Effects of Experience and Certification on Teacher Perceptions of the Arkansas Teacher Excellence and Support System

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EFFECTS OF EXPERIENCE AND CERTIFICATION ON TEACHER PERCEPTIONS
OF THE ARKANSAS TEACHER EXCELLENCE AND SUPPORT SYSTEM

by

Nita R. Bohannon

Dissertation

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For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future (Jeremiah 29:11).
ABSTRACT

by
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May 2017

Title: Effects of Experience and Certification on Teacher Perceptions of the Arkansas Teacher Excellence and Support System (Under the direction of Dr. Bruce Bryant)

Teacher evaluations have been a facet of the education sector throughout history. Meaningful teacher evaluations entail an accurate assessment of teacher effectiveness. Of late, States have implemented evaluation mandates that called for a more comprehensive teacher evaluation approach when assessing the effectiveness of teachers. In 2011, Arkansas adopted the Teacher Excellence Support System (TESS), which standardized the evaluation system to support licensed and non-licensed educators. Teachers’ perceptions are critical in understanding an evaluation system that assesses for teacher effectiveness.

The purpose of this dissertation was to investigate the effects of experience and certification on teachers’ perceptions related to the effectiveness of TESS. The related literature recognizes a strong correlation between teacher effectiveness and student achievement. The researcher sought to determine teachers’ perceived beliefs about the new evaluation system compared to the previous system, on the effect of professional development received, and the effectiveness of the new system. The targeted population consisted of 236 licensed teachers from three school districts in Central Arkansas. Data
were collected through the use of Rutgers University Graduate School of Education Teacher Survey. Factorial analysis of variance revealed that no evidence was found that years of experience interacting with certification specialty or main effects of experience and certification had an effect on teachers’ perceptions considering the three hypotheses. Based on these findings, recommendations for improved results are discussed, and suggestions are included for future research.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Teacher evaluations are based on theory and methods intertwined with federal, state, and local guidelines. However, the theories about teacher evaluations often have been forfeited by a flawed system that inadequately assesses teachers’ performances. Callahan and Sadeghi (2015) noted that in teacher evaluation systems “inadequate assessments are all too common, which means poor performance is not addressed, teaching excellence goes unrecognized, new teachers do not receive the feedback they need, and professional development is not aligned with areas of need” (p. 48). Teacher evaluation processes are essential in building a teacher’s instructional capacity. The knowledge gained through the process can be valuable in school improvement efforts, aligning professional development, and ultimately affecting student learning outcomes positively. However, teacher evaluations, for the most part, have been conducted solely for compliance. In some cases, the idea of compliance has outweighed the possibility of having an effective teacher evaluation system that affects teacher professional growth and self-efficacy.

Teacher evaluations have a broad range of purposes. One of the preponderant purposes of evaluations should be the influence of improving teachers’ instructional methods (Marzano, 2012). Several researchers (Danielson, 2001; Darling-Hammond, 2013; Tucker & Stronge, 2005) concluded there is a significant relationship between
teacher effectiveness and student learning outcomes. Teaching matters; more so, the
teacher matters. Darling-Hammond (2000) indicated that “the effects of well-prepared
teachers on student achievement can be stronger than the influences of student
background factors, such as poverty, language background, and minority status” (p. 33).
Prior to 2000, teacher evaluation policies often did not link teacher quality and student
learning outcomes regardless of what research revealed (Darling-Hammond, 2000).
However, policy stakeholders have embraced the ideology that linking student
achievement data to the teacher evaluation process may be essential to improving teacher
effectiveness (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Teachers have faced a progressive trend by
using a value-added model to teacher evaluations; many states’ Departments of
Education have included student growth data as a key component in teacher evaluation
processes.

Indeed, perceptual data collected from teachers can provide information to
essential stakeholders in assessing evaluation methodologies. Teachers’ perceptions of an
evaluation process could be vital in determining the strengths and challenges of the
implementation process of an evaluation system. The perceptual process occurs through a
complex progression of the human intelligence in order to organize, categorize, infer, and
interpret from one’s environment (Cherry, 2015). The perceptual process is continual
and, thus, the gateway to stimulation before one channels an unforced response. Hence,
perception differs from person to person. What one perceives is by choice and is shaped
by one’s culture, beliefs, and experiences. Therefore, including perceptual data in
assessing the evaluation process could enhance the teacher evaluation system. Effective
evaluation methodologies allow for questions to be asked and discoveries to be made between the teacher’s perception and the evaluator’s perception.

**Statement of the Problem**

The purposes of this study were three-fold. First, the purpose of this study was to determine if differences existed between teachers’ years of experience as probationary versus non-probationary and between teachers with the certification specialty type as core versus contributing on their perceptions when comparing the new evaluation system and the previous evaluation system as measured by the Rutgers University Graduate School of Education (RU-GSE) Teacher Survey for teachers in three school districts in Central Arkansas. Second, the purpose of this study was to determine if differences existed between teachers classified as probationary versus non-probationary and between teachers with the specialty type classified as core versus contributing to the effect of professional development received regarding the new evaluation system as measured by the RU-GSE Teacher Survey for teachers in three school districts in Central Arkansas. Third, the purpose of this study was to determine if differences existed between teachers classified as probationary versus non-probationary and teachers with the specialty type categorized as core versus contributing regarding the effectiveness of the new evaluation system as measured by the RU-GSE Teacher Survey in three school districts in Central Arkansas.

**Background**

**Teacher Evaluations**

Performance evaluations for teachers have recently become increasingly important as a result of the call for improving teacher quality and accountability.
According to Aldeman and Chuong (2014), the well-known report released by The New Teacher Project in 2009 titled *The Widget Effect* revealed that the majority of America’s current teacher evaluations were systems that used two-fold appraisal ratings of satisfactory or unsatisfactory categorizing teacher effectiveness. Based on 12 states’ teacher evaluation systems, the researchers found three common themes: (a) a binary rating system was used, (b) a small percentage of teachers received unsatisfactory ratings, and (c) districts did not use evaluations to make critical personnel decisions in relation to implementing a comprehensive teacher evaluation process (Aldeman & Chuong, 2014).

Similarly, Laine and Behrstock-Sherratt (2012) revealed that a high-quality teacher evaluation should include a multiple-leveled performance system that ranks teaching on a 4- or 5-point scale rather than a binary system. A 2012 education sector report replicated and extended *The Widget Effect*’s findings to include the entire state of Washington. The report disclosed that only a meager number of teachers received an unsatisfactory rating at a rate of 0.92% (Aldeman, 2013; Aldeman & Chuong, 2014). Furthermore, in Washington state, 85% of schools failed to identify a single low-performing teacher (Aldeman & Chuong, 2014). Finding a more quantifiable way to measure teacher effectiveness has been a significant purpose for improvements in teacher evaluation processes.

Despite the efforts of policymakers at the federal level with the Race to the Top grant initiative that suggested policies should be adopted linking student achievement to teacher evaluations, state departments and local school districts continue to dismiss the urgency shared by proponents of a value-added model that evaluation systems should link student growth achievement to teacher effectiveness (Aldeman & Chuong, 2014). The
National Council on Teacher Quality asserted that “two-thirds of states adopted new ways to evaluate teachers between 2009 and 2012” (Aldeman & Chuong, 2014, p. 2). Aldeman and Chuong (2014) extrapolated the following information from the data collected from 17 states and the District of Columbia on states' newest teacher evaluation policies:

1. Districts are starting to evaluate teachers as professionals rather than as interchangeable widgets.
2. Schools are providing teachers with better, timelier feedback on their practice.
3. Despite state policy changes, districts still do not factor student growth into teacher evaluation ratings.
4. Districts have wide discretion even under statewide evaluation systems.
5. Districts continue to ignore performance when making decisions about teachers.

While *The Widget Effect* illuminated America’s failing teacher evaluation practices, state and local policies continue to be complacent in full implementation of effective teacher evaluation processes.

**Teacher Evaluation Reform**

State departments of education and local districts have the autonomy to utilize a research-based evaluation tool based on specific criteria that objectively evaluates teachers. Arkansas adopted the Teacher Excellence and Support System (TESS) in 2011 as the state’s comprehensive teacher evaluation system for licensed and non-licensed teachers. Arkansas’s teacher evaluation conditions set forth that the state's model would be comprised of formal and informal observations and could incorporate a value-added
model using student achievement data as well as tenure and dismissal policies (Ashby, Frank, & McClain, 2014). Arkansas, along with numerous states across America, continued to reform policies that support empirical standards of an effective teacher evaluation system in the effort to improve teacher quality and student achievement. Danielson (2012) proposed that evaluation systems should focus on accountability and improvement, and Marzano (2012) claimed a two-fold teacher evaluation should focus on measurement and development. It has been shown that teacher evaluation systems should be a systemic process that allows for a fair, effective, and comprehensive evaluation based on performance that also supports teacher improvements (Danielson, 2011a; Darling-Hammond, 2012; Schooling, Toth, & Marzano, 2013; Stronge, 2006). Moreover, teacher evaluation systems should include multiple measures that appraise teacher effectiveness and focus on professional development.

In early December of 2015, President Barack Obama signed into law the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act known as the Every Student Succeeds Act or ESSA (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). ESSA has continued to hold at a high standard teacher quality and accountability. The ESSA paradigm shift as related to teacher evaluation proclaimed that states no longer have to evaluate teachers through student outcomes (Klein, 2015). Under Title II of the bipartisan approved bill that began in the 2016-2017 school term and took full effect during the 2017-2018 school year, States have the autonomy of including standardized test scores in teacher evaluations. This inclusion is a significant shift from No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), waivers, and the incentive funding Race to the Top grant that awarded States that linked teacher evaluations and student test scores. In addition, under ESSA, States
were not required to report highly qualified teacher requirements annually, but school report cards were required to include professional qualifications of teachers (Klein, 2015). ESSA ended the federal mandates on certain criteria for teacher evaluations; States were afforded the opportunity to develop and implement teacher evaluation processes (Hightower, 2016). Ultimately, through ESSA, the stakeholders sought to strengthen America's public school system by building stronger schools that focused on teaching and learning through accountability.

**High-Quality Teacher Evaluation System**

Teaching quality begins prior to receiving a teacher’s licensure. Quality teaching commences at the start of the prospective teacher’s pre-service training. According to the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE), teaching quality “grows through a process of continuous improvement gained through experience, targeted professional development and the insights and direction provided through thoughtful, objective feedback about the teacher’s effectiveness” (ADE, 2016b, para. 3). Teacher accountability promotes a significant role in increasing student achievement. For the purpose of improving teacher effectiveness, Laine and Behrstock-Sherratt (2012) offered that teacher effectiveness is the single most important school-level factor affecting student achievement. Therefore, an integral part of continuous improvement of teacher effectiveness must include an effective teacher evaluation process that takes aim at raising student learning outcomes (Laine & Behrstock-Sherratt, 2012).

A high-quality teacher evaluation system affords teacher accountability and promotes continuous improvements in teaching quality. Laine and Behrstock-Sherratt (2012) defined a high-quality teacher evaluation system as one that embeds throughout
the process multiple opportunities to assess teacher quality, uses a multiple-measured system that is proven to be valid and reliable, employs multiple-trained evaluators who observe teachers over a period of time, and compares ratings that provide detailed written and oral feedback to teachers while coaching teachers to improve in areas of weakness. Teacher evaluation systems that include multiple evaluators using a common language to evaluate teaching quality enhance the validity and reliability of the evaluation system.

A high-quality teacher evaluation framework can strengthen a school’s culture that focuses on teacher evaluations. A high-quality, effective teacher evaluation process must define who will evaluate teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2012). These evaluators must be trained in the processes and tools for collecting data. Possible evaluators could include but are not limited to, the principal, assistant principal, a master teacher, an instructional facilitator, or a curriculum and instruction director in a specific content field (Darling-Hammond, 2012). Glickman (2002) disclosed that teachers should be treated with worthiness, respect, and assurance. In addition, teachers “deserve systematic support and assistance to change, grow, improve, and share” (p. 98). Glickman emphasized that for continuous improvement, formal teacher evaluations should be separated from professional development processes. Teachers are more inclined to be receptive to a competent individual who has a non-evaluative role in the school setting when supporting teacher professional growth.

One of the most highly effective processes in using evaluations to increase teacher accountability is reflective practice. A key element in reflective practice is peer coaching within a collegial setting. While peer coaching is non-evaluative, the implications of
improving professional practices that maximize student learning are evident. Peer coaching enhances reflective practice and can prepare teachers for evaluations. According to Robbins (2015),

…peer coaching has been used to augment the availability of feedback to teachers about teaching and learning; to increase problem-solving capabilities; to build teachers’ capacity...to refine teachers’ instructional repertoire and competencies in an instructional framework, and to personalize professional learning. (p. 9)

The ultimate goal in peer coaching is improved staff and student learning through reflective practice (Robbins, 2015). Peer coaching to enrich professional practice and teacher accountability occur over time in a trusting school culture coupled with competent observers and relevant feedback.

For Arkansas, the State Department of Education has implemented TESS to be its high-quality teacher evaluation system (ADE, 2016a), as TESS contained the conditions of such an evaluation system (ADE, 2014). In 2011, based on 2 years of research and collaboration with Charlotte Danielson, the Arkansas Teacher Evaluation Task Force recommended a new teacher evaluation system. Since then, according to the ADE (2016a), TESS has been a significant part of a comprehensive and coherent differentiated system for accountability, recognition, and tiered support. During the 2015-2016 school year, the department launched full implementation of TESS to evaluate teacher effectiveness. Arkansas made continuous strides in securing a high-quality teacher evaluation that assesses teacher effectiveness by embedding Danielson’s Framework for Teaching Evaluation Instrument into TESS (Ashby et al., 2014). TESS provided a clear standard for evaluating teacher effectiveness which focuses on teachers’ professional
growth measured by professional standards and student achievement growth (ADE, 2016a). While previous teacher evaluation systems used in Arkansas were in the form of a checklist that disregarded rubrics or descriptors, TESS has afforded school districts a comprehensive and systematic approach to accountability for improving instruction and ultimately bolstering student achievement. This systematic approach includes reflective practice, multiple measurements, standards-based evaluation tools, and multiple observations by trained evaluators who provide timely and targeted feedback.

**Teaching Quality through Targeted Professional Development**

The ultimate purpose of teacher evaluations should lead to improved teacher quality. An effective teacher evaluation system should link teacher evaluation to professional development. Several researchers (Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Darling-Hammond, 2012; Marzano, Toth, & Schooling, 2011; Stronge, Tonneson, Grant, & Xu, 2011) concluded that one significant criterion of an effective teacher evaluation system must be aligned to professional development opportunities that are relevant to teachers’ goals and needs that include peer collaboration, observation, and coaching combined with job-embedded professional learning opportunities. Professional development methods should be those that are job-embedded, collegial, and of merit.

Professional growth has consistently been a part of teacher evaluations throughout America. Stronge et al. (2011) suggested two purposes of teacher evaluations are accountability and professional growth in which neither are competing but rather are supportive and essential for systemic improvements. The relationship between individual professional growth and school-wide professional development should coexist to strengthen teacher effectiveness (Stronge et al., 2011). In addition, job-embedded
professional development should be an ongoing approach to improving teacher quality individually and collectively.

One way to measure teacher effectiveness would be to note how traditional professional development has impacted teacher quality. Conventional modes of professional development at the district or school levels have frequently been unsuccessful in improving and sustaining teacher quality (Phillips, 2014). One-time workshops are a type of traditional professional development that has been a way to offer teachers professional learning activities. According to Phillips (2014), the Boston Consulting Group study found that a teacher on average spends 68 hours yearly engaging in professional learning. This professional learning included traditional professional development as well as job-embedded professional development (Phillips, 2014). Researchers agreed that although traditional one-time workshops are often the reality of professional development, job-embedded professional development yields greater results (Phillips, 2014; Ritter & Barnett, 2016). In brief, a shift in building systems of effective teacher evaluations that generate more effective professional development modes ultimately improves teacher quality and student outcomes.

Job-embedded professional development includes online courses, coaching, and collaborative professional learning communities. The Boston Consulting Group study, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, disclosed that a typical teacher’s professional development hours increase to an average of 89 hours per year when job-embedded hours are coupled with conventional professional development hours (Phillips, 2014). However, teachers largely noted a concern about the efficacy of professional learning. This concern led the researchers to seek the perspectives of teachers on what
constitutes an effective professional learning experience. The Boston Group study found teachers cited the ideal professional development experience as one that is relevant, interactive, peer-facilitated, sustained over time, and treats teachers like professionals. In addition, this experience should not be in the form of a lecture, but in opportunities for application through demonstration, modeling, and practice (Joyce & Showers, 1988; Knight, 2011; Phillips, 2014). Districts and schools must empower teachers to attend high-quality professional development. In this way, teacher evaluations have the ability to improve teacher quality through effective professional development.

An effective professional development supports the complex system of effective teaching through collegiality. Indeed, teacher-centered professional development should enhance the effectiveness of a teacher’s professional growth and learning (Ritter & Barnett, 2016). Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009) offered an effective approach to cultivating collegiality when school cultures foster a climate for teachers to support each other in a trusting, collaborative environment that encourages risk taking and reflective practices. According to Ritter and Barnett (2016), “teachers become more open to evaluations as they see professional growth as a result of the evaluation system” (p. 52). Collegial collaboration fosters improvements in the teacher’s pedagogy, leading to a focus on continuous improvements in teacher practices based on unbiased evaluation processes linked to professional development.

Merit professional development can also improve teaching practice and student learning. A merit professional development includes teachers who are engaged in peer observations, analysis of student work and data, and study groups (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). High-quality professional development that focuses on improving
teaching competencies should be a focus for continuous improvements in schools and districts. To illustrate, in a study conducted at an elementary school that serves low-income students, in just 3 years, two-thirds of students’ reading levels went from below grade level to at or above grade level expectations (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). Administrators and teachers credited this transformation to their redesigned professional learning approach. Creating climates of professional learning that shifts from 1-day workshops to merit, job-embedded professional learning improves professional development efficacy. As identified by Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, and Orphanos (2009), a recent study disclosed that researchers found 90% of teachers attended professional development, yet most of the teachers reported it to be futile. Thus, availability is not the dispute, but merit is.

Arkansas has strategically shifted forward ensuring high-quality instruction with the enactment of TESS, a structure that clearly defines a systemic approach to supporting effective teaching in traditional public and public charter schools in Arkansas. In the last few years, teachers and administrators in Arkansas have been provided professional development on TESS to ensure implementation with fidelity. According to Arkansas’s Annotated Code Section 6-17-2802, teachers and administrators must be trained in TESS prior to the 2014-2015 school year when TESS would be fully implemented as the teacher evaluation system. Administrators began formal training on TESS during the 2012-2013 academic year. Administrators’ preparations included a 1-day training focused on law, training and evaluation processes, certification tests, and the Teachscape software, which is the management system used for TESS evaluations (Cushman, Pfeffer, Gibson, Johnson, & Gathright, 2013). All evaluators and administrators were required to
be certified by December 31, 2013. In the same way, teachers received online training in TESS during the 2013-2014 school year and had to complete the Teachscape modules by May 31, 2014 (Cushman et al., 2013). For the school year 2015-2016, currently employed educators and novice teachers and administrators were required to receive calibration or new training of the updates to TESS as the state transitioned from pilot to full implementation (ADE, 2014). Teachers and administrators were provided extensive support in preparation for the paradigm shift to full implementation of TESS during the 2015-2016 academic year.

**Dichotomies of Teacher Descriptions**

The dichotomies of teacher descriptions are categorized as years of experience and certification specialty within this study. Teacher qualifications have often been connected to years of experience. Teacher qualifications are generally utilized to indicate teacher effectiveness (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2007; Goe & Stickler, 2008). A study was conducted to examine the effects a teacher’s level of experience has on student achievement. One category was comprised of probationary teachers (teachers with fewer than 3 years of teaching experience); another category was comprised of non-probationary teachers (teachers with 3 or more years of experience). Results showed teachers differed in the variations of their effectiveness in student learning outcomes based on years of experience (Clotfelter et al., 2007). Clotfelter et al. used an administrative data set from North Carolina to explore the relationship between a teacher’s years of experience and student achievement in North Carolina schools over a 10-year period to determine if a teacher’s years of experience had a positive effect on student achievement. The researchers concluded that nearly half the achievement gains
attained by students were related to the teacher’s years of experience. Furthermore, students made significant gains during the first few years of teaching for the teacher. Moreover, it appeared that all of the gains were attributable to experience rather than to differential rates of attrition between more or less effective teachers. Researchers also found that teachers’ years of experience incrementally have the capacity to improve during the first 5 years of teaching (Goe & Strickler, 2008).

Firestone, Nordin, Shcherbakov, Kirova, and Blitz (2014) surveyed teachers in 10 school districts in New Jersey and found that perceptions differed among probationary and non-probationary teachers. For instance, over two-thirds of non-probationary teachers perceived they would not lose their jobs based on teacher evaluations. Subsequently, probationary teachers believed heightened teacher evaluation would strengthen their chances of receiving non-probationary status rather than not.

Experience enhances teacher effectiveness and productivity. As explained by Harris and Sass (2007), the extent “of the experience effects occurs in the first year, with subsequent experience yielding diminishing increases in teacher productivity” (p. 19). In a study conducted in the Cincinnati Public Schools, Taylor and Tyler (2012) extrapolated a sample from mid-career elementary and middle school teachers who had participated in a year-long teacher evaluation program over a ten-year span concluding ...

... teachers are more effective at raising student achievement during the school year when they are being evaluated than they were previously, and even more effective in the years after evaluation. A student instructed by a teacher after that teacher has been through the Cincinnati evaluation will score about 11% of a standard deviation (4.5 percentile points for a median student) higher in math than
a similar student taught by the same teacher before the teacher was evaluated. (p. 80)

With results like these in mind, a timeline for evaluating and the level of support provided to probationary and non-probationary teachers should be considered in policy decision-making at the state and district levels. Moreover, perceptions of teachers in both categories could differ based on experiences, beliefs, and motivations.

**Hypotheses**

The review of the literature suggested a well-aligned teacher evaluation system produces growth for teachers. Therefore, the researcher generated the following null hypotheses.

1. No significant difference will exist by experience (probationary teachers versus non-probationary teachers) and certification specialty type (core teachers versus contributing teachers) in three school districts in Central Arkansas on teachers’ perceptions in regards to comparing the new evaluation system to the previous evaluation system as measured by the RU-GSE Teacher Survey.

2. No significant difference will exist by experience (probationary teachers versus non-probationary teachers) and certification specialty type (core teachers versus contributing teachers) in three school districts in Central Arkansas regarding the impact of professional development received on the new evaluation system as measured by the RU-GSE Teacher Survey.

3. No significant difference will exist by experience (probationary teachers versus non-probationary teachers) and certification specialty type (core
teachers versus contributing teachers) in three school districts in Central Arkansas on teachers’ perceptions of the effectiveness of the new evaluation system as measured by the RU-GSE Teacher Survey.

**Description of Terms**

**Contributing teacher.** This term describes a professional who has been assigned the responsibility to provide additional services that support and increase a student’s learning and/or access to learning. A contributing professional includes a classroom teacher who teaches in an untested subject (ADE, 2014).

**Core teacher.** This term denotes a professional who has been assigned the responsibility to provide services that support and increase a student’s learning and one who teaches in a content area that is tested under a statewide assessment of student achievement (ADE, 2016b).

**Elementary and Secondary School Act of 1965.** This act established the federal role in educating economically disadvantaged students by providing financial assistance to local educational agencies (Viteritti, 2012).

**Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).** ESSA is the education law of 2015 under the Obama administration that reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 and addressed concerns such as accountability, testing requirements, and the evaluation of teachers (U. S. Department of Education, 2015).

**No Child Left Behind (NCLB).** This legislation was designed to impose accountability on states. The NCLB Act of 2001 amended the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to revise, reauthorize, and consolidate various programs. As it
related to teacher quality, the act required local school districts to provide highly-qualified teachers in core subject areas (H.R., 107-334, 2001).

**Non-probationary teacher.** This term refers to a teacher who has 3 or more successive years of public school classroom teaching in Arkansas (ADE, 2014).

**Performance-based teacher evaluation.** This term refers to a multiple-measure of teacher performance based on a range of evidence that demonstrates teacher pedagogy and craft related to student achievement (Danielson, 2001; Darling-Hammond, 2013).

**Probationary teacher.** This term describes a teacher who has less than 3 successive years of public school classroom teaching experience in Arkansas (ADE, 2014).

**Race to the Top.** This federal initiative created monetary incentives for states to make imperative policy changes in teacher quality. RTT supported audacious, locally-led improvements in student learning outcomes and teaching quality (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

**Specialty type.** This term describes a core teacher who teaches a tested subject or a contributing teacher who teaches an untested subject (ADE, 2014).

**Teacher Excellence and Support System (TESS).** This Arkansas state-wide, multi-tiered teacher evaluation system provides support, collaboration, feedback, and targeted professional development opportunities aimed at ensuring effective teaching and improving student learning. (Childress, 2014; ADE, 2014).

**Value-added model.** A student growth model becomes value-added when students' growth is attributed to a particular entity. The value-added model uses a student’s score history to help separate the effects of non-school factors on a student’s
change in achievement so that the student’s growth expectation is more accurate (ADE, 2016a).

**Significance**

**Research Gaps**

The primary purpose of this quantitative study was to investigate the implementation of Arkansas’ new teacher evaluation system, consequently gaining knowledge about teacher perceptions of the transition. In recent years, interest in teacher effectiveness has surged in response to evidence revealed in *The Widget Effect* report (Weisburg, Sexton, Mulhern, & Keeling, 2009). There have been numerous studies completed on teacher evaluation processes and the importance of quality teacher evaluation systems; however, in the current review of the literature, limited research has been conducted on perceptions of teachers as related to teacher evaluation processes that lead to improving teacher practice and professional growth within school districts in Central Arkansas. This study provides educational leaders at the state, district, and building levels in Central Arkansas with the evidence needed to enhance teacher evaluation processes that will lead to improvements in teacher accountability and teaching quality that can profoundly impact student achievement.

Ascertaining what teachers perceived as the most useful components of an effective evaluation system could provide valuable information that enhances teacher evaluation processes while increasing teaching quality and student achievement. Even so, this study had a few limitations. First, the researcher used a non-probability sampling. Second, a focal point of teacher evaluation reform should include both administrators and teachers; this study only included teachers’ perceptions. Third, this study was limited to
perceptual data. Participation was voluntary. Additional data from multiple sources, such as observational data and artifacts, should be considered when yielding high-stake decisions.

**Possible Implications for Practice**

Implications for this study concern state department, local school boards, and district-level staff that make decisions on teacher evaluations overseen by the ADE. Superintendents have the duty to inform school boards of what constitutes an effective teacher evaluation system. This research adds to the body of knowledge that gleans teacher perceptions of an effective evaluation system and should illuminate a district’s path on improving and refining approaches to teacher evaluation processes that lead to improving teacher practices and student outcomes. Further research that investigates the fidelity of the implementation of state-level, performance-based teacher evaluation systems through perceptual data ascertained from key stakeholders would gather key information on the challenges and successes of state-level, performance-based teacher evaluation systems. Suggestions from this study concern building level instructional leaders that evaluate teachers. The perceptual data garnered from this study may give the evaluator an opportunity to be a reflective practitioner and absorb teachers’ perceptions of the evaluator’s role in the teacher evaluation process for continuous improvements. The core purpose of teacher evaluations should be to enhance the craft of teaching, keeping in mind the end goal to affect positive student learning outcomes. Instructional leaders must value teacher evaluation systems to create a culture for teacher evaluations and a culture of teacher evaluations.
Process to Accomplish

Design

A quantitative, causal-comparative strategy was used in this study. The first hypothesis was tested using a 2 x 2 factorial between-groups design. The independent variables were teacher experience (probationary versus non-probationary) and specialty type (core teachers versus contributing teachers). The dependent variable for Hypothesis 1 was measured perceptions of teachers in regards to comparing the new evaluation system to the previous evaluation system as measured by the RU-GSE Teacher Survey for teachers in three school districts in Central Arkansas.

The second hypothesis was tested using a 2 x 2 factorial between-groups design. The independent variables were teaching experience (probationary versus non-probationary) and specialty type (core teachers versus contributing teachers). The dependent variable for Hypothesis 2 was the measured perceptions of teachers regarding the impact of professional development received on the new evaluation system as measured by the RU-GSE Teacher Survey for teachers in three school districts in Central Arkansas.

The third hypothesis was tested using a 2 x 2 factorial between-groups design. The independent variables were teacher experience (probationary versus non-probationary) and specialty type (core teachers versus contributing teachers). The dependent variable for Hypothesis 3 was the measured perceptions of teachers of the effectiveness of the new evaluation system as measured by RU-GSE Teacher Survey in three school districts in Central Arkansas.
Sample

This study used teachers from school districts in Central Arkansas. Schools consisted of elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools. Probationary core teachers, probationary contributing teachers, non-probationary core teachers, and non-probationary contributing teachers were identified as participants in the study. Teachers were selected by convenience sampling from the population. Teachers were assigned to the two conditions, experience: probationary versus non-probationary; and certification specialty type: core teacher versus contributing teacher.

Instrumentation

To explore current teacher evaluation and professional development practices in the state of Arkansas, an online survey was administered in the spring of 2016. RU-GSE Teacher Survey (see Appendix A) was used to measure the perceptions and beliefs of teachers. The survey instrument was comprised of 5-point Likert Scale items ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree and structured items. The content validity of the RU-GSE Teacher Survey targeted the questions following the core components of the new teacher evaluation system implementation using a Likert Scale which was divided into four categories: (a) professional background, (b) the new teacher evaluation system in comparison to the previous system, (c) professional development on the new teacher evaluation system, and (d) the effectiveness of the new teacher evaluation system. The RU-GSE Teacher Survey consisted of 24 questions that measured the perceptions of teachers of the evaluation of TESS in Arkansas.

Based on New Jersey’s Pilot Teacher Evaluation Program Year 1 (Firestone, Blitz, Kirova, Shcherbakov, & Nordin, 2013) and Year 2 studies (Firestone et al., 2014),
the pilot studies of this instrument were conducted in Spring 2012 and Spring 2013. The response rate was 59% for Spring 2012 and 39% for Spring 2013 (Firestone et al., 2014).

Indeed, Keeter, Kennedy, Dimock, Best, and Craighill demonstrated that surveys with a 25% response can provide comparable results to those with a response rate of 50%. In their study, 77 out of 84 comparisons were statistically indistinguishable between the two surveys, and the differences in proportions ranged from 4 to 8 percentage points. (Firestone et al., 2014, p. 7)

The New Jersey Pilot Teacher Evaluation study results indicated the online survey instrument to be reliable.

Data Analysis

To address the first hypothesis, a 2 x 2 factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted using condition by years of experience (probationary versus non-probationary) and by certification specialty type (core versus contributing) as the independent variables and the perceptions of teachers in regards to comparing the new evaluation system and the previous evaluation system as the dependent variable. The second hypothesis, analyzed by a 2 x 2 ANOVA, was conducted using condition by years of experience (probationary versus non-probationary) and by certification specialty type (core versus contributing) as the independent variables and the perceptions of teachers regarding the impact of professional development received on the new evaluation system as the dependent variable. The third hypothesis was analyzed by a 2 x 2 ANOVA and conducted using condition by years of experience (probationary versus non-probationary) and by certification specialty type (core versus contributing) as the independent variables and the perceptions of teachers of the effectiveness of the new evaluation system as the
dependent variable. To test the null hypotheses, the researcher used a two-tailed test with a .05 level of significance.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

The vital purpose of teacher evaluation is improving teacher effectiveness in order to improve student achievement. Teacher quality is under significant scrutiny among America’s school districts. According to the findings reported in the 2009 report titled *The Widget Effect*, Americans have a sense of urgency related to teacher quality (Weisberg et al., 2009). The Obama administration answered the concern being led by Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. The federal government initiative, known as *Race to the Top*, provided a platform for states to reform teacher evaluation systems based on specific criteria. Teacher accountability has heightened the concern that teacher evaluation systems should consist of a comprehensive approach to evaluating teachers. New teacher evaluation systems, according to Darling-Hammond (2012), should “create a coherent, well-grounded approach to developing teaching ... based on clear standards for student learning...include common statewide standards for teaching...support structures to ensure trained evaluators, and aligned professional learning opportunities” (p. ii). A comprehensive teacher evaluation system can result in improving teacher effectiveness and student learning outcomes.

Traditionally, teacher effectiveness has been measured by credentials and years of experience. Research has suggested that teacher effectiveness profoundly impacts student achievement, and teacher effectiveness has recently been measured using a modern
system known as a value-added model. A value-added model uses student achievement data to estimate the effects that teachers have on student learning outcomes. Buddin and Croft (2014) defined a value-added model as a method that “isolate[s] teacher contributions to student outcomes by estimating the effects of teachers on student achievement conditional on prior-year test scores and student-level measures of student demographics and background” (p. 1). According to Whitehurst, Chingos, and Lindquist (2014), “the difference in effectiveness between a teacher at the 84th percentile ... and an average teacher translates into roughly an additional 3 months of learning in a year” (p. 4). Valid research studies have been credited to teacher effects on student learning outcomes. The impact of a teacher provides the purpose for teachers to continue to learn and to craft the skills needed to be effectual in practice and increase student achievement.

Historical Background

The evaluation of teachers has been a practice in America’s school systems since as early as the mid-1800s. The 1900s brought a significant shift in teacher evaluation processes. Teacher evaluation systems have evolved over time from a system that focused on morals, beliefs, and values of a teacher to a more complex system of standards-based observations. Early evaluation systems had two main purposes: ensure proper use of resources and that competent teaching occurred (Frontier & Mielke, 2016). During this era, teacher evaluation systems began to focus more on teacher effectiveness, and for the first time, the teacher was included in the teacher evaluation process (Glanz & Sullivan, 2005). While evaluating teachers began to shift from a moral-focused system to a standards-based system, teacher evaluations would continue to evolve through the next several decades.
The clinical supervision model emerged in the late 1950s. Clinical supervision entailed a reflective dialogue between supervisors and teachers that included five phases (Marzano, Frontier, & Livingston, 2011). Phase 1 was the pre-observation conference, Phase 2 the classroom observation, Phase 3 an analysis of the observation data, Phase 4 a supervision conference, and Phase 5 was an analysis of the overall evaluation and extension of professional learning of the teacher (Marzano et al., 2011). While teacher evaluations have evolved over the years, the overall structure of a reflective dialogue between teacher and supervisor has remained the foundation of today’s teacher evaluation systems.

By the 1960s, in order to discover the extent of the achievement deficiency that the nation suffers from, educational experts insisted that a call for a closer look at the role of the federal government in education reform, in particular, the teacher evaluation process, was needed. According to Goodwin and Webb (2014), the Coleman Report of 1960 findings reported that teaching alone might not be enough to overcome the effects of poverty on student achievement outcomes. However, proponents of teacher effectiveness suggested that teacher quality might be the strongest correlation with student achievement (Goodwin & Webb, 2014). The findings in the Coleman Report revealed that poverty and teacher quality affected student achievement. These findings impelled changes in the educational arena. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 began the era of the federal government’s involvement in education. Until 1965, education was considered a state and local function (Viteritti, 2012). The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 became known as a pivotal milestone for President Lyndon Johnson. President Johnson’s agenda for education reform was to ensure that
students with low-income received adequate educational opportunities (Viteritti, 2012). Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 was part of a larger endeavor where the federal government attempted to provide equitable education and offer monetary incentives to state and local entities that served economically disadvantaged and minority students. These efforts were directly influenced by Brown v. Board of Education as well as The Civil Rights Act of 1964 requiring states to submit desegregation plans with the risk of losing federal funding (Viteritti, 2012). According to Viteritti (2012), this level of reform, that Johnson ultimately sought, was not ascertained until President Barack Obama and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan pushed for educational reform with the RTT initiative. One component of the RTT that received a significant overhaul was the teacher evaluation process.

Another essential point in the role of the federal government in relation to education occurred during President Ronald Reagan’s term when the Secretary of Education released the publication A Nation at Risk. In this publication, the nation’s education status was scrutinized, revealing data that showed the nation was behind developing countries. The report recommended that districts strengthen high school graduation requirements, establish rigorous and measurable performance standards, have a longer school day and school year, improve teacher preparation programs, offer merit-based compensation, and increase teacher accountability (Gardner, 1983; Viteritti, 2012). According to Viteritti (2012), the A Nation at Risk era has been marked as the standards movement and influenced the modern school reform movement. The federal government scaled back their control in educational matters while shifting more control to the states and local school districts during the Reagan era. Viteritti explained attempts were made
by the next three presidents to allocate federal funds for low-income and minority students. Although the prior three administrations had some influence on education reform, it was not until President George W. Bush’s administration that education reform illuminated the need for improvements in teacher quality, presented to the nation as NCLB initiative (Viteritti, 2012).

**Teacher Evaluation Reform**

**No Child Left Behind (NCLB)**

President Bush made education a high priority for the nation, just as he did while serving as governor of Texas. NCLB affirmed the need for content performance-based standards and required testing and standards as a stipulation for funding (Cardichon, 2016; Darling-Hammond et al., 2016; Viteritti, 2012). As NCLB disseminated results of achieving and non-achieving districts and schools throughout the nation, more emphasis was placed on meeting annual targets and closing the achievement gap between discreet groups of students (Viteritti, 2012). Furthermore, as explained by Viteritti (2012), NCLB required districts to meet annual goals until all students met proficiency by the year 2014.

NCLB attempted to address the need for improvements in preparing teachers. States and districts received funds for recruitment, retention, and training for teachers, and the term *highly-qualified teacher* was coined (Cardichon, 2016; Viteritti, 2012). Prior to NCLB, American education had never experienced high expectations on student achievement; implementation was difficult based on the complexity of networking between federal and state agencies (Viteritti, 2012). NCLB expectations resulted in the achievement of students but did not address teacher quality. NCLB became the gateway to RTT and the need for improvements in teacher quality and effectiveness.
Race to the Top

In this decade, America’s teacher evaluation systems have been under scrutiny. Need for improvements in the way teachers are evaluated led to a requirement under the federal RTT initiative (Darling-Hammond, 2014). In order for funding to be allocated to states and districts, states had to reform their current teacher evaluation process. Darling-Hammond (2014) argued that states should not answer haphazardly to this requirement by identifying and removing ineffective teachers; rather, states should have a comprehensive system that cultivates effective teachers. The federal RTT initiative required teacher evaluation systems to use various measures to evaluate teacher effectiveness and devise professional growth plans for improvements.

The field of education has continued to evolve over time with numerous initiatives at the federal, state, and district levels. At a time of heightened concern about low student achievement in America and how to prepare students to be career- and college-ready, there has been a spotlight on improving student learning outcomes. The federal government established a grant-funded initiative for states and districts to reform their current teacher evaluation practices. The RTT initiative focused on six policy categories, with the category valued with the highest points being the category of great leaders and teachers. From this category, in regards to teacher quality, RTT promoted states to revamp their evaluation policies to include using multiple measures and multiple rating categories that would, in turn, assess teacher quality more effectively (Hallgren, James-Burdumy, & Perez-Johnson, 2014). This reform guided states to alter teacher evaluation policies. Howell (2015) emphasized that the sole intention of the RTT was to
incite new education policies. The purpose of this type of reform was to evoke systemic changes to improve teacher quality thus student achievement.

For the first 3 years, the Obama administration failed to persuade Congress to revise NCLB (Viteritti, 2012). However, Secretary Arne Duncan was afforded the opportunity to modify policies for elementary and secondary schools (Viteritti, 2012). In the modification of NCLB, the RTT program dedicated $4.35 billion dollars for states to compete for the funds upon meeting specific criteria (Viteritti, 2012). As explained by President Obama, states would compete for the grant not based on politics or ideology or preferences of a distinct group, rather, it would be based on whether or not a state is ready to implement best practices proposed by Secretary Duncan and Department of Education (Viteritti, 2012).

Educational reform was the goal of RTT. The federal government influenced states to collectively adopt a national core curriculum, an assessment that was aligned with the national curriculum and urged states to take part in a leadership role to advance reform (Viteritti, 2012). According to Viteritti (2012), RTT highlighted the need to improve teaching quality nationally, making teacher effectiveness a high priority. This stood in contrast to NCLB objectives, in which improving teacher quality was a low priority (Viteritti, 2012). Inclusive in RTT grant criteria, standardized test scores would be used to evaluate, compensate, and tenure teachers (Viteritti, 2012).

One essential category of the RTT initiative where states could earn points in order to win the competitive grant was teacher quality. As identified by Viteritti (2012), the Obama administration sought requirements for states to develop teacher evaluation systems that were inclusive in measuring a teacher’s individual contribution to what an
individual student learns. Grant recipient states as well as states who did not apply or non-recipients, including Arkansas, have continued to develop a sound teacher evaluation tool that meets the standards that the Obama administration intended to the details of RTT (Viteritti, 2012).

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

ESSA was signed into law in late December 2015 by President Obama, replacing Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 that once governed America’s education system. Under ESSA, “states are largely responsible for creating a system that supports the success of all students” (Darling-Hammond et al., 2016, p. 2). ESSA excluded NCLB’s Annual Yearly Progress that set unachievable targets for improving student learning outcomes which were exclusively based on test scores in literacy and mathematics (Cardichon, 2016; Darling-Hammond et al., 2016). Instead, ESSA provided state departments education opportunities to create new accountability pathways that sought to behold students and schools as a whole (Darling-Hammond et al., 2016).

Along with significant changes in accountability processes that would allow for equity for all students, a paradigm shift in teacher evaluations was disclosed in ESSA. ESSA has afforded states autonomy in the teacher evaluation process (Cardichon, 2016; Darling-Hammond et al., 2016; Paufler & Amerin-Beardsley, 2016). States are not required to implement teacher evaluations based on student achievement data. It will allow federal professional development funds to be consumed for implementation purposes (Cardichon, 2016). In essence, ESSA ended the era of federal involvement in teacher evaluations.
Arkansas Teacher Excellence Support System (TESS)

Teacher evaluation has been an area impacted by education reform that originated in the new millennium defined in NCLB and RTT. The report *The Widget Effect* condemned the nation’s teacher evaluation policies (Weisberg et al., 2009). The report exposed the nation’s failed system of retaining ineffective teachers with no plan of action to support teaching excellence. Defined by the authors, *the Widget Effect* depicted the nation’s trend of assuming classroom effectiveness is the same from teacher to teacher (Weisberg et al., 2009). One of the most revealing outcomes of *The Widget Effect* report was the alarming acknowledgment that the United States has been unable to distinguish between great teachers and good teachers and even more alarming, ineffective teachers are in most cases rewarded the same as great teachers (Weisberg et al., 2009). Teacher evaluation systems can be the tool needed to differentiate teacher effectiveness.

The 2011 Arkansas General Assembly passed a law to have a standardized evaluation and support system for teachers in Arkansas. In 2013, an amendment to the legislation was made that resulted in the development of the Arkansas teacher evaluation system known as TESS, stipulating that all Arkansas public school entities must implement TESS during the 2014-2015 school year (ADE, 2014; Goodwin & Webb, 2014). TESS is a multiple measurement tool to support teachers in order to improve instruction and learning (Ashby et al., 2014). Based on observations by trained evaluators, evidence of teacher effectiveness is collected using TESS. The multilayered system for supporting teachers begins with constructing a professional growth plan and moves through each layer of support. According to Goodwin and Webb (2014), TESS was created using Charlotte Danielson’s *A Framework for Teaching* model. Danielson’s
model is a research-based set of domains rooted in the constructivist view with an intended purpose to provide a framework for school districts to have an evaluation tool that supports teaching and learning in order for teachers to be more intentional practitioners (Danielson, 2007). The vision of the ADE (2016b) was for all students in Arkansas classrooms to learn through engaging and rigorous standards from competent teachers.

According to the ADE (2014), prior to passing the 2011 legislation for a new evaluation tool, known as TESS, 90% of school districts used a checklist for evaluating educators. As reported by the University of Arkansas Office for Education Policy (2010), in round one application for RTT, Arkansas scored weakly in the area of developing effective systems for improving teacher effectiveness based on performance. Since the initial application process, Arkansas has revamped its teacher evaluation tool. Using the Danielson model, Arkansas’s new evaluation tool provides an optimal process for evaluating teachers. Inclusive to this evaluation process is more opportunities for observations and feedback provided by administrators. One significant factor in the state’s new evaluation tool was to provide more opportunities in the form of formative assessments versus one summative assessment that prior evaluation systems required (Office for Education Policy, 2010). The new system allowed for frequent opportunities for specific feedback, coaching, and action planning in order to improve teaching practices and engage teachers in meaningful conversations focused on student learning outcomes.
Effective Teacher Evaluation System

Teacher evaluation systems in the United States have progressively evolved since the release of the 2009 report, *The Widget Effect*. Moreover, states competed for the RTT grant that placed specific conditions on revisions of America’s teacher evaluation systems. Award recipient states, as well as non-award recipient states, revised their teacher evaluation tools to meet the rigorous standards set by Secretary Arne Duncan and Department of Education in order to receive total possible points for that category as explained in the regulations of RTT. This led to debate from policy makers and attention to the research of what comprises an effective evaluation system.

The core of formative schooling is teaching and learning. To improve student achievement, high-quality teaching is required. Teacher evaluation systems must identify and define the teacher’s responsibilities within the classroom and the profession (Danielson, 2007; Schooling et al., 2013; Stronge, 2006). Creating a comprehensive system that supports and evaluates effective teaching must be at the core of teacher effectiveness (Danielson, 2011a; Darling-Hammond, 2012). Darling-Hammond (2012) defined a comprehensive evaluation system as one that includes objective teaching standards, trained evaluators providing useful feedback, and evaluations linked to professional learning that supports teacher growth and student achievement.

There are two types of teacher evaluations: formative and summative. Formative evaluations are used for improvements in teaching and professional development that will enhance teacher practices as an ongoing process. Summative evaluations are used for decision-making such as tenure, personnel placement, and salary. Summative evaluations rely on an observation by the evaluator with minimum feedback for improvement.
According to Mathers, Oliva, and Laine (2008), using only one type of evaluation will not fully measure teachers’ effectiveness. However, the two together provide a better opportunity for improvement in teaching practices.

Emphasis has been placed on reforming teacher evaluations. A high-quality teacher evaluation system includes formative and summative evaluations. Experts in the field of teacher evaluation identified commonalities associated with an effective teacher evaluation system should include a components of an evaluation language shared among stakeholders, skilled evaluators equipped to provide feedback, and a comprehensive evaluation system that links evaluation data and professional development (Danielson, 2011b; Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Darling-Hammond, 2012; Marzano, 2012; Schooling et al., 2013). According to Warrick and Livingston (2012), Marzano’s model for teacher evaluation provides a framework that cultivates effective teaching practices that are built on a common language between teachers and administrators. Inclusive in Marzano’s model are four domains that identify best practices that link teacher effectiveness and student achievement (Marzano, 2012). The domains included in the model are classroom strategies and behaviors, planning and preparing for teaching and learning, reflecting on teaching, and collegiality and professionalism (Warrick & Livingston, 2012). The Marzano Center for Teaching and Leadership noted that a highly effective teacher evaluation system must acknowledge teaching as a complex teaching and learning process, embed research-based data, and impact student achievement and student growth (Schooling et al., 2013). They also argued that teachers and instructional leaders must have specific tools to determine professional goals and offer powerful
feedback (Schooling et al., 2013). Both formative and summative evaluations’ primary purpose should be to improve teacher effectiveness.

An effective teacher is an essential school-based connection to student achievement. As defined by RTT, an effective teacher is one who uses proven instructional strategies to increase student achievement (Schooling et al., 2013). Furthermore, administrators indirectly impact student achievement through fostering a culture of conditions that support teacher effectiveness (Schooling et al., 2013). The common agreement among the experts has been noted that an effective teacher evaluation system ultimately promotes professional growth and improvement in student achievement (Danielson, 2011b; Darling-Hammond, 2012; Marzano, 2012). Schooling et al. (2013) determined that an aligned system for teacher evaluation must include a common language among all stakeholders within the system. Like Schooling et al., Danielson argued that a culture of teacher evaluation should include a common language that is shared among all stakeholders (Danielson, 2011b). This common language should be communicated at state, district, and school levels. Once the common language has been understood among stakeholders, teachers must employ instructional strategies that have a positive impact on student learning outcomes. In addition, those teachers should frequently be observed and given immediate, specific feedback from the observer that promotes teacher effectiveness (Schooling et al., 2013).

**Feedback to Improve Teacher Quality**

As a criterion for a vigorous evaluation system, data compiled using a comprehensive evaluation tool should include indicators that will provide a gateway for specific, constructive, and focused feedback for teachers that links teaching and learning.
As shared by Schooling et al. (2013), these indicators should include self-assessments; peer, mentor, and evaluator observations; formative assessments, and student surveys. With regard to feedback, Stronge (2006) argued that feedback from administrators should allow for accountability and professional growth. Focused feedback based on teaching standards from data collected through formative and summative evaluations can be informative in the professional growth of teachers and linked to professional development (Kee, Anderson, Dearing, Harris, & Shuster, 2010). Evaluators and teachers benefit when feedback is specific and based on a shared common language.

Teaching is comprised of a complex system. It has been noted that teaching is a physical, emotional, and cognitive exhaustive profession (Danielson, 2007). Charlotte Danielson’s Framework for Teaching has provided a platform to support the complexity of teaching. Danielson defined an effective teacher evaluation system as one that distinctly outlines aspects of the teacher’s responsibility in fostering improved student achievement (Danielson, 2007, 2011a, 2011b). Danielson’s framework has encapsulated good teaching and degrees of teacher qualities through levels of performance in each of the framework domains (Danielson, 2011b). Danielson’s framework has captured key elements of an effective teacher evaluation system inclusive of a common language, a trained evaluator, and one that promotes professional learning (Danielson, 2011b). As has been noted, Danielson (2011b) claimed that an effective teacher evaluation system should not be limited to a set of forms, but be comprised of a well-defined definition of teaching, an assessment of all facets of teaching, and an evaluation by trained evaluators who are consistent with judgments based on evidence. Danielson’s Framework for Teaching unravels the complexity of teaching as described in each domain’s rubric.
A common language is critically important to a teacher evaluation system. According to Danielson, a shared language focused on improving instruction between evaluator and teacher should be integrated into the teacher evaluation process (Sartain, Stoelinga, & Brown, 2011). Griffin (2013) highlighted that a shared understanding coupled with a common language should be shared among evaluators, observers, supervisors, and teachers. In the same manner as Marzano (2012), Danielson emphasized a common language of teacher quality must be defined and shared in a culture that cultivates teacher evaluations (Danielson, 2011b). Danielson (2011b) stated that evaluator-teacher conversations, when centered on a common language of good teaching and evidence of that teaching, offer opportunities for professional discourse and teacher growth. Similar to Danielson (2011a) and Marzano (2012), Stronge (2006) insisted that an essential criterion of an effective teacher evaluation should include a systemic communication shared in a culture of teacher evaluation. Stronge expressed that teacher evaluation communication should be two-fold. Communication about teacher evaluations has a public connotation that could be disclosed to the public, and, in contrast, the private communication should be conducted between the evaluator and the teacher (Stronge, 2006). Therefore, an effective evaluation should encompass a shared common language that can be communicated publicly or privately.

Teacher evaluations can serve as a developmental purpose when the evaluator-teacher conversation occurs following the observation. Sartain et al. (2011) indicated that evidence from observing a teacher could be used during the post-conference to discuss specific methods to improve instructional practices using a common language embedded in an effective teacher evaluation system. In 2008, a major study was conducted that
looked at the evaluator-teacher conversations during pre- and post-conferences by the Chicago Public School System using Danielson’s Framework for Teaching (Sartain et al., 2011). This study was conducted over a 2-year period involving Chicago’s Excellence in Teaching Pilot, and the purpose of the study was to use an evaluation tool that would provide teachers with evidence-based feedback. The pilot consisted of the evaluator observations of teaching practice conducted twice a year using the Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching. In addition, the pilot included pre- and post-conferences between the evaluator and the teacher to reflect on evaluation results and teaching method. The findings revealed that the overall perception of the new evaluation system was an improvement from Chicago’s old system (Sartain et al., 2011). Moreover, administrators and teachers found the evaluator-teacher dialogue was more reflective and focused on improvements of instructional practices than previous evaluations using Chicago’s old teacher evaluation system that lacked evidence and findings from the classroom observation (Sartain et al., 2011). Sartain et al. (2011) concluded that the implementation of the new system changed the conversations between administrators and teachers by providing evidence-based feedback during the post-conference that compelled teachers to be reflective practitioners. Evaluations have the power to be transformational for teachers.

**Trained Evaluator**

One of the primary responsibilities of an administrator is the evaluation of teaching. A highly skilled evaluator has to be equipped as a co-thinker with the teacher in engaging in conversations about teaching and learning. A credible evaluator must be able to define and communicate exemplary elements of good teaching clearly. Evaluators
must also be able to evaluate teachers precisely so that teachers can accept the findings as fair, valid, and reliable (Danielson, 2011b). As explained by Darling-Hammond (2012), a strong evaluation system needs evaluators with a deep knowledge of teaching and learning, as well as an understanding of how to evaluate teaching. As identified by Danielson (2011b) and Darling-Hammond (2012), a stronger emphasis placed on principal preparation coupled with the use of performance-based rubric strengthens the effectiveness of the evaluation. Evaluators should receive intense training in evaluating teaching using a standard-based evaluation tool, equipped with strategies for providing meaningful feedback and processes for removing ineffective teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2012). According to Mathers et al. (2008), school districts seldom require evaluators to be trained. The Regional Educational Laboratory Midwest Study that included 216 public school districts in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin found only 8% of the reporting school districts had policies that required evaluators to have received formal training in the evaluation tool used to evaluate teaching (Brandt, Thomas, & Burke, 2008). Educational experts have insisted that preparing principals to be skilled evaluators in order to increase consistency and validity in the evaluation process must be in place by school districts. As noted, evaluators are challenged with connecting evaluations and professional learning.

**Evaluations that Promote Professional Development**

Professional development is another facet of an effective teacher evaluation system. Ritter and Barnett (2016) believed “when done well, evaluation is not punitive, it is not a human resource function, but it is actually professional development” (p. 49). Additionally, based on data received from self-assessments, student surveys, frequent and
specific feedback, and peer and mentor observations, professional development should be tailored specifically from formative evaluations for a teacher or groups of teachers (Danielson 2011a, 2011b; Schooling et al., 2013). According to Stronge (2006), highly effective teacher evaluation systems should be built on a compelling balance between school and teacher improvement. School and teacher improvements can be highly influenced by an effective evaluation system that can be accomplished through customized professional development. Subsequently, an effective teacher evaluation system should be part of a whole in the overall improvement efforts of the school, according to Stronge. Based on the findings of Stronge, a systemic teacher evaluation system is essential to school improvement efforts.

Professional development can promote change in teacher effectiveness. Delivery of professional development that promotes improvements in teacher effectiveness can assume different modalities. Professional development should include traditional concepts as well as 21st-century methodologies (Schooling et al., 2013). Schooling et al. (2013) suggested that teachers must be engaged in the full scope of identifying, implementing, and monitoring professional development that leads to improvements in teacher effectiveness. A study was conducted involving 59 schools, 1,117 teachers, and over 13,000 K–12 students in Oklahoma schools that revealed a positive correlation using the Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model (Marzano et al., 2011). This study sought to determine whether teacher effective use of strategies identified in the model has a positive impact on student achievement in reading and mathematics. The findings showed that strategies used by teachers’ school-wide effect of the model had a .35 correlation with reading proficiency and .26 correlations with mathematics proficiency (Marzano et
al., 2011). Furthermore, data showed 96% of the 82 correlations split between reading and mathematics were found to be positive, even revealing a .40 and greater effect size, which entailed a 31 percentile point gain in student achievement (Marzano et al., 2011).

An effective teacher evaluation system promotes professional learning. The context for professional learning can range from a wide scope of approaches. Professional development plans aligned with results from evaluations can transform teacher evaluation processes (Danielson, 2011a, 2011b). Districts should be intentional in providing rich opportunities for professional learning by providing training on the evaluation tool, including peer observations, and using evidence-based artifacts (Danielson, 2011b). Schooling et al. (2013) stressed that teachers would need professional development following feedback received from multiple sources of teacher evaluation data. More importantly, “this professional development must be targeted, aligned, and differentiated to meet the various needs of teachers” (Schooling et al., 2013, p. 7). Darling-Hammond (2012) noted that a systemic approach to teacher evaluation should include aligned professional learning. Next generation methodologies such as wikis, digital resources, and virtual learning communities coupled with traditional models of professional development engage teachers interactively in the tailoring and implementation of the targeted learning progression (Schooling et al., 2013).

One form of next generation methodologies of professional development is the use of technology for delivering targeted professional learning. Teacher evaluations can be innovative by including technology within the scope of the evaluation system. In a study conducted by Allen, Pianta, Gregory, Mikami, and Lun (2011) explained this argument using the next generation professional development methodology. The
researchers examined the professional learning opportunities provided to teachers using the professional development program known as My Teaching Partner-Secondary, which is a web-mediated coaching program that utilizes a Classroom Assessment Scoring System-Secondary evaluation tool (Allen et al., 2011). The study concluded that My Teaching Partner-Secondary had a positive impact on student achievement, with participating teachers’ scores increasing from the 50th to the 59th percentile (Allen et al., 2011). It is essential to note that next generation professional development can be viable in linking teacher evaluations with immediate feedback in order to strengthen teaching practices and continuously improve.

The most effective professional development practices promote the incorporation of job-embedded professional learning for teachers versus traditional workshops (Danielson, 2011b). With regard to professional development, Danielson (2011b) argued that professional development should be called professional learning to emphasize that the learning occurs when the learner engages in an intellectual process that encompasses self-reflection, self-assessment, and professional discourse. The challenge in designing an effective teacher evaluation system is ensuring it encourages professional learning (Danielson, 2011a, 2011b; Danielson & McGreal, 2000). An effectual teacher evaluation system must connect professional learning in order to impact teacher growth and student achievement positively. Hence, professional learning should be inclusive of the teacher evaluation process.

**Value-Added Model**

During the last decade, empirical studies of the value-added model have been conducted, providing evidence that a strong correlation exists among teacher
effectiveness and student achievement. The value-added model is a statistical process that uses test score data to link student achievement and teacher effectiveness (Doran & Fleischman, 2005; Murphy, 2012). Formerly, under NCLB, traditional methods measured school effectiveness from year to year known as adequate yearly progress (Doran & Fleischman, 2005). In contrast, “value-added modeling uses statistical procedures that allow direct comparisons between schools and teachers—even when those schools are working with quite different populations of students” (Doran & Fleischman, 2005, p. 85).

Recently, robust research has erupted involving the credibility of value-added modeling and its use in identifying teacher effectiveness. One of the most commonly known value-added systems is the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System that has been in use since 1996 (Pearson Education, 2004). Chetty, Friedman, and Rockoff (2014) conducted a studied data that covered 20 years on students and teachers. The participants included students in grades third through eighth and teachers who taught those grades from a larger metropolitan city. The researchers sought to determine the adult outcome of teacher effects on their students. The findings revealed that “that students assigned to high-value-added teachers are more likely to attend college, earn higher salaries, and are less likely to have children as teenagers” (Chetty et al., 2014, p. 2633). Policies that outline the use of value-added model continue to be controversial, despite the recent empirical research.

Value-added assessment systems examine data at the teacher, school, and district levels. Value-added models are analyzed to measure “the impact of a teacher on student learning, by accounting for other factors that may impact the learning process” (Copa, 2012, p. 7). Value-added models’ refined formulas have the ability to remove non-
educational variables, isolate those variables, and measure the direct impact a teacher, school, or district has on student achievement (Pearson Education, 2004). A study conducted in Florida found that teachers who had received high regards on their impact on student achievement based on a value-added model formula were perceived to implement better teaching practice and valued as reflective in formal evaluations (Harris, Ingle, & Rutledge, 2014). Value-added assessment has grown in credibility as a tool for measuring teacher quality.

**Conclusion**

America’s teacher evaluation systems have been under scrutiny. Most states, in particular those states that received grant funding from the federal government, have reformed their evaluation processes based on specific criteria indicated in RTT. Historically, teacher evaluation systems have been in the form of compliance throughout districts, while formative and summative evaluations were limited to providing opportunities for teacher growth and improvements in teacher quality. Moreover, declining student achievement has illuminated the obvious ineffectiveness of certain teacher evaluation systems. The thrust for every classroom to have an effective teacher has only heightened the call for improvements in the teacher evaluation process.

Recently, Arkansas joined other states in reforming its evaluation system. The new system has been instrumental in ensuring trained evaluators must be trained in order to provide evaluations on teachers. In addition, Arkansas’ model meets the criteria scripted in RTT. TESS has allowed districts in Arkansas to offer a transparent and consistent measurement in evaluating teachers.
It has been shown that the value-added model has a causal link between teacher quality and student achievement. Currently, Arkansas has not mandated a value-added model to teacher evaluation processes. However, Florida and Tennessee have used a value-added model to provide teachers with a rating on teacher evaluations. Research has concluded there is a high correlation between teacher effectiveness and student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Value-added models have recently become popular despite criticism by teachers. Prior to ESSA, 44 states used a value-added model in teacher evaluations (Amrein-Beardsley, Pivovarova, & Geiger, 2016). According to ESSA, states and districts have the autonomy to include a value-added measurement in teacher evaluations (Amrein-Beardsley et al., 2016). Indeed, value-added methods can ensure highly effective teachers are identified by using student achievement data in teacher evaluation processes (Buddin & Croft, 2014).

An extensive amount of literature highlighted the role of an effective teacher evaluation system as paramount in improving teacher quality (Danielson, 2011a, 2011b; Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Darling-Hammond, 2000, 2012, 2013; Marzano, 2012; Stronge, 2006). In the era of high teacher accountability and low student achievement, many states and school districts across the nation have improved teacher evaluation systems as a method of support for teachers (Weisburg et al., 2009). The researcher questions the effectiveness of teacher evaluations as related to improved teacher quality in the areas of professional development and feedback. The following chapter details methods the researcher implemented while exploring teachers’ perceptions of professional development and feedback received on improved teacher quality.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Prior chapters depicted a synopsis of current research for considering the effects of teacher evaluations on enhancing teacher effectiveness. According to Goe and Holdheide (2011) defined an effective teacher as “one whose students achieved at least one grade level of academic growth in one year and a highly effective teacher as one whose students achieved at least one and a half grade level of academic growth in one year” (p. 5). The purpose of this study sought to investigate whether years of experience or certification specialty had an effect on teachers’ perceptions of teacher evaluation processes. This research study will add to the existing body of literature in analyzing teachers’ perceptions of the teacher evaluation system. The purpose of this quantitative study was to investigate the perceptions of teachers of the new teacher evaluation system. The research hypotheses were as follows:

1. No significant difference will exist by experience (probationary teachers versus non-probationary teachers) and certification specialty type (core teachers versus contributing teachers) in three school districts in Central Arkansas on teachers’ perceptions in regards to comparing the new evaluation system to the previous evaluation system as measured by the RU-GSE Teacher Survey.
2. No significant difference will exist by experience (probationary teachers versus non-probationary teachers) and certification specialty type (core teachers versus contributing teachers) in three school districts in Central Arkansas regarding the impact of professional development received on the new evaluation system as measured by the RU-GSE Teacher Survey.

3. No significant difference will exist by experience (probationary teachers versus non-probationary teachers) and certification specialty type (core teachers versus contributing teachers) in three school districts in Central Arkansas on teachers’ perceptions on the effectiveness of the new evaluation system as measured by the RU-GSE Teacher Survey.

Teachers in three Central Arkansas school districts completed the RU-GSE Teacher Survey. Descriptive statistics from the survey data provided the means of the groups that were compared. Inferential statistics of the survey data were conducted to determine the significant differences among the groups’ scores. An explanation of the framework has been provided including the research design methodology, selection of participants, data collection procedures, analytical methods, and limitations of the study.

**Research Design**

The focus of this causal-comparative study attempted to examine the effect of experience and certification specialty type on teachers’ perceptions of a teacher evaluation system. This study used a non-experimental, quantitative approach and generated descriptive and inferential statistics. An extensive quantity of educational research is non-experimental since numerous amounts of important variables are not able to be manipulated (Johnson, 2001).
A causal-comparative study was used to analyze the interaction effects and main effects of years of experience and certification specialty on teachers’ perceptions of the new evaluation system. This study used three 2 x 2 factorial ANOVAs. The independent variables for Hypothesis 1-3 were years of experience (probationary versus non-probationary) and certification specialty type (core versus contributing). The dependent variables for each hypothesis were teachers’ perceptions in regards to comparing the new evaluation system and the previous evaluation system, teachers’ perceptions regarding the impact of professional development received on the new evaluation system, and teachers’ perceptions of the effectiveness of the new evaluation system, respectively.

Sample

Convenience sampling was used in the selection of participants for this study. A convenience sampling is “the process of including who happens to be available” (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012, p. 144). Gay et al. (2012) indicated a disadvantage of convenience sampling could be in the difficulty to describe the population from which the sample was drawn; therefore, it could limit the researcher’s ability to generalize the results. For the purpose of this study, the researcher invited select school districts that participated in TESS in Central Arkansas. Demographic information of participants was included to make comparisons between the different subgroups. Table 1 contains the years of experience and certification of the participants for this study.
The researcher invited 901 licensed K-12 teachers to participate in the study. The study included 236 respondents. The districts comprising this study varied in a number of ways. The school districts’ sizes somewhat varied with districts serving between 8,000 to 17,000 students. In addition to the difference in size, teachers in the school districts were diverse in years of experience, certification specialty, and earned degree. According to Gay et al. (2012), researchers cite a minimum of 30 participants in each group as the recommended guideline for causal-comparative studies.

Teachers were selected by convenience sampling technique. Teachers represented two conditions, years of experience: probationary versus non-probationary and certification specialty type: core teacher versus contributing teacher. The purpose of selecting this sample was to develop an understanding of the new teacher evaluation system. This sample was expected to provide useful data for stakeholders to bolster teacher effectiveness.
**Instrumentation**

The researcher used a modified version of the RU-GSE Teacher Survey instrument created by RU-GSE assessment team (see Appendix A) to gather perceptual data related to the components of the new teacher evaluation system used in the school districts studied. RU-GSE developed the survey to capture teachers’ perceptions of the pilot teacher evaluation programs in school districts in New Jersey. New Jersey State Department of Education contracted with RU-GSE to conduct an external review of New Jersey’s pilot teacher evaluation programs. The extent of the study included reporting on the implementation of the new teacher evaluation programs, documenting participants’ perceptions of the pilot programs, and determining factors that influenced the implementation process (Firestone et al., 2014). The researcher was granted permission (see Appendix B) by William Firestone, principal investigator, to use the RU-GSE Teacher Survey instrument, as adapted, in this research (see Appendix A).

W. Firestone, the senior author of New Jersey’s Pilot Teacher Evaluation Program Year 1 and Year 2 studies, offered judgment on the reliability of the survey to measure teachers’ perceptions. According to the W. Firestone, the survey’s “reliability statistics would have to be calculated for each scale, and we did not do that” (personal communication, February 4, 2016). Gay et al. (2012) stated content validity could not be expressed quantitatively and experts should be asked to assess its validity. The authors continued to define content validity as how well the items of a test represent the intended content (Gay et al., 2012). The validity of the instrument to measure teachers’ perceptions based on the survey that was used previously in two large studies by RU-GSE.
Reliability and validity are key facets of a survey design. Of the total items on the survey, 13 items created the perception scale score that assessed differences in teachers’ perceptions when comparing the new to the previous teacher evaluation system. The scale had a reasonable level of internal consistency reliability as determined by a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.637. Furthermore, teachers’ perceptions regarding the impact of professional development received on the new teacher evaluation system consisted of 10 items that created the perception scale score. The scale had a high level of internal consistency reliability as determined by a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.922. Similarly, teachers’ perception regarding the effectiveness of the new teacher evaluation system consisted of 58 items that created the perception scale score. The scale had a reasonable level of internal consistency reliability as determined by a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.876.

The survey used in this study included Likert scale questions. Brown (2011) indicated when using a Likert scale “the scale item should be at least five and preferably seven categories” (p. 11). The Likert scale of choices ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The scale encompassed not applicable, do not know, or does not apply to Questions 9, 12, 14, and 22. Also, the survey included six structured items in addition to the Likert scale items. Two of the six structured items were open-ended.

The survey instrument was divided into four sections. Section One: Professional Background contained Items 1-7 to obtain demographics such as school district, degree attainment, grade level, the context of class, teaching subject, years of experience. Section Two: New Teacher Evaluation in Comparison to Previous contained 3 items (8-10) and addressed the perceptions of respondents about the new teacher evaluation system compared to the previous teacher evaluation system. Items in this section
examined teachers’ beliefs about the new teacher evaluation system in comparison to the previous teacher evaluation system. Item 10 addressed what contributions the respondent provided training teachers on the new evaluation system. Section Three: Training on the New Teacher Evaluation System contained 3 items (11-13) and measured respondents’ perceptions of the quality of professional development received on the new evaluation system. Section Four: Effectiveness of the New Teacher Evaluation System contained 10 items (14-23) and explored the attitudes of teachers toward the effectiveness of the new teacher evaluation system. The final item was open-ended and allowed respondents to include information that was not depicted in the closed-ended items.

**Data Collection Procedures**

This study relied on data collection from a teacher survey. Before disseminating the survey, the researcher requested and acquired permission from the Institutional Review Board of Harding University (see Appendix C) to conduct research in the school districts. Data were collected using an electronically-mailed survey instrument (SurveyMonkey). Permission was granted from the superintendents of the districts where the sample was drawn. A formal telephone call was made to each superintendent of participating school districts seeking written permission to solicit participants and the preferred process for administering the survey electronically.

After the formal phone call, a permission letter was electronically mailed to each school district where the study was conducted informing the superintendent of the study and providing a link to the survey (see Appendix D). Additionally, superintendents were provided a letter with the link to the survey requesting certified teacher participation (see Appendix E). One school district requested that the district’s communication director
forward the survey to participants. The remaining two districts preferred the researcher to send the survey directly to teachers. The researcher created a list-serv and forwarded the link to the teachers in the respective districts. The electronic packet included a permission letter to superintendents (Appendix D), an invitation to participate in this research study (Appendix E), and the RU-GSE Teacher Survey (see Appendix A).

In May 2016, the researcher electronically delivered the survey to teachers. After two weeks, in an effort to increase participation in the study, a reminder email was sent to teachers who had not responded to the survey. Participation was assumed as voluntary by the respondent enabling the survey link, completing the survey, and submitting the survey for review. Respondents had the opportunity to receive a copy of the study’s results upon request. The data were collected using SurveyMonkey and downloaded into an Excel spreadsheet. The data from the Excel spreadsheet was downloaded into Statistical Analysis Software Program (SPSS) for statistical analysis. Factors that may have influenced the data collection process included changed emails, miskeyed emails, and email server blocks. Bounced emails were excluded from the study, leaving 901 email addresses for this study. The survey was distributed to 901 teachers within the participating school districts. Overall, 236 teachers (26%) completed the survey. The average response rate for email surveys is 24.8% (FluidSurveys, 2014). All respondents answered all questions.

Analytical Methods

Following completion of the surveys from all participating school districts, the researcher compiled all data and reported significant findings using a computer-generated SPSS to perform analysis of the data pertaining to teachers’ perceptions of the new
A factorial analysis was conducted with regard to the hypotheses. An alpha level of 0.05 was set for the two-tailed test of each null hypothesis. The researcher analyzed the hypotheses to report both interaction and main effects of the independent variables. The results of the surveys were analyzed to determine perceptions of teachers regarding the comparison of the new teacher evaluation system to the previous teacher evaluation system, the impact of professional development received on the new evaluation system, and the effectiveness of the new evaluation system.

**Limitations**

A number of limiting factors may affect the generalization of the findings of this study. One limitation of the study was with the study’s sample. This study only focused on one region in Arkansas. The researcher found other regions that fit the same profile of Central Arkansas; yet, three school districts were chosen for this study. The sample drawn from the population was small. Gay et al. (2012) indicated when a sample size is too small, caution should be used when generalizing the findings. Given the limited sample size, the study would likely not achieve equal participants in each group.

The second limitation of the study was convenience sampling. Convenience sampling was used to draw from the population to whom results would be generalized. The use of convenience sampling limits the ability to generalize based on the population. According to Gay et al. (2012), “if a sample is well selected, the results of a study testing that sample should be generalizable to the population; the results of the research will be applicable to other samples selected from the same population” (p. 134). Hence, the use of a non-probability sampling would likely limit generalizing about the population based on the sample.
A third limitation was the assumption that participants responded to survey items with fidelity and candor as it pertained to their perceptions of the new teacher evaluation system. This study relied on respondents’ perceptions. Perceptions often differ from reality. A large sample size may have the ability to minimize this limitation.

A fourth limitation of the study was with the reliability and validity of the survey instrument. Gay et al. (2012) indicated in order for the researcher’s findings to be valuable, the measuring tool used must be valid and reliable. The scarcity of data on the reliability and validity of the survey instrument adapted for this study may heighten concerns about the findings of this study. Conversely, this and the former limitations did not seem to exceed common limitations associated with educational research.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

In this study, three between group factorial ANOVAs were conducted. One for each of the three null hypotheses. Data were collected from a survey from three Central Arkansas school districts. Years of experience and certification specialty served as the independent variables for Hypotheses 1-3. The dependent variable for Hypothesis 1 analysis was teachers’ perceptions in regards to comparing the new evaluation system to the previous evaluation system. The dependent variable for Hypothesis 2 analysis was teachers’ perceptions regarding the impact of the professional development received on the new evaluation system. The dependent variable for Hypothesis 3 analysis was teachers’ perceptions of the effectiveness of the new evaluation system. Prior to running statistical analyses, assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variances were checked. In addition, descriptive and inferential statistics were used to examine the hypotheses. The results of these analyses are found in this chapter.

Demographics

Respondents who participated in this study taught in Central Arkansas. The sample included 236 licensed teachers. These teachers taught subjects that were tested (core) and non-tested (contributing) and taught for less than 3 years (probationary) and 3 or more years (non-probationary). In this sample, 42.4% taught at an elementary school,
28.4% taught at a middle school, and 29.2% taught at a high school. In terms of degree attainment, 38.2% earned a bachelor’s degree, and 61.8% earned a postgraduate degree.

**Hypothesis 1**

Hypothesis 1 stated that no significant difference will exist by experience (probationary teachers versus non-probationary teachers) and certification specialty type (core teachers versus contributing teachers) in three school districts in Central Arkansas on teachers’ perceptions in regards to comparing the new evaluation system to the previous system as measured by the RU-GSE Teacher Survey. Nine outliers were found within the group sample; no outliers were deleted from the sample. Results from the Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests revealed the assumption of normality was violated for core participants, $D(145) = 0.15, p = .000$; contributing participants, $D(91) = 0.11, p = .011$; and non-probationary participants, $D(205) = 0.12, p = .000$. For the probationary participants, $D(31) = 0.14, p = .105$, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov indicated that the data were normally distributed. Since factorial ANOVA is robust relative to violations of normality, no adjustments were made (Leech, Barrett, & Morgan, 2015). Table 2 presents the group means and standard deviations in regards to comparing the new evaluation system to the previous evaluation system for years of experience by certification specialty on teachers’ perceptions.
Table 2

*Descriptive Statistics for Years of Experience by Certification Specialty for Comparison of New and Previous Teacher Evaluation Systems*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Certification</th>
<th>Years of Experience</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core</td>
<td>Probationary</td>
<td>46.60</td>
<td>5.91</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-probationary</td>
<td>45.95</td>
<td>4.85</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>46.01</td>
<td>4.95</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributing</td>
<td>Probationary</td>
<td>46.25</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-probationary</td>
<td>45.88</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>45.95</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Probationary</td>
<td>46.42</td>
<td>4.90</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-probationary</td>
<td>45.92</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>45.99</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Levine’s test for equality of variances was conducted within ANOVA and indicated homogeneity of variance was not violated, $F(3, 232) = 0.64, p = .592$. Levene’s test was not significant. The variances were not significantly different. Leech et al. (2015) indicated that SPSS uses the regression approach to calculate ANOVA; so, this problem is less important. A line plot indicated parallel lines in regards to comparing the new evaluation system to the previous evaluation system with no interaction between certification specialty and years of experience. Figure 1 displays group means by years of experience.
To test the hypothesis, a 2 x 2 factorial ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the effects of years of experience by certification specialty on teachers’ perceptions as measured by RU-GSE Teacher Survey. The results of the ANOVA are displayed in Table 3.

Figure 1. Comparison of new and previous teacher evaluation system means by years of experience.
Table 3

Factorial ANOVA Results from Teachers’ Perceptions of Comparison of New and Previous Teacher Evaluation Systems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>ES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Certification Specialty</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>.821</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of Experience</td>
<td>6.98</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.98</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>.579</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialty*Experience</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>.878</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>5239.14</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>22.58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>504347.00</td>
<td>236</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No statistically significant difference between the certification specialty and the years of experience groups in regards to comparing the new evaluation system and the previous evaluation system existed. Insufficient evidence existed based on the interaction of the variables to reject the null hypothesis, $F(1, 232) = 0.02, p = .878, ES = 0.000$. The effect size was small according to Cohen’s guidelines. Given there was no significant interaction between the variables of years of experience and certification specialty, the main effect of each variable was examined separately. The main effect for years of experience was not significant, $F(1, 232) = 0.31, p = 0.579, ES = 0.001$. In addition, the main effect for certification specialty was not significant, $F(1, 232) = 0.05, p = .821, ES = 0.000$.

**Hypothesis 2**

Hypothesis 2 stated that no significant difference will exist by experience (probationary teachers versus non-probationary teachers) and certification specialty type
(core teachers versus contributing teachers) in three school districts in Central Arkansas regarding the impact of professional development received on the new evaluation system as measured by the RU-GSE Teacher Survey.

The population from which this sample was drawn was normally distributed. One outlier was found within the group sample but not extreme. Results from the Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests revealed the assumption of normality was violated for core participants, $D(145) = 0.16, p = .000$; for contributing participants, $D(91) = 0.13, p = .000$; for probationary participants, $D(31) = 0.16, p = .048$; and for non-probationary participants, $D(205) = 0.15, p = .000$. ANOVA is considered robust against violations of the assumption of normality (Leech et al., 2015). Table 4 presents the group means and standard deviations for professional development received on the new teacher evaluation system for years of experience by certification specialty on teachers’ perceptions.
### Table 4

*Descriptive Statistics for Years of Experience by Certification Specialty for Professional Development on the New Teacher Evaluation System*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Certification</th>
<th>Years of Experience</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core</td>
<td>Probationary</td>
<td>32.07</td>
<td>7.13</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-probationary</td>
<td>33.02</td>
<td>6.50</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32.92</td>
<td>6.54</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributing</td>
<td>Probationary</td>
<td>34.88</td>
<td>6.52</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-probationary</td>
<td>33.01</td>
<td>6.46</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33.34</td>
<td>6.48</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Probationary</td>
<td>33.52</td>
<td>6.85</td>
<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-probationary</td>
<td>33.01</td>
<td>6.47</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33.08</td>
<td>6.51</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Levine’s test for equality of variances was conducted within ANOVA and indicated homogeneity of variance was not violated, \( F(3, 232) = 0.26, p = .853 \). Levene’s test was not significant; the variances were not significantly different. Leech et al. (2015) indicated that SPSS uses the regression approach to calculate ANOVA; so, this problem is less important. A line plot indicated an interaction between certification specialty and years of experience, but the interaction was not statistically significant. Figure 2 displays group means by years of experience.
Figure 2. Professional development received on new teacher evaluation system means by years of experience.

To test the hypothesis, a 2 x 2 Factorial ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the effects of years of experience by certification specialty on teachers’ perceptions as measured by RU-GSE Teacher Survey. The results of the ANOVA are displayed in Table 5.
No statistically significant difference between the certification specialty and the years of experience groups regarding the impact of professional development received on the new teacher evaluation system existed. Insufficient evidence existed based on the interaction of the variables to reject the null hypothesis, $F(1, 232) = 1.23, p = .268, ES = 0.005$. The effect size was small according to Cohen’s guidelines. Given there was no significant interaction between the variables of years of experience and certification specialty, the main effect of each variable was examined separately. The main effect for years of experience was not significant, $F(1, 232) = 0.13, p = .719, ES = 0.001$. In addition, the main effect for certification specialty was not significant, $F(1, 232) = 1.23, p = .268, ES = 0.000$.

**Hypothesis 3**

Hypothesis 3 stated that no significant difference will exist by experience (probationary teachers versus non-probationary teachers) and certification specialty type (core teachers versus contributing teachers) in three school districts in Central Arkansas.
on teachers’ perceptions of the effectiveness of the new evaluation system as measured by the RU-GSE Teacher Survey.

The population from which this sample was drawn was normally distributed. A few outliers were found within the group sample; no outliers were excluded. Results from the Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests revealed the assumption of normality was violated for core participants, $D(145) = 0.10, p = .001$; for contributing participants, $D(91) = 0.09, p = .047$; for probationary participants, $D(31) = 0.17, p = .027$; and for non-probationary participants, $D(205) = 0.11, p = .000$. ANOVA is considered robust against violations of the assumption of normality (Leech et al., 2015). Table 6 presents the group means and standard deviations for the effectiveness of the new teacher evaluation system for years of experience by certification specialty on teachers’ perceptions.

Table 6

*Descriptive Statistics for Years of Experience by Certification Specialty for the Effectiveness of the New Teacher Evaluation System*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Certification</th>
<th>Years of Experience</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
<th>$N$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core</td>
<td>Probationary</td>
<td>205.60</td>
<td>20.74</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-probationary</td>
<td>206.40</td>
<td>20.79</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>206.32</td>
<td>20.71</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributing</td>
<td>Probationary</td>
<td>212.06</td>
<td>18.38</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-probationary</td>
<td>203.36</td>
<td>19.91</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>204.89</td>
<td>19.84</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Probationary</td>
<td>208.94</td>
<td>19.50</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-probationary</td>
<td>205.29</td>
<td>20.48</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>205.77</td>
<td>20.35</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Levine’s test for equality of variances was conducted within ANOVA and indicated homogeneity of variance was not violated, $F(3, 232) = 0.64, p = .592$. Levene’s test was not significant; the variances were not significantly different. Leech et al. (2015) indicated that SPSS uses the regression approach to calculate ANOVA; so, this problem is less important. A line plot indicated an interaction between certification specialty and years of experience, but the interaction was not statistically significant. Figure 3 displays group means by years of experience.

*Figure 3. Effectiveness of the new teacher evaluation system means by years of experience.*
To test the hypothesis, a 2 x 2 Factorial ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the effects of years by certification specialty on teachers’ perceptions as measured by RU-GSE Teacher Survey. The results of the ANOVA are displayed in Table 7.

Table 7

*Factorial ANOVA Results from Teachers’ Perceptions of the Effectiveness of the New Teacher Evaluation System*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>ES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cert Specialty</td>
<td>77.99</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>77.99</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>.665</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of Experience</td>
<td>415.80</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>415.80</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.318</td>
<td>0.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialty*Experience</td>
<td>601.21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>601.21</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>.230</td>
<td>0.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>96187.02</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>414.60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10089557.00</td>
<td>236</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No statistically significant difference between the certification specialty and the years of experience groups of the effectiveness of the new teacher evaluation system existed. Insufficient evidence existed based on the interaction of the variables to reject the null hypothesis, $F(1, 232) = 1.45, p = .230, ES = 0.006$. Given there was no significant interaction between the variables of years of experience and certification specialty, the main effect of each variable was examined separately. The main effect for years of experience was not significant, $F(1, 232) = 1.00, p = .318, ES = 0.004$. In addition, the main effect for certification specialty was not significant, $F(1, 232) = 0.19, p = .665, ES = 0.001$. 

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Summary

In summary, there were no statistically significant differences in the interactions for certification specialty and years of experience for all three hypotheses as measured by the RU-GSE Teacher Survey. There were no statistically significant differences in the main effects for certification specialty and years of experience for all three hypotheses.

Table 8
Summary of Findings by Null Hypothesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>H0</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Interaction $p$</th>
<th>Main Effect $p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Teacher Perceptions</td>
<td>.878</td>
<td>.579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Teacher Perceptions</td>
<td>.268</td>
<td>.719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Teacher Perceptions</td>
<td>.230</td>
<td>.318</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1. Years of Experience; 2. Certification Specialty.

Table 8 displays the different hypotheses that were tested in the current study. Ultimately, the results of this study revealed that no evidence was found that years of experience interacting with certification specialty had an effect on teachers’ perceptions of the new teacher evaluation system.
CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

In the past decade, numerous states have made significant changes to how teachers are evaluated. Effective teacher evaluation systems have the transformative power to impact student achievement positively. In fact, the most significant factor in student achievement is having an effective teacher (Oliva, Mathers, & Laine, 2009). A valuable method for identifying an effective teacher is the use of observations of teaching and learning through quality evaluation processes. Field experts suggested that teacher evaluation systems should be a systemic process that supports improving teacher effectiveness (Danielson, 2011b; Darling-Hammond, 2012). Teaching is a complex process that requires dedication, commitment, and tenacity. This complex process coupled with accountability could make the evaluation process an arduous task for both teacher and evaluator. Delving deeper into teachers’ perceptions could reveal relevant information that enhances teacher evaluation processes.

In the context of teacher quality, it is important to have a comprehensive teacher evaluation system that creates a systemic approach to improving teacher effectiveness. Experts support the ideology that teacher’s effectiveness is an essential factor in improving student learning outcomes (Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Marzano et al., 2011; Stronge, 2006). Indeed, a high-quality teacher evaluation system can improve teacher effectiveness (Stronge, 2006). The core purpose of teacher evaluation should be to
enhance the content knowledge, skills, and instructional practices of educators (Danielson, 2011b; Darling-Hammond, 2012; Stronge, 2006). Therefore, a high-quality teacher evaluation system could improve teacher effectiveness.

The focus of this study was to examine the effects of years of experience and certification specialty on teachers’ perceptions of the new teacher evaluation system employed in Arkansas. A causal-comparative study was conducted. In this study, the researcher sought to examine teachers’ perceptions of the new teacher evaluation system in three Central Arkansas schools. A convenience technique was used in the selection of samples for the study. Survey data were collected from 236 licensed teachers. Teachers were assigned to the two conditions, years of experience (probationary versus non-probationary) and certification specialty (core teacher versus contributing teacher).

This chapter consists of a description of the data collected and analyzed in this study. Also, implications for practice and significance of this study are discussed. Finally, recommendations for future research based on the conclusions found in the data analysis for stakeholders involved in this study as well as individuals interested in teachers’ perceptions of the new teacher evaluation system used in Arkansas.

Conclusions

To address each hypothesis, three factorial ANOVA tests were conducted using years of experience and certification specialty as the independent variables. The dependent variables were teachers’ perceptions in regards to comparing the new evaluation system to the previous evaluation system, teachers’ perceptions regarding the impact of the professional development received on the new teacher evaluation system, and teachers’ perceptions of the effectiveness of the new evaluation system. To test the
null hypotheses, the researcher used a two-tailed test with a .05 level of significance. The following hypotheses were tested, and conclusions were made.

**Hypothesis 1**

Hypothesis 1 stated that no statistically significant difference will exist in the perceptions of probationary teachers and non-probationary teachers based on certification specialty in regards to comparing the new evaluation system to the previous evaluation system used in three Central Arkansas school districts as measured by RU-GSE Teacher Survey. There was no evidence that years of experience had an effect on teachers’ perceptions in regards to comparing the new evaluation system to the previous evaluation system. For the main effect of certification specialty, there was no evidence that teachers’ area of certification had an effect on teachers’ perceptions in regards to comparing the new evaluation system to the previous evaluation system. The findings showed no evidence that years of experience interacting with certification specialty had an effect on teachers’ perceptions in regards to comparing the new evaluation system to the previous evaluation system.

In an effort to better evaluate teacher effectiveness, the way teachers were evaluated shifted from a binary method to standards-based method. Prior to the current era of standards-based teacher evaluation systems, most of America’s teacher evaluations used a binary approach when categorizing teacher effectiveness. The data disclosed that core teachers and contributing teachers had similar means for comparison of the new teacher evaluation system and the previous teacher evaluation system regardless of years of experience. Overall, teachers’ perceptions were neutral. The failure to find a significant difference in the current study suggests that teachers were neither satisfied or
dissatisfied with the new evaluation system compared to the previous evaluation system. This conclusion differs from existing literature that concluded teachers were less inclined to be satisfied with the new evaluation than the previous system (Firestone et al., 2013; Jack & Stratos, 2015). Sartain et al. (2011) indicated that the overall perception of the new evaluation system was an improvement from Chicago’s old system. Thus, continuous improvements in the implementation of a new standards-based evaluation system used to identify teacher effectiveness are critical in identifying teacher quality.

**Hypothesis 2**

Hypothesis 2 stated that no statistically significant difference will exist in the perceptions of probationary teachers and non-probationary teachers based on certification specialty regarding the impact of professional development received on the new evaluation system used in three Central Arkansas school districts as measured by RU-GSE Teacher Survey. There was no evidence that years of experience had an effect on teachers’ perceptions regarding the impact of professional development received on the new evaluation system. For the main effect of certification specialty, there was no evidence that teachers’ area of certification had an effect on teachers’ perceptions regarding the impact of professional development received on the new teacher evaluation system. The findings indicated no evidence existed that years of experience interacting with certification specialty had an effect on teachers’ perceptions regarding the impact of professional development received on the new teacher evaluation system.

In the current study, the data revealed that contributing, probationary teachers had the highest means. Core, non-probationary teachers and contributing, non-probationary teachers had the same means. Core, probationary teachers had the lowest means. Overall,
teachers were dissatisfied with the professional development received on the new teacher evaluation system. In the same way, based on the findings of Firestone et. al (2013), teachers were dissatisfied with the professional development received on the new teacher evaluation system piloted in New Jersey. In Arkansas, the teacher evaluation policy requires licensed teachers to receive a minimum of three hours of professional development prior to being evaluated with no recalibration requirement (ADE, 2016b). In contrast to Arkansas’ policy, researchers indicated that on-going, job-embedded professional development yields better results and offers long-term opportunities for teachers (Philips, 2014; Ritter & Barnett, 2016). Subsequently, Goe, Biggers, and Croft (2012) disclosed that professional development provided on the teacher evaluation system must not be a one-time occurrence, but continuous over time with recalibration of the understanding of the standards, measures, and tools used in the teacher evaluation process. For this reason, continuous professional development on the evaluation system is beneficial to improving teacher effectiveness.

**Hypothesis 3**

Hypothesis 3 stated that no statistically significant difference will exist in the perceptions of probationary teachers and non-probationary teachers based on certification specialty of the effectiveness of the new evaluation system used in three Central Arkansas school districts as measured by RU-GSE Teacher Survey. There was no evidence that years of experience had an effect on teachers’ perceptions of the effectiveness of the new evaluation system. For the main effect certification specialty, there was no evidence that teachers’ area of certification had an effect on teachers’ perceptions of the effectiveness of the new evaluation system. The findings indicated no
evidence existed that years of experience interacting with certification specialty had an effect on teachers’ perceptions of the effectiveness of the new evaluation system.

The present study’s data revealed probationary, contributing teachers had the highest means. Probationary, core teachers and non-probationary, core teachers had the same means. Contributing, non-probationary teachers had the lowest means. Teachers were satisfied in the overall effectiveness of the new evaluation system.

Evaluator training and meaningful feedback from the evaluator are two principles that reflect what the research revealed about how the process of teacher evaluations should be implemented. Evaluators should receive training using a standards-based evaluation tool and be equipped with strategies for providing meaningful feedback (Danielson, 2011b; Darling-Hammond, 2012; Schooling et al., 2013). With regard to evaluator training, a Midwest study was conducted that included 216 public school districts in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin. The researchers found only 8% of the reporting school districts had policies that required evaluators to have received formal training in the evaluation tool used to evaluate teaching (Brandt et al., 2008). Arkansas requires evaluators to be highly trained and prove competency of scoring accurately and providing meaningful feedback. Hence, an effective teacher evaluation system promotes the improvement of professional practice resulting in the improvement of student achievement.

**Implications**

In the era of high accountability within the scope of America’s education system, states have recently made significant changes to the way teachers are evaluated. The core purpose of teacher evaluations should be to enhance teacher effectiveness. Research has
supported teacher effectiveness as the most significant school-based factor in student achievement. An ample amount of research indicated teacher effectiveness as a key factor in determining student achievement (Danielson, 2001; Darling-Hammond, 2000, 2013; Tucker & Stronge, 2005). Furthermore, recent research has been conducted on how a well-designed teacher evaluation system can contribute to improvements in teaching and learning outcomes (Goe et al., 2012; Taylor & Tyler, 2012). In fact, teacher effectiveness matters. District policymakers should ensure that the evaluation system is linked to teachers’ professional development and continuous improvements. Additionally, principals are critical to successful implementation of the evaluation system. Principals should link evaluations to the school’s professional development plan in order to target specific support and evaluate whether provided support is improving teacher effectiveness.

The current study contributes to the existing body of literature focused on teachers’ perceptions of the evaluation system. Indeed, a sufficient amount of the latest research on teachers’ perceptions of the evaluation process has been conducted outside of Arkansas; such as in New Jersey (Firestone et al., 2013, 2014), in Georgia (Sheppard, 2013), in Pennsylvania (Jack & Stratos, 2015), and in Michigan (Coulter, 2013). A significant amount of research has been accomplished on states’ implementation of high-quality teacher evaluation systems (Weisburg et al., 2009; Riordan, Lacireno-Paquet, Shakman, Bocala, & Chang, 2015). The state department of education should consider validity checks to ensure implementation of the new evaluation system to ensure fidelity.
Recommendations

Potential for Practice/Policy

The findings from this study will provide useful information for policy stakeholders and school administrators. There are four considerations for policy stakeholders and school administrators relating to teacher evaluations including policy regarding continuous training requirements for teacher evaluation processes for teachers, recalibration requirements for evaluators, professional development alignment, and policies regarding peer coaching.

First, ADE acknowledges the need for effective and highly effective teachers in every classroom. Policy stakeholders should consider policies and processes that ensure teachers will receive continuous training of the teacher evaluation system. Effective training is essential to a continual refinement of the evaluation process. Goe et al. (2012) disclosed that “through training, stakeholders gain a better understanding of the purpose and expectations embedded in the system” (p. 12). School administrators could employ training that focuses on the standards that capture teaching proficiencies, evidence alignment, and evidence-based feedback.

Second, policy stakeholders could consider policies that recalibrate evaluators. School districts could benefit by providing school administrators with recalibration of the teacher evaluation system. Scholars believed that teacher effectiveness improves when skilled evaluators are equipped to fairly and accurately assess teacher effectiveness (Danielson, 2011a; Darling-Hammond, 2012). For example, ADE requires evaluator training that focuses on the teacher evaluation rubric, citing preponderance of evidence to support the evaluation rubric standards, and ensuring accuracy and validity in the
evaluation process to ensure inter-rater reliability (ADE, 2014). Perhaps school districts could offer recalibration training in the effort of sustaining evaluators’ competencies in assessing teacher effectiveness.

Third, professional development should be aligned to teacher evaluation data. Teacher evaluations must shift from one of compliance to a belief that evaluation’s purpose is to improve teaching and learning outcomes. School administrators should provide opportunities for teachers to craft teaching skills through targeted and collective professional development that has been aligned to observation data collected through teacher evaluations. For policy stakeholders, implement a funded professional development agenda that focuses on differentiated needs of teachers based on teacher evaluations.

Fourth, policy stakeholders should consider providing policies that include peer coaching in the evaluation process as a support to teachers. The ultimate goal in peer coaching is to improve teaching and student learning through reflective practice (Robbins, 2015). Peer coaching could be used to enrich professional practice and teacher accountability in a trusting school culture coupled with competent peers and relevant feedback. Glickman (2002) emphasized that teachers deserve a systematic support that cultivates reflective practice so the teacher can change, grow, and improve in practice. Teachers are more inclined to receive reflective feedback from a competent individual who has a non-evaluative role in the school setting when supporting teacher professional growth.
Future Research Considerations

This study investigated teachers’ perceptions in the areas of the new evaluation system compared to the previous evaluation system, professional development received on the new evaluation system, and the overall effectiveness of the new evaluation system. The data collected and analyzed yielded results that were found not statistically significant for the effects of years of experience and certification specialty on teachers’ perceptions. Recommendations for further research should be obtained regardless of insignificant findings noted in this study to determine if different results are found. Based on the data in this study and the conclusions drawn, there are at minimum four implications for future research. To build on the research data found in this study and to address some of this study’s limitations, future research aspects of teachers’ perceptions of the evaluation process should include a larger sample size, probability sampling, mixed-methods research design, and evaluators’ perceptual data.

First, researchers could examine teacher perceptions with a larger sample size to gain further insight into teachers’ beliefs about the effectiveness of teacher evaluation process used in Arkansas. Further research using a large sample size may assist to strengthen the generalizability of these findings.

Second, future research could use a probability sampling. This study used a non-probability sampling known as convenience sampling method. In convenience sampling, the sample drawn is not randomly selected. This weakens the ability to make generalizations from the sample to the population (Gay et al., 2012). Future research using a random sampling strategy may improve the generalizability of the findings.
Third, future researchers could consider building on this research by using a mixed-methods research design. This research study solely employed a quantitative approach when examining teachers’ perceptions of the new evaluation system. Results from a mixed-methods design enhance the findings from a research problem (Gay et al., 2012). Arkansas’ new teacher evaluation system, TESS, could benefit from a mixed-methods design in which the researcher uses a qualitative and quantitative approach in collecting data.

Fourth, this study concentrated on teachers’ perceptions. Future studies could focus on evaluators’ perceptions along with teachers’ perceptions. An examination of the similarities and differences in the perceptions of evaluators and teachers could be examined. Including evaluators’ perspectives in a study could reveal more insight into the effectiveness of the teacher evaluation process.

Educators, whether core or contributing, probationary or non-probationary, share a primary goal: seeing every student succeed. This success lies in the notion that every student will receive a high-quality education from effective teachers. Measuring teacher effectiveness can be a complex process for state departments, school districts, and principals. However, a teacher evaluation system that supports teachers in improving practice has the capacity to provide a gateway to improving teacher effectiveness. Stronge (2006) concluded that “without capable, high-quality teachers in America’s classrooms, no educational reform effort can possibly succeed” (p. 3). Every student deserves effective teachers in every classroom. A high-quality, comprehensive, and well-implemented teacher evaluation system is essential in improving teacher effectiveness.
The teacher evaluation system in Arkansas has significantly been reformed to evaluate teacher effectiveness better. Scholars indicated that teacher evaluation systems that are grounded in research and support teachers have a substantial impact on improving teaching and learning (Danielson, 2001; Darling-Hammond, 2013; Tucker & Stronge, 2005). Darling-Hammond, Amrein-Beardsley, Haertel, and Rothstein (2012) explained that “successful teacher evaluation systems use multiple classroom observations, expert evaluators, multiple sources of data, are timely, and provide meaningful feedback to the teacher” (p. 14). Overall, this study found that teachers were satisfied with the effectiveness of TESS, Arkansas’ new teacher evaluation system. With successful implementation, TESS will more effectively meet the state’s goal of assuring every student’s access to a highly effective teacher.
REFERENCES


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resources/linking-teacher-evaluation-professional-development-focusing-
improving-teaching


MeasuringTeachersContributions.pdf


APPENDICES
# APPENDIX A: Rutgers University Graduate School of Education

## Teacher Survey Instrument

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Perceptions of the Arkansas Teacher Excellence and Support System</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

May 24, 2016

Dear Teacher:

You have been selected to participate in this study because you were a certified teacher during the 2015-2016 academic year. As a former teacher and a current literacy instructional facilitator, I know how busy you are, and your time in completing this survey is greatly appreciated.

As a part of my doctoral studies at Harding University, I am interested in discovering the perceptions of certified teachers about the new teacher evaluation system in Arkansas. Your perspectives will enable me to provide an accurate picture to stakeholders regarding perceptions about the Arkansas teacher evaluation system.

Since the validity of the results depends on obtaining a high response rate, your participation is crucial to the success of this study. The completion of the online questionnaire will last approximately fifteen minutes. Please be assured that your responses will be held in the strictest confidence. You will not be identified by name, so I would appreciate your honest response to each question. As soon as questionnaires are collected, they will be stored in a secure online database that will be password protected. Once the study is complete, the information in the database will be deleted. If the results of this study were to be written for publication, no identifying information will be used.

I would like to thank you in advance for your time and effort in bringing this study to a reality. If you are interested in the results of this survey, please indicate that you would like a copy of the results on the final question in the questionnaire.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose not to participate and discontinue your participation at any time with no penalty and without loss of benefits to which you would otherwise be entitled.

If you agree to participate in this survey, you may proceed by clicking NEXT and begin. The deadline to complete the survey is July 10, 2016. Your accessing this link will demonstrate that you have read this consent form, that you freely and voluntarily choose to participate, and that you consent to participate.

Nita R. Bohannon, Principal Investigator
Ed.D. Candidate – Harding University

Dr. Bruce W. Bryant, Associate Professor
Harding University

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Teacher Perceptions of the Arkansas Teacher Excellence and Support System

1. Are you a teacher currently teaching students?
   ○ Yes
   ○ No

* 2. School District Name
   ○ Bryant School District
   ○ North Little Rock School District
   ○ Pulaski County School District

3. Which grade do you teach? Select all that apply.
   ○ Pre-K
   ○ Kindergarten
   ○ Grade 1
   ○ Grade 2
   ○ Grade 3
   ○ Grade 4
   ○ Grade 5
   ○ Grade 6
   ○ Grade 7
   ○ Grade 8
   ○ Grade 9
   ○ Grade 10
   ○ Grade 11
   ○ Grade 12
4. What is the highest degree you have earned?

☐ Bachelor’s degree (B.A., B.S., etc.)

☐ Master’s degree (M.A., M.A.T, M.B.A, M.Ed., M.S., etc.)

☐ Educational specialist

☐ Doctorate or first professional degree (Ph.D., Ed.D., M.D., J.D.)

5. Which statement best describes the way YOUR classes at your current school are organized?

☐ You instruct several classes different students most or all of the day in one or more tested subjects.

☐ You instruct several classes different students most or all of the day in one or more non-tested subjects.

☐ You instruct the same group of students all or most of the day in multiple subjects and at least one of the subjects are tested.

☐ You are one of two or more teachers, in the same class, at the same time, and are jointly responsible for teaching the same group of students all or most of the day.

☐ You instruct a small number of selected students released from or in their regular classes in specific skills or to address specific needs.

6. What is/are the subject(s) you currently teach? Select all that apply.

☐ English Language Learners (ELL)

☐ Health and Physical Education

☐ English/Language Arts

☐ Mathematics

☐ Science

☐ Social Studies

☐ Special Education

☐ Technology

☐ Visual and Performing Arts

☐ World Language

Other (please specify)
7. How many years will you have been teaching at the end of the current school year?

- 1-3
- 4-6
- 7-10
- 11 or more

Current Teacher Evaluation in Comparison to Previous System

Teacher Perceptions of the Arkansas Teacher Excellence and Support System

8. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about teacher evaluation systems in general.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher evaluation is essential to raise the standards of teaching and learning.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher evaluation should primarily focus on the identification of my professional development needs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher evaluation aims at meeting the minimum standards.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher evaluation aims at providing useful information for teachers to improve their performance.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher evaluation should be based upon a list of professional competencies or behaviors.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a professional, I am entitled to have my performance appraised.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher evaluation aims to enhance teachers’ reflection on their practice.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher evaluation should be used for professional development and accountability purposes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. In comparison to your previous teacher observation system, how would you rate the current (new) teacher observation system on the following dimensions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>The current system is much better than the previous system</th>
<th>The current system is better than the previous system</th>
<th>The current system is neither better nor worse than the previous system</th>
<th>The current system is much worse than the previous system</th>
<th>Does not apply</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formalization (clear rules, steps, procedures, reporting forms)</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of use</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grounding in research</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intuitiveness</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usefulness for providing guidance to teachers</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. Were you responsible for informing other teachers about the new teacher evaluation system?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Training on the New Teacher Evaluation System

The next set of questions is about the training you received on the new teacher evaluation system in your district. There are no right or wrong answers. We are simply interested to learn about your experience with the new teacher evaluation.

* 11. How many hours of training or education have you personally received on the new teacher evaluation system:

☐ 0
☐ 1-2
☐ 3-4
☐ 5-8
☐ 9-16
☐ 17-24
☐ 25-32
☐ 33-40
☐ More than 40
12. Overall, how well, would you say, the training accomplished each of the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very well accomplished</th>
<th>Accomplished</th>
<th>Somewhat accomplished</th>
<th>Not accomplished</th>
<th>Not at all accomplished</th>
<th>Does not apply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Help you understand your district’s system of assessing teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help you understand the main components of the teacher evaluation: teacher practice and direct measures of student achievement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help you understand the process of linking student growth scores to teacher observations in tested subjects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help you understand the process of linking student growth scores to teacher observations in non-tested subjects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help you understand the information needed for you to be accurately assessed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help you understand the criteria for assessment of teachers’ planning process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help you understand the criteria for assessment of teachers’ instructional practices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help you understand the feedback after an observation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help you understand what underlies judgments of teacher quality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help you understand potential biases in the way teachers are evaluated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
13. Have you been evaluated by the new teacher evaluation system (TESS)?

- Yes, I have been evaluated as part of the new evaluation system at least once.
- No, but I will be evaluated in the future.
- No, and I will not be evaluated.

**Evaluation of New Teacher Evaluation System**

The next set of questions asks for your personal evaluation of the new teacher evaluation system based on your experience.

14. Below is a series of statements about the new teacher evaluation system used in your school district. For each statement, please indicate whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with that statement. Please answer based on your personal experience and observation. Remember that your answers are confidential.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I feel comfortable being assessed by the district’s new evaluation system.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The district’s system for assessing teachers generates accurate assessments.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The district’s system for assessing teachers is fair.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The district’s system for assessing teachers generates assessments that provide constructive individual feedback and promote professional development.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The district’s system for assessing teachers is well aligned with the district’s curriculum.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The district’s system for assessing teachers clearly separates accomplished from unaccomplished teachers.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The district’s system for assessing teachers fits well with other school/district initiatives.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The district's system for assessing teachers provides a firm basis for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>making teacher tenure and promotion decisions and weeding out weak teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The district's system for assessing teachers helps this district meet its</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accountability requirements under ESSA and other external mandates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The district's system for assessing teachers helps improve student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>achievement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The district's system for assessing teachers consumes resources that could</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be better spent elsewhere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The district's system for assessing teachers is relevant for my subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>area and teaching methodology.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about your perceptions of the new teacher observation system.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel adequately informed about the new observation system</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that the new observation system takes too much time</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not feel prepared for the new observation system</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand the new observation system</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I receive useful feedback from observers under the new observation system</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The new observation system provides a fair picture of my teaching</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
16. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about your experience with the new teacher evaluation system.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In my school evaluation criteria and indicators are appropriate.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Existing instruments for teacher performance evaluation are clear.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing evaluation criteria take into account the context of teaching.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The evaluation process at my school allows teachers to explain decisions and actions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rating scales used to evaluate my performance are appropriate.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am given useful feedback by the evaluator.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that in my school teachers' work and achievements are recognized.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that the evaluators in my school have the required knowledge and competencies to appraise teachers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that the evaluators in my school have received adequate training to perform their job.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general, I think that the feedback that I am given focuses upon suggestions for improvement.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
17. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about your perceptions of the effects of the new teacher evaluation system.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The evaluation system encourages me to reflect on my teaching.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The evaluation system has made me more aware of my strengths and weaknesses as a teacher.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The evaluation system has led to an intensification of my work.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The evaluation system has increased the bureaucratic work at school.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The evaluation system has led to tension among staff.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18. I would prefer to be evaluated by:

- ○ A superior (principal, etc.) with whom I have a developed professional relationship
- ○ A superior with whom I am not very familiar
- ○ A teacher with whom I have a developed professional relationship
- ○ A teacher with whom I am not very familiar
- ○ Someone whom I have never met

19. Why do you prefer to be evaluated by that person?


21. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about your perceptions of how you would prefer to be evaluated in the new teacher evaluation system.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I will excel under the new evaluation system</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am confident that I will be accurately evaluated in the new system</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel comfortable being observed and evaluated by the current person responsible for it</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am confident I would score well on an evaluation done by my principal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am confident I would score well on an evaluation done by an impartial observer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am more likely to be accurately assessed by someone who knows my classroom and teaching well</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impartial observers will not understand the context of my classroom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An impartial observer may give a more accurate evaluation of my teaching than someone who knows me</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would rather be evaluated by a direct superior (i.e. a principal) than a peer or master teacher in my content area for purposes of accountability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would rather be evaluated by a direct superior (i.e. a principal) than a peer or master teacher in my content area for purposes of professional development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
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<td>----------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would rather be evaluated by an impartial observer than someone who knows me for purposes of accountability</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would rather be evaluated by an impartial observer than someone who knows me for purposes of professional development</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

22. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about your perceptions of how content knowledge affects evaluation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Not applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating good teaching in my subject area is different from evaluating good teaching in other subject areas</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A strong understanding of the pedagogy specific to my subject matter (i.e. the pedagogy of science or special education) on the part of the observer is essential for an accurate observation of my teaching</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The person who evaluates me has a robust knowledge of the content I teach</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The person who evaluates me has a robust understanding of what good teaching looks like in my subject area</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would prefer to be evaluated by someone who understands my content area deeply</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I would be more accurately evaluated by someone who understands my content area deeply.

The people who evaluate me do not understand the intricacies of teaching my subject.

The new evaluation system accounts for the importance of content knowledge and content-specific pedagogy in evaluation.

It is fair to be evaluated on my teaching by someone who is an expert on effective pedagogy even if they are not familiar with my subject area.

Effective teaching is generally the same across all content areas.

23. In general, what kind of an effect do you think the new teacher evaluation system has had:

On your professional development

On collaboration with others

On your school

24. If you have any other comments or thoughts you would like to add which have not been captured by the previous questions, please write them below:

End of survey

That completes our survey. Thank you very much for your time and cooperation. If you have any questions, you may contact Nita Bohannon at 501-960-7945. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the administrator of the Harding Institutional Review Board at: irb@harding.edu.

Please do not forget to click on done in order to successfully SUBMIT THE SURVEY. Thank you!
APPENDIX B

Permission Letter to Dr. William Firestone

February 2, 2016

Dr. Firestone,

Thank you for responding to my request expeditiously. The items you attached are useful. Will you please share with me the alpha level, reliability and validity of RU-GSE teacher survey? In addition, I would need permission to use the teacher survey that was used in the NJ study. Please advise how I may attain that permission.

I am greatly interested in the research and findings of this study.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Nita Bohannon

February 4, 2016

Nita,

These reliability statistics would have to be calculated for each scale, and we did not do that. As senior author of the study in question, I grant you permission to use the study

William A. Firestone, Distinguished Professor
Rutgers Graduate School of Education
10 Seminary Place
New Brunswick, NJ 08901
The best way to get me is by email at xxx@gse.rutgers.edu
APPENDIX C

Institutional Review Board of Harding University

Status of Request for Exemption from IRB Review
(For Board Use Only)

Date: 5/18/18
Proposal Number: 2018-067
Title of Project: Teacher Perceptions of the Arkansas Teacher Excellence and Support System
Principal Investigator(s) and Co-Investigator(s): Nita R. Bohannon

☐ Research exempted from IRB review.
☐ Research requires IRB review.
☐ More information is needed before a determination can be made. (See attachment.)

I have reviewed the proposal referenced above and have rendered the decision noted above. This study has been found to fall under the following exemption(s):

1 2 3 4 5 6

In the event that, after this exemption is granted, this research proposal is changed, it may require a review by the full IRB. In such case, a Request for Amendment to Approved Research form must be completed and submitted.

This exemption is granted for one year from the date of this letter. Renewals will need to be reviewed and granted before expiration.

The IRB reserves the right to observe, review and evaluate this study and its procedures during the course of the study.

[Signature]
Rebecca O. Weaver
Chair
Harding University Institutional Review Board
May 23, 2016

Dear Teacher,

You have been selected to participate in this study because you were a certified teacher during the 2015-2016 academic year. As a former teacher and a current literacy instructional facilitator, I know how busy you are, and your time in completing this survey is greatly appreciated.

As a part of my doctoral studies at Harding University, I am interested in discovering the perceptions of certified teachers about the new teacher evaluation system in Arkansas. Your perspectives will enable me to provide an accurate picture to stakeholders regarding perceptions about the Arkansas teacher evaluation system.

Since the validity of the results depends on obtaining a high response rate, your participation is crucial to the success of this study. The completion of the online questionnaire will last approximately fifteen minutes. Please be assured that your responses will be held in the strictest confidence. You will not be identified by name, so I would appreciate your honest response to each question. As soon as questionnaires are collected, they will be stored in a secure online database that will be password protected. Once the study is complete, the information in the database will be deleted. If the results of this study were to be written for publication, no identifying information will be used.

I would like to thank you in advance for your time and effort in bringing this study to a reality. If you are interested in the results of this survey, please indicate that you would like a copy of the results on the final question in the questionnaire.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose not to participate and discontinue your participation at any time with no penalty and without loss of benefits to which you would otherwise be entitled.

If you agree to participate in this survey, you may proceed by clicking NEXT and begin. The deadline to complete the survey is July 10, 2016. Your accessing this link will demonstrate that you have read this consent form, that you freely and voluntarily choose to participate, and that you consent to participate.

Nita R. Bohannon, Principal Investigator
Ed.D. Candidate – Harding University
P.O. Box XXX
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XXX@gmail.com
501-xxx-xxxx

Dr. Bruce W. Bryant, Associate Professor
Harding University
Box XXX
Searcy, AR 72149
XXX@harding.edu
501-279-4000