the expectations are for the four TESS domains, thereby alleviating the perception gap demonstrated in this study. Multiple trainings and discussions, formally and informally must occur to communicate the administrator's values and beliefs. This dialogue should continue every year as teachers change and perhaps even the culture or vision of the organization.

Principals across the state are aligned on what they use as evidence and what they want to see in the classroom. These expectations should be clearly communicated to teachers as well. The evaluation process should not be a mystery. Seventy-six teachers (14%) in this study reported not knowing what artifacts were important to the principal, many more left the question blank. The evaluation process hinges on principals to provide constructive feedback based on the multiple data sources used to evaluate teacher effectiveness (Range, Duncan, Scherz, & Haines, 2012). Inferentially, multiple data sources could also refer to multiple instances of an administrator in the teachers' classrooms. It is virtually impossible for an administrator to get a clear picture of a teacher's craft by entering the room two to three times a year. This study of TESS demonstrates a lack of consensus on what data is important and how it is used. There are many potential reasons for this disconnect. Range, et al. (2012) argued that one of many reasons there is a disconnect between principals and teachers is because of cultural and linguistic diversity that make it "difficult for principals and teachers to reach a shared understanding of

evaluation outcomes, making communication about the evaluation process meaningless" (p. 308). It is impossible for a teacher to understand an administrator's beliefs with one or two conversations. This understanding must develop over time with explicit conversations.

Perhaps the gaps in perception are really about the lack of personalization that the TESS model may incite after the evaluation is over when determining what professional development should be offered. Mette, et al. (2017) advocates for a personalized evaluation system that accounts for novice teachers, veteran teachers, teachers that are reflective in their practice, or those that are not. They found that effective principals capable of fulfilling the roles of instructional leader and evaluator differentiated the process for teachers. The observations of teachers informed how direct a principal would be when reviewing professional development plans. Novice teachers that struggled to engage in self-reflection were provided with more principal-directed professional development opportunities. Teachers that were high performing or highly self-motivated could develop professional development plans with less administrative oversight.

In the end, what really matters might be the relationship cultivated between the administrator and teacher. If evaluation is truly for the ultimate purpose of indirectly supporting student achievement by helping teachers improve instruction (Mette, et al., 2017), then supervision of instruction is just as important as evaluating a teacher for punitive purposes. As Mette, et al. (2017) argue "the role of an instructional coach can be accomplished through building strong relationships with teachers and valuing teacher feedback to provide differentiated professional development opportunities" (p. 720). What teachers believe about the evaluation system and their personal evaluations matters. Hopkins (2016) quotes, "School systems can either use the teacher evaluation system as a catalyst for improving teaching and learning or as a

meaningless bureaucratic necessity" (p. 21). Administrators must develop a relationship with teachers so they can have hard conversations, discuss ways to improve classroom learning, push each other's thinking, and understand each other's perspective.

According to the Arkansas Department of Education website (2018), "TESS is a support system for all educators to have flexibility in personalizing their professional learning to meet their individual growth needs. Educators have the capacity to become self-empowered and more effective through documentation and reflection of professional practices." Teachers do not consistently perceive this to be happening. Arkansas schools must have the structures in place to honor teachers as adult learners and give them a voice in determining how their professional development should look. The pupil allocation fund has been cut drastically since 2013, causing districts to run more efficiently at the expense of programs and opportunities for innovative professional development opportunities. Districts need funding to provide a variety of learning experiences and to allow teachers to seek out the help they need. Act 427 of 2017 is an act requiring any increase in professional development funding each school year be used for professional learning communities (ADE website, 2018). This is an example of how state legislators are prohibiting building leadership and district leadership to personalize learning for their teachers. This could perpetuate the gap in perception that the professional development and teacher evaluation systems are authentic.

As Hattie (2012) stated, a teacher is the single most important influence on a student's success. Good teachers should feel empowered to get better after a constructive evaluation and less effective teachers should know where they need to improve. None of this will occur, if teachers do not value the system. Teacher evaluation is likely one of the most important jobs of

the principal and possibly one that is pushed down in priority because of other measures of accountability.

Summary

The results of this study identify a gap in administrator and teacher perceptions of the TESS evaluation system being authentic, providing learner-centered professional development, and understanding data use. Teacher surveys revealed that there is more inconsistency in their responses than within the administrator community. To ensure consistency throughout the state and for teachers to have more ownership for their learning, training on the evaluation system must be more aligned. Administrators must communicate beliefs, personalize the evaluation for the teacher, and build strong relationships to cultivate collaboration. Furthermore, principals must know if this gap exists within his/her own building to have a culture of continuous learning and to be able to offer professional development that is welcome and necessary for teachers.

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Appendix A

UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS

To:	Allison Louise Byford
From:	Douglas James Adams, Chair IRB Committee
Date:	01/19/2018
Action:	**Exemption Granted**
Action Date:	01/19/2018
Protocol #:	1711086329
Study Title:	Teacher and Administrator Perceptions of the Teacher Excellence and Support System (TESS) in Arkansas

The above-referenced protocol has been determined to be exempt.

If you wish to make any modifications in the approved protocol that may affect the level of risk to your participants, you must seek approval prior to implementing those changes. All modifications must provide sufficient detail to assess the impact of the change.

If you have any questions or need any assistance from the IRB, please contact the IRB Coordinator at 109 MLKG Building, 5-2208, or irb@uark.edu.

cc: Kit Kacirek, Investigator

Appendix B

Teacher Excellence and Support System (TESS) Survey

Please complete the following survey which will be used in a study designed to compare the perceptions of teachers and principals regarding the Arkansas Teacher Excellence and Support System (TESS). The survey is very short. It should take only about five minutes to complete. Your responses will be kept confidential. Only the compiled statistical data will be shared. No individual of a school district will be identified in any part of the report. You may stop taking the survey or withdraw from the study at any time. By taking this survey you are giving your consent to the researcher to use the results collectively. If you would like a summary of the results of this research, you may enter your email address at the end of the survey. Entering your email address is not a requirement to complete this survey.

1. What is your current role in your building?
    a. Administrator who evaluates teachers
    b. Teacher
2. Number of years completed as a practicing administrator:
    a. 0-5
    b. 6-10
    c. 11-15
    d. 16-20
    e. 21 or more
3. Grade level of students currently in your building (check all that apply):
    a. PK
    b. K

   c. 1
   d. 2
   e. 3
   f. 4
   g. 5
   h. 6
   i. 7
   j. 8
   k. 9
   l. 10
   m. 11
   n. 12

4. Gender
   a. Female
   b. Male
5. Age
   a. 20-25
   b. 26-30
   c. 31-35
   d. 36-40
   e. 41-45
   f. 46-50
   g. 51-55

h. 56-60

i. 61+

6. Number of students in the district (K-12th grades):

a. 0-500

b. 501-1000

c. 1001-2000

d. 2001-5,000

e. 5,001 +

7. Please enter the following about TESS: (Participants indicated Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree or Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree)	
Administrator Statements	**Teacher Statements**
I know what types of information are collected during the teacher evaluation process (TESS) in my district.	I know what types of information are collected during the teacher evaluation process (TESS) in my district.
I have access to a central data system that allows me to analyze my teachers' evaluation data/effectiveness score.	I know how data collected during my evaluation will be used by school administrators.
From my perspective, the Teacher Excellence & Support System (TESS) process has improved teachers' instructional practice.	The Teacher Excellence & Support System (TESS) has led me to improve my instructional practice.
From my perspective, the Teacher Excellence & Support System (TESS) process has benefited students.	The Teacher Excellence & Support System (TESS) has led me to improve my instructional practice.
I use TESS data collected during teacher evaluations to determine the professional development offerings at my school.	Administrators use TESS data collected during teacher evaluations to determine the professional development offerings at my school.
In my district, teacher evaluation results are used to assign teachers to particular schools.	District administrators use teacher evaluation results to assign teachers to particular schools.
I use teacher evaluation results to assign teachers to particular classrooms, subjects, or grade levels.	School administrators use teacher evaluation results to assign teachers to particular classrooms, subjects, or grade levels.
Poor-performing teachers in my school are designated for remediation based on their evaluation results.	Poor-performing teachers in my school are designated for remediation based on their evaluation results.
My district provides me with adequate guidance about how to use teacher evaluation data/effectiveness scores to make decisions.	In my district, evaluation results are used to determine which teachers are retained.
In my school, evaluation results are used to promote teachers.	In my district, evaluation results are used to promote teachers.
After their evaluations, teachers at my school clearly understand the next steps they need to take for their professional growth.	After my evaluation, the next steps I need to take for my professional growth are clear to me.
The teachers I evaluate have opportunity to engage in professional development opportunities directly linked to the needs identified in their evaluations.	I engage in professional development opportunities directly linked to the needs identified in my evaluation.

I directly oversee the professional development of the teachers I evaluate.	My supervising administrator uses evaluation results to guide my professional growth in a helpful way.
Teachers in my school are primarily responsible for overseeing their own professional development.	I'm primarily responsible for using evaluation results to guide my own professional development.
From my perspective, the district does a good job linking its professional development offerings with the needs identified through teachers' evaluations.	From my perspective, the district does a good job linking its professional development offerings with the needs identified through teachers' evaluations.
I have adequate guidance/training/understanding to complete TESS evaluations on teachers.	My principal seems to have adequate guidance/training/understanding of the TESS model evaluations.

8. How do you define teacher effectiveness? (Teacher and Administrator question)
9. What artifact collected during the TESS evaluation most significantly influences a teacher's evaluation? (Administrator question)

   What artifact collected during the TESS evaluation most significantly influences your evaluation? (Teacher question)
10. What Domain of TESS (planning & preparation, classroom environment, instruction, or professional responsibilities) do you feel teachers need the most support and why? (Administrator question).

    What Domain of TESS (planning & preparation, classroom environment, instruction, or professional responsibilities) do you feel you need the most support and why? (Teacher question)
11. Identify the top three learner-centered professional development sessions that teachers attended within the past twelve months. (please list) (Administrator question)

    Identify the top three learner-centered professional development opportunities you attended within the past twelve months. (please list) (Teacher question)