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RESEARCH A FORMATIVE METHOD

AND INSTRUMENT FOR STAFF

EVALUATIONS

By
Mary Benatti

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree
of
The Graduate School
at
Rowan University
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Approved by_____
Professor

Date Approved____*May 16, 2002*_____

Abstract

Mary Benatti

Research a Formative Method

and Instrument for Staff Evaluations

2002

Dr. Kathleen Sernak

School Administration

Through the creation of a formative method and instrument of staff evaluations an ongoing cycle of evaluation and professional development will be encouraged for all middle school teachers. All data collection was conducted through individual interviews at Salem Middle School in Salem City School District. Team leaders from grades 4 through 8 and the team leader from the special education department participated in the interview process. The data was analyzed by the intern at the conclusion of all interviews. Analysis was conducted through coding which led to categories, themes and patterns.

Recognizing their own areas of improvement and assessing input from students and parents, the teachers feel their evaluation process can be enhanced. Through self-assessment, student and parent assessments teachers can gain input and take personal responsibility for their own growth and professional development. They can assess how they affect each of their students, which will help them focus their efforts where it counts, on student learning!

Mini-Abstract

Mary Benatti

Research a Formative Method

and Instrument for Staff Evaluations

2002

Dr. Kathleen Sernak

School Administration

Through the development of a growth-oriented method of teacher evaluations the success of all students will be promoted. Through self, parent and student assessments teachers will realize the personal impact they have on their students. These benefits, along with the empowerment that results from diagnosing and meeting their own needs can help reduce frustration and help them recapture the joy and excitement that brought them into the field.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Focus

In order for teachers to develop professionally and strive for excellence they must be afforded the opportunity to acknowledge their strengths and to receive the guidance to make the necessary changes to overcome their shortcomings. By offering teachers a method and instrument to document their accomplishments and giving them the opportunity to reflect on their own goals, we are allowing them to have an ear and a voice in setting the course for their professional aspirations. Through the creation of a growth oriented method and tool for middle school teacher evaluations, teachers will be offered the opportunity to participate in the ownership of their own learning process while also allowing them to demonstrate skills above the level of minimum competency.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to permit and encourage an ongoing cycle of evaluation and development for all middle school teachers. This study resulted in a report to inform board members, administrators, and middle school teachers of its findings. The creation of a formative evaluation method and tool encouraged collaboration based on mutual trust and shared responsibility.

Through the creation of a formative method and instrument of staff evaluations the project promoted the success of all students by advocating and nurturing, a school culture and professional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

Valuing professional development as an integral part of school improvement encouraged life-long learning and heightened the benefits that diversity brings to the school community.

Significance

This project enhanced professional communication and collaboration between administrators and middle school teachers. Increased communication and collaboration expanded the middle school teachers' ownership role in their professional development, thereby all middle school teachers can strive for excellence.

Definitions

Administrators - Principal and Vice Principal of Salem Middle School

Authentic Assessment - Methods of evaluation which engages students in tasks or activities that use real world or resemble the real world

Board Members - Board of Education members of the Salem City School District

Constructivism - A learning theory that emphasizes the ways in which learners actively create meaning by constructing and reconstructing ideas about reality

Criterion-Referenced Tests - Tests which are designed to measure what a student knows in a particular subject in relation to other students at a given time

Formative Evaluation - Growth oriented method of collecting and sharing information on a teacher's performance

Holistic Teaching - Teaching to the whole child

Mentor - An advisor or coach

Students - All students in grades four through eight at Salem Middle School

Summative Evaluation - A summary of the teacher's performance

Teachers - All certified professional teaching staff at Salem Middle School

Limitations

The limitations of this project are that all research and data pertained to and was collected from building administrators and middle school teachers of Salem Middle School in Salem City School District. All data collection was conducted through written surveys. Through this single data collection technique all building administrators and middle school teachers of Salem Middle School in Salem City School District were given the opportunity to participate. Due to these limitations, all outcomes and conclusions pertain solely to Salem Middle School.

Setting

Salem City is a small, urban community of approximately six thousand residents in which eighty-five percent of the children qualify for the federal free/reduced lunch program. The Salem City School District serves the community of Salem, the county seat on the western side of Salem County in southern New Jersey. Salem County is the most rural county in New Jersey and is located in the most southwestern portion of the state next to the Delaware River. It has the lowest population of the 21 counties with 64,285 residents. Approximately 57% of the total population in the City of Salem is African American while approximately 38% are white, less than 1% are American Indian or Asian, slightly over 1% are some other race and approximately 4% are 2 or more races. The total civilian labor force in 1999 equaled 2,848 with an unemployment rate of approximately 10% for the same year (2000 census).

The Salem City School District consists of 3 schools: The John Fenwick School, infants through grade 3, currently enrolls 505 students; Salem Middle School, grades 4-8, has a total of 400 students; and Salem High School, grades 9-12, has an enrollment of 550 students. Salem High School's class of 2000 consisted of a total of 94 graduating students. 28 of these graduates continued their studies in a 4-year college/university, 30 students continued their education through a 2-year college, 4 pursued their studies in other post secondary schools, 27 graduates sought full-time employment and 0 graduates entered the military. 138 certified teachers are currently employed by the Salem City School District, with 31 teachers holding masters' degrees. 14 administrators, 16 support staff, 20 instructional aids and 21 maintenance staff all contribute to the total staff of 209 employees. Approximately 64% of the total faculty and staff are white, while approximately 35% are African American and slightly over 1% are some other race.

With a total enrollment of 1,455 students Salem City is surrounded by small rural communities. The communities of Lower Alloways Creek, Mannington, Quinton and Elsinboro also send their students to Salem High School. The Salem City School is one of 11 school districts in New Jersey selected as a School Choice District. This means that any student in New Jersey may attend Salem High School.

The ratio of students per teacher is approximately 10 1/2 while the cost per pupil equals $8,098 (2000 census). The Salem, New Jersey school system is the fourth poorest school district in the state of New Jersey with a 48% student poverty level (Wiggins, 1999).

Organization of the Study

The intent of this study is to permit and encourage on ongoing cycle of evaluation and development for all middle school teachers. The remainder of this study will be as follows:

- Chapter 2 Review of the Literature

- Chapter 3 Design of the Study

- Chapter 4 Presentation of the Research Findings

- Chapter 5 Conclusions, Implications and Further Study

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

Introduction

Traditionally, teacher evaluation has served two unequal purposes. Its primary purpose has been to determine a teacher's suitability for continued employment. Fewer educators have considered evaluation as a way to provide teachers with feedback on performance and stimulate reflective thought. Professional development, clearly the more beneficial purpose of evaluation, regrettably has had less formal support in most schools. To promote professional development, teachers must become an integral part of the assessment process within their schools. When observation reports include teacher input teachers are more willing to engage in follow-up professional growth activities and to perceive administrators as help-mates in the process. This process is beneficial to everyone, particularly to students, who realize the greatest benefits from the professional growth experiences of their teachers.

Enz and Searfoss (1996) addressed alternative ways to access teaching and learning in classrooms that endorse holistic, integrated approaches consistent with the constructivist perspective. To determine perceptions of evaluation in holistic classrooms, they interviewed principals and teachers from twenty schools within seven districts in the central urban core of Phoenix, Arizona. All schools served low socioeconomic, multilingual, and multicultural populations.

Teachers at several of the schools expressed interest in creating an instrument that was sensitive to and appropriate for holistic practices. At one particular school, the teachers and principal jointly decided to collaboratively develop a new instrument and negotiate for agreement of form, content, and procedures. The collaboration was active and often intense, as the many ideas about assessment procedures reflected continual professional growth. As the teachers assumed a dominant role in developing an evaluation instrument for themselves, they also gained valuable insights into their own teaching. They now had ample opportunities for dialogues about their practice, and they felt empowered as they grew.

Gilkey (1996), superintendent in Baldwinsville Central Schools, located in New York, believes that observations are all too often viewed as a perfunctory obligation with little regard for formative possibilities and an unceasing focus on summative aspects to fulfill contractual requirements.

Gilkey also suggests that most evaluations treat teachers in their twentieth year in the profession in the same manner as it did in their first. The obvious results are a lack of guidance and assistance for helping teachers in their quest to become better educators. Through a team effort of administrators and teachers they developed a pilot program and committed themselves to improve their evaluation process.

The results of their program helped the administrators feel relieved from the constraints imposed by the traditional system while teachers felt large steps had been taken on a journey that will allow them to reach their goal of improving instruction.

Clemente, Greenblatt and Maher (1992) believe instructional improvement depends on a continuing dialogue between the principal and the teacher. Administrators and teachers

need to realize that improved instruction requires observation and feedback. Through this initiation of dialogue teachers can be lead to self-analysis and self-improvement.
The result of regular observations is that teachers have a good sense of how they are doing. In addition, the observations give a starting point for peer mentor programs and staff development and instructional improvement efforts.

The authors suggest that each school must establish their own instructional supervision. But two things are certain: Instructional improvement happens only when dialogue takes place between the principal and the teacher about classroom instruction, and that kind of dialogue means the most after classroom visits and observations.

DePasquale (1990) offers a model for an evaluation system designed for use with effective experienced teachers. The model allows such teachers to be challenged and to experience personal and professional growth. The model developed involves five steps. The first four are formative; step five is the final summative evaluation conference.

While the number of teachers participating in the program was too small to generalize widely, there seem to be benefits for both principals and teachers. It thrusts the principal into the role of an educational leader who is not only knowledgeable, but who can be trusted and is a helper of teachers. For teachers, it provided the opportunity to control factors that will make them more successful, meet their needs, use skills they value, and at the same time be challenged.

Koehler (1990) developed a process that enables supervisors to incorporate teacher self-assessments into their observation reports. According to this author, the majority of teachers are capable of such activity, and having done so are more willing to engage in follow-up activities.

Koehler believes every time we evaluate a teacher, we deprive him or her of the opportunity to self-evaluate. Teacher self-evaluation results in ownership of performance. It's safe to assume that the person who makes the value judgments owns them, at least initially.

The process developed by the author is relatively simple. Every worthwhile classroom observation involves the collection of data, the kind that documents one or more areas of teacher performance. Teachers must be the first to analyze these data and, ultimately, to make preliminary decisions regarding what the data say about the quality of teaching.

Obviously, not every teacher is capable of the kind of self-evaluation that leads to ownership of performance. Those who are either inexperienced or incapable require direct assistance from supervisors. Such assistance must involve specific value judgments. Such judgments should be followed by directed experiences for the teacher that remediate areas of weakness. Knowledgeable writers in the field assert that teachers requiring such direct assistance constitute only five to ten percent of the typical school staff. The majority of teachers, therefore, will benefit from a process that engages them in self-evaluative activities most of the time.

According to Gunter and Reed (1996) much concern continues to be expressed regarding skills needed by teachers for management and instruction of children, particularly in classrooms for children with behavioral disorders. In fact, teachers' skill deficits in these areas have been identified as possible reasons for their, and their students' dropping out from school. Yet, teachers have indicated that they are not often given strategies for identifying and remediating these deficits.

Self-evaluation through the use of audiotaped classroom interaction has been recommended by these authors. They believe that by recording observations of both students' and teachers' behaviors, teachers should be able to functionally assess the relationship between the two. Certainly, such self-observation can highlight teaching behaviors that are exemplary and indicate those that need to be strengthened.

In summary, they recommend that teachers develop and use a systematic procedure to objectively self-evaluate behaviors that may unintentionally maintain undesirable student behaviors. Videotape recordings of teacher/student interactions and analysis of behavior exchanges seem to be an effective avenue for this to occur.

Wallace (1998) described a study of peer supervision framed within the context of a formal school board-sponsored program called Supervision for Growth (S4G). In the study he examined the collegial interactions of four teachers and their partners in one Canadian school and explored the effects of collegiality on the teachers' work. Data for the study consisted of field notes and interview transcripts collected over a five month period of participant observation.

This research indicates that although collegiality holds some promise, externally imposed programs of peer supervision may be difficult to implement because of entrenched practices in schools and classrooms. Although the program had only a limited effect on the teachers in this study, there were, nonetheless, many positive aspects. The S4G program has the potential to provide teachers with opportunities to examine themselves, to reflect on their work, to establish goals in an improvement framework, to work toward those goals in their own way, to interact with colleagues, and to obtain the support of the principal. The program emphasizes teachers' individuality and autonomy

within a collegial framework. This research shows that, although such an approach is conceptually attractive, it can produce imperfect results because of the subjective nature of teacher growth.

The philosophy of adults learning from their peers is at the heart of a five-track evaluation program used in an Albany County, Wyoming, school district, and the beliefs of Bowman (1999). This five-track system extensively utilizes teachers working with teachers for the improvement of instruction.

Even though this multitrack evaluation program has worked extremely well, they have encountered a few problems. Some principals find it extremely difficult to tell a teacher that he or she is not demonstrating superior job performance. Sometimes, administrators overidentify master teachers. Some have expressed concern that occasionally veteran teachers simply sign the forms without doing the required observations. Another problem arises from the amount of time necessary for assistance team members to be away from their classrooms to observe and help their peers.

One of the keys to the success of this evaluation program is that adults are more receptive to learning from their peers in a nonthreatening environment than they are to learning from a supervisor. Certainly, this is not to suggest that our principals should cede their own mentorship role, but peers working with peers can bring a new dimension to teacher development.

Two years ago, a rural K-5 school in southeastern Pennsylvania surveyed parents about their feelings regarding their programs. According to Brackbill (1996) their school district was pleasantly surprised by the overwhelming positive feedback. Were they ready,

however, to invite criticism from their students and to use the information to improve the quality of their instruction?

After examining the results they were able to draw many conclusions. As educators we have an obligation to search out and invite criticism in order to grow and become more successful. We should try not only to please our students and parents, but to give them more than they expect whenever possible. Teachers have an obligation to establish and maintain a trusting relationship with their students and parents. Continuous improvement for any organization depends on the quality of the feedback from the people they serve, and the realization that the perceptions of our students and parents are their reality. We have to change their perceptions before we can change reality.

As we continue to look for ways to improve the delivery of services to our students and parents, we remain focused on the quality of our instruction. As professionals, we must be secure enough to continue to do what we know is best for children, but not so secure that we don't welcome honest feedback. Teachers need self-assessment and reflection tools to help them assess fundamental beliefs and assumptions about learning, learners, and teaching, as well as differences between their perceptions of practice and those held by students in their classrooms. A process of reflection will help to identify the personal characteristics and practices that must change to improve motivation and achievement for each student.

Teachers are the crux of the entire educational system. There is no doubt that they experience a good deal of stress, and a change in evaluations may temporarily cause more. That cannot be a deterrent, however, to those who really believe that education is more than regular attendance and multiple-choice questions.

Chapter 3

Design of the Study

Introduction

The need for teacher observation is obvious not only to administrators but also to teachers. Administrators often view the need for teacher observation from an accountability perspective. They must prove to administrative officers, district personnel, and community members that their teachers are good and are getting even better. Teachers may also view observations for accountability purposes; they need to climb the tenure-track or pay-scale ladder.

New models of professional development for teachers focus on empowerment, leadership skills, teacher responsibility for their own growth and professionalism, and teachers' development of higher order thinking and personal reflection skills. Viewing observations as a legitimate manner in which to determine change and as a self-improvement indicator is key to teachers' ability to accept and implement these new models. Teachers can then use the information in a nonthreatening and nonjudgmental context to help determine the kinds of changes needed to better serve the learning needs of all students.

Research Design and Sample

All data collection was conducted through interviews at Salem Middle School in Salem City School District. Salem Middle School encompasses sixteen regular education classrooms for grades four through eight and six special education classrooms also for

grades four through eight. For the purposes of this research the team leader for each grade level and the team leader for special education participated in the interviews.

Since I gathered information from employees of my school district, I felt it was imperative that I have permission from my building principal. I spoke with him, explained the purpose of the research, and gained his full support. He assured me that any further permission would be granted and handled through him. We also discussed confidentiality and he felt teachers' names should not be revealed.

The fourth grade team leader, "teacher A," is a Caucasian female who teaches all subject areas and has accumulated all her professional experience of more than twenty-five years at Salem Middle School. "Teacher B," the fifth grade team leader, is also a Caucasian female who teaches math and science to approximately half the students in the fifth grade. She has been teaching at Salem Middle School for six years however, she has also taught various grade levels in a parochial elementary school for seven years. The sixth grade team leader, "teacher C," is also a Caucasian female who teaches math and science to approximately half the students in the sixth grade. She has been teaching at Salem Middle School for four years and also taught at a private school for special education students for three years. "Teachers B and C" are the only teachers interviewed with teaching experience in other schools. "Teacher C" is also the only teacher interviewed with a master's degree and experience in special education. The seventh grade team leader, "teacher D," is an African American male who has accumulated his total teaching experience of six years at Salem Middle School. He teaches math to the entire seventh grade and is the only teacher interviewed who has his college degree in specific subject areas, history and math. He is also the only teacher interviewed who

substituted at Salem Middle School before teaching there full time. The eighth grade team leader, "teacher E," is a Caucasian male who teaches math to the entire eighth grade and has accumulated all his teaching experience, of more than twenty years, at Salem Middle School. The team leader for special education, "Teacher F," is an African American female who has twenty-two years experience at Salem Middle School. She is presently assigned to teach a perceptionally impaired group of seventh and eighth grade students. She is also the only teacher interviewed who has teaching experience in all grade levels at Salem Middle School.

Data Collection Approach

Six teachers from Salem Middle School were given the opportunity to participate in the data collection for this project. All data collection took place through individual interviews, which were developed and conducted by the intern. Each interview took approximately 45 minutes to complete and all responses were collected by the intern through written notes.

Data Analysis Plan

The intern analyzed all data from the interviews at the end of all data collection. An analysis of the data began with the intern organizing and familiarizing herself with all collected data. Coding the data then generated categories, themes and patterns. The intern then searched for explanations of the data and recorded and documented all findings in the form of a written report.

Chapter 4

Presentation of Findings

Introduction

There is a shared conviction between the general public and educators that teachers can make a difference, a crucial difference for the students they serve. Good teachers are the key to a quality educational system and it is imperative that they receive feedback on their performance in order to improve that system. The value of this effort depends upon the willingness of the professional educators to accept constructive feedback and to change direction when necessary in order to serve children more effectively. If teacher evaluations are to have the desired effects there must be a sound basis of trust, a trust which requires collaboration and mutual support.

Elements of an effective method and tool used for teacher observations were similarly described by "teachers A, E and F." Each of these teachers are veteran teachers with more than twenty years teaching experience at Salem Middle School. These teachers' perception of effective teacher evaluations centers around fairness. They feel this can best be accomplished by allowing teachers to know exactly what is expected of them. The evaluation therefore, should be based on this criteria. The purposes of the evaluation program needs to be clearly stated in writing and be well known to the evaluators and those who are to be evaluated.

The effectiveness of the present method and tool used for teacher observations was described as "fair" by "teachers A, E and F," however, "teachers C and D" voiced

concerns about its effectiveness when being observed by administrators who are not located within Salem Middle School on a full time basis. The effectiveness of evaluations conducted by the district Director of Curriculum were questioned by both these teachers. Their feelings centered around his knowledge of the unique needs of the middle school student, and feel a greater understanding is needed concerning the uniqueness of the middle school environment compared to the elementary and high school environments.

All teachers interviewed felt the present method and tool used for teacher observations by Salem Middle School fairly reflects their value as a teacher. However, in order to measure consistency, steadiness and reliability on the job, one veteran teacher feels these qualities are discovered over a longer period of time. Again, concern over who conducts the observation was expressed by "teacher C." Communication between administrators and teachers focusing on the specific criteria, process and procedures by which they will be evaluated is an area of concern.

Reflecting on the ability of the present method and tool for teacher evaluations used by Salem Middle School, and recognizing the areas in which teachers want to grow , the veteran teachers, "teachers A, E and F," feel this is an area which is greatly deficient. "Teachers A, E and F" all stated that their post observation conference consists of asking them if they have any questions concerning their evaluations and then sign the necessary forms. "Teachers B, C and D," who all have less than ten years experience at Salem Middle School, all stated positive feelings concerning their post observation conference. "Teachers B, C and D" feel the present process effectively analyzes their teaching strengths and helps to improve their teaching methods and strategies.

Considering the possibility for more teacher input regarding their own evaluation process all teachers interviewed felt there was not a need for improvement. All participants stated they were satisfied with their present amount of input, while each of the less experienced teachers also expressed they felt supported while attempting to acquire new skills. They felt their input was not only supported, it was valued.

Peer evaluations were supported by all participants in this study. This was seen as a non-threatening method of evaluation and was viewed by teachers as a positive avenue for seeking suggestions. One teacher felt it could only be effective however, if both teachers were in agreement to work together. Concerns over the evaluation tool and the added responsibility for the all ready stressed out teachers was also expressed.

Student participation in teacher evaluations was also seen as a worthwhile tool in teacher evaluations. The participants recognized this as an opportunity to gain input, from the students' point of view, into what is effective in engaging them in learning. "Teacher D" expressed that the use of a student survey may allow students to communicate with their teachers how they best learn.

The involvement of parents into the teacher evaluation process was also positively considered by all participating teachers. "Teachers D and E" viewed this as a creative way to initiate more parental involvement within our school while "teacher A" realized the positive input parents could offer concerning the specific needs of their individual child. This same teacher however, stated that this process would need to be extremely well thought out in order to be used as an effective tool.

Considering the need for the development of a new method and tool for teacher evaluations at Salem Middle School all participants stated the present process was

sufficient. One veteran teacher, "teacher A," stated she has had many evaluators throughout her twenty-five year career. Some used a checklist, others a narrative and some wrote a novel. All methods were viewed by her as effective as long as they were fair and objective.

Evaluation is an issue which intrinsically affects each teacher. As a positive tool, evaluation can aid teaching staff members when they need guidance. Paving the way to positive and collaborative approaches to staff evaluation can be characterized by such terms as trust, cooperation, planning and improvement. Improving the learning experiences of students can only be achieved if professionals work together to use the evaluation as a positive force within their school. A good evaluation system will not only identify and remedy deficiencies, but will identify exemplary performances and good practices. All parties however, need to support these positive approaches if the benefits of evaluation are to be realized.

Chapter 5

Conclusions, Implications and Further Study

Introduction

The educational system of the future must embrace a learner-centered perspective to

maximize high standards of learning, motivation, and achievement for *all* learners,

including the teachers. To support the function of this "learner centered" perspective,

education and schooling must provide a supportive learning context for its teachers by

valuing and understanding the rich array of teacher differences and needs. To support the

process of continuous learning, teachers should have opportunities for learning and inquiry

into the research on learning to help them create a professional development model that

meets their needs. Teachers must feel empowered to take increased responsibility and

higher level of control over their own learning and professional development process.

When this foundation is in place educators are more likely to maximize motivation,

learning, and achievement for *all* students.

This research was designed to permit and encourage an ongoing cycle of evaluation

and development for all middle school teachers. The intern began by collecting data from

the team leaders of grades 4 through 8 and also the team leader of the special education

department. Three areas of the evaluation process were considered by the participants of

this study as areas which could be improved. Fairness, the ability to recognize the areas in

which teachers want to grow in and incorporating input from self-assessments, students

and parents are considered avenues which may need to be explored.

Based on the research articles and the research conducted by the intern for this study, fairness and recognizing areas of improvement go hand in hand. Through open communication between the administration and teachers this can be accomplished. Collaboratively determining the purpose of teacher evaluations and the development of a goal setting process may help to ensure active and effective communication between school leaders and teachers. Requiring teacher participation in their own goal setting process, at the start of the school year, and collaboratively agreeing on the plans and means for assessing the accomplishment of the goals will help to ensure a commitment from both parties. Through regular meetings to ascertain progress toward attainment of the goal, evidence can be gathered which may indicate that the goal has been achieved.

Allowing teachers to have a voice in their own evaluation process, and considering input from their students and parents is also supported by research and indicated as a possible need for the improvement of the evaluation process at Salem Middle School. Sometimes teachers are unaware of how their classroom practices are perceived and experienced by their students. These tools can help teachers become more aware of how their practices are perceived. Tools that increase their awareness and knowledge of the personal impact of their classroom practices on each of their students' learning experiences and, ultimately, their motivation and achievement help teachers make *self-initiated changes* that can improve the learning and the experience of learning for all their students. This input thus provides teachers with a professional development tool that can help them address personal areas of change that have a high likelihood of enhancing student motivation and achievement.

New models of professional development for teachers focus on empowerment, leadership skills, teachers' responsibility for their own growth and professionalism, and teachers' development of higher order thinking and personal reflection skills. Self-assessment tools are key to teachers' ability to accept and implement these new models. Teachers can then use information from the self-assessments to identify, in a nonthreatening and nonjudgmental context, the kinds of changes in practice needed to better serve the learning needs of all students.

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Appendix A

Research Instrument

Interview Questions: Classroom Observations

1. What is your perception of the elements of an effective method and tool used for teacher observations?

2. What is your perception of the effectiveness of the present method and tool used for teacher observations by Salem Middle School?

3. How does the present method and tool used for teacher observations by Salem Middle School reflect your value as a teacher?

4. Reflecting on the present method and tool used by Salem Middle School for teacher observations; how do the results aid in recognizing the areas you want to grow in and help to enhance your ongoing development as an educator?

5. In what specific areas of **your own evaluation** do you feel **you** need more input?

6. **Peer evaluation** of teachers are being considered by many school districts throughout the nation. In what specific areas do you feel **peers** could effectively enhance the teacher evaluation process?

7. **Student evaluation** of teachers are being considered by many school districts throughout the nation. In what specific areas do you feel **students** could effectively enhance the teacher evaluation process?

8. **Parent evaluation** of teachers are being considered by many school districts throughout the nation. In what specific areas do you feel **parents** could effectively enhance the teacher evaluation process?

9. Do you feel there is a need for Salem Middle School to develop a new method and/or tool for teacher evaluations? Why or Why not?

10. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Biographical Data

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