AN INTERPRETATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS
EXPLORING THE TEACHER EVALUATION PROCESS
IN NEW YORK STATE

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Melanie Pombrio

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Abstract

As a result of receiving Race to the Top (RTTT) funding, changes were recently implemented with regards to the teacher evaluation system in New York State. Historically, teacher observations were the primary tool used to evaluate teacher performance; however the new Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) plan now requires the utilization of student scores on standardized tests or district approved pre- and post- assessments as an additional means of evaluating a teacher’s effectiveness in the classroom (Engage NY, n.d.). While teacher observations have been used as an integral part of growth and reflection for novice and veteran teachers alike, it is less clear how teachers can utilize student test scores to improve their practice. Therefore, using the lens of Schön’s (1987) reflection-on-action theory, this study explored teacher perceptions towards the new evaluation system in a small, rural school district in upstate New York and how these teachers make sense of the evaluation data provided to them to enhance the quality of their instruction towards the end of improving student learning. The research findings showed a general understanding by the participants as to why the teacher evaluation process is in place while also noting the unease in the reasons for and implementation procedures of the process. Each participant also reflected on the positive and negative affects the APPR process had on their classroom. It is these personal experiences that have played a role in their overall perceptions of the evaluative system. Additionally, the teachers who participated in this research all acknowledged a genuine concern for their students learning about their curriculum and how to make the connections in the connections made in the classroom expand to the outside world.

Key words: Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR), teacher evaluation, classroom observation
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# Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction 8

  - Statement of the Problem 8
  - Significance of Research Problem 13
  - Research Question 14
  - Positionality Statement 15
    - Biases 16
    - Challenges 17
  - Theoretical Framework 18

Chapter 2: Literature Review 21

  - Introduction 21
    - Problem Statement 21
    - Teacher Evaluations 22
    - What Constitutes a Teacher Evaluation 22
    - Evolution of the Teacher Evaluation 26
    - Today’s Teacher Evaluation 28
    - Formative Assessment 29
    - Summative Assessment 29
    - Models to Follow 30
      - Performance based evaluations 31
      - Framework for teaching 31
      - The teacher evaluation system 31
      - Mixed methodology evaluations 32
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Professional Assessment and Comprehensive Evaluation System</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Professional Development System for Teacher Appraisal</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The TAP System</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The New York State Model</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluative Function and Purpose</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Signifies Effective Teachers</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Concerns</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining control: local districts or governmental agencies</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation Strategy</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluator Training</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time to self-reflect</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion and Implications</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3: Research Design</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Paradigm</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Design</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Tradition</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment and Access</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection of Human Subjects</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter One: Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Throughout a person’s teaching career, there is the expectation that all teachers will be evaluated on a yearly basis. These evaluations have historically been based on observations of the teacher’s performance in the classroom. In recent years, the evaluation of teachers has been in the forefront of educational debates. In 2009 the Race to the Top (RTTT) program was initiated to promote student learning, to enhance the qualities of the teachers, and to turn around our underperforming schools (The White House, 2009). New York State applied for and received funding to spur the goals set forth through this program. As a result of receiving the RTTT funding, changes were implemented with regards to the teacher evaluation system in New York State.

This research study examined one of the most recent and important changes affecting teachers in New York, the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR). In 2010, changes instituted by the Governor and State Education Department set a new system in motion. A new component is the utilization of student scores on standardized tests or district approved pre- and post- assessments as an additional means of evaluating a teacher’s effectiveness in the classroom (Engage NY, n.d.).

In response to this new system, stakeholders of a small, rural, upstate New York school assembled an APPR team consisting of teachers and administrators to annually examine the APPR contract established as a result of the new legislation. There were three administrative team members including the school district superintendent in addition to the elementary and high school principals. The teachers’ association had five total team members. The association members included the teachers’ union president, the APPR coordinator, one member of the
negotiation team, and two additional teachers representing the elementary school and the junior-senior high school. Each team member was charged with conducting an annual review of the APPR process. This examination included incorporating any new updates set forth by the state, discussing any changes considered by either the administration or the teachers’ association, as well as acknowledging issues that may have arisen throughout the course of the year that may potentially impact the contractual agreement.

In the years following the A Nation at Risk (ANAR) report, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation, and the Race to the Top (RTTT) funding program, the evaluative system used by administrators when determining teacher quality and effectiveness has been under the watchful eyes of parents, community members, school administrators, and governmental officials. This new look at the process has been examined and analyzed on national and state levels. Furthermore, a comprehensive examination of the teacher evaluation system has encouraged, and in some cases forced districts to negotiate a new system for teacher evaluations (Hazi & Rucinski, 2009a; Hazi & Rucinski, 2009b; The New Teacher Project, 2010). New York was no exception. Due to the acceptance of the RTTT funding, New York was required to develop and adopt a new system for evaluating its teachers and began the process of implementing the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) plan (Engage NY, n.d.).

The new evaluation system has been a long and arduous process. There have been court battles about the fairness of the system, concessions made on certain requirements set forth in the original agreement, deadlines that have been pushed back with regards to contractual obligations, in addition to a multitude of meetings to discuss how individual districts can develop and implement contractual agreements between the unions and their respective districts. This
process has involved multiple layers and participants both inside and outside of the classroom setting.

The APPR process resulted in teachers receiving a minimum of two observations per year for tenured teachers and three times per year for untenured teachers with one of these observations being informal or unannounced. Each formal or announced meeting requires a pre- and a post-observation meeting with the evaluator to discuss the components of the lesson that will be observed and then provide feedback based on what was observed by the trained evaluator during the lesson. In addition, teachers have had to adjust to a new tool that is used as part of their classroom evaluation. In many cases, this tool includes specific factors that are to be demonstrated during the classroom evaluation, as well as specific indicators of lesson planning and preparation and reflection about professional requirements outside of the classroom, too. Thus, the evaluative tool, in many instances, measures not only observable and specific classroom behaviors, but also the outside preparations and professional connections made by each individual teacher (Appendix A).

The focus of this study was to gain insight into teacher perceptions surrounding the new teacher evaluation system. More specifically, this study was designed to inform the use of the Danielson Framework for Teaching as a tool to further the relationship between the teacher and the students while also positively impacting teacher effectiveness and efficiency. The Danielson Framework for Teaching, developed by Charlotte Danielson in 1996, contains four domains with twenty-two components and seventy-six elements that have the potential to be observed in a classroom setting and is the framework used to develop the evaluation instrument in the district where the research was conducted. Thus, within this observation tool there are numerous opportunities for productive feedback and communication between teacher and observer, which
can promote lines of communication for professional growth and personal reflection (The Danielson Group, 2011).

Student assessment scores are another component in the evaluation process. This portion of the evaluation is divided into two sections: the student learning objective (SLO), which measures growth, and the locally assessed measure (LAM), which measures achievement or growth. If the LAM is also used to measure growth, the group of students must be different from those used in the SLO segment or a sub-set of the SLO population with a different unit of measure. When addressing the SLO segment, the use of student assessments creates an added concern as some curricular areas and grade levels are able to create their own pre- and post-assessments while other curricular areas and grade levels are forced to use state assessments for this evaluative component. It is to this end that both the teacher and the students can benefit from a more inclusive understanding of the overall process.

While teachers in New York have worked under this new evaluative tool for a couple of years, there are still underlying frustrations and anxieties about the direction the teaching profession is headed. In speaking with teaching professionals regarding the teacher evaluation system, one cannot help but notice the concerns that are evident in their voices and wording. The hesitations expressed by veteran teachers in addition to the limited number of students entering certain fields of education are primary concerns that need to be addressed (District employees, personal communication, 2015). The loss of veteran teachers negatively influences the mentor program, which in turn, produces an undesirable effect on novice teachers during what could be considered their formative years. It is to this end that research regarding the new system must be examined.
Several reasons have been given for developing and sustaining the teacher evaluation system; however, in conducting the research and literature review two primary categories of evaluative purposes have emerged, formative and summative assessment. These two categories can then be expanded to encompass smaller more independent reasons for performing the evaluations that include both personal and organizational goals (Darling-Hammond, Wise, & Pease, 1983). Material written by Hazi and Rucinski (2009b) found that teacher observation has been standard practice since the early 18th century yet there has been little impact from these evaluations on teacher performance overall (Colby, Bradshaw, & Joyner, 2002; Collins, 2004; Daley & Kim, 2010; Darling-Hammond, 1986). That being said, one cannot ignore that there have been continual changes in the process and the product. These changes can be examined on a larger scale such as the national level or on a much smaller scale like at the district level. Expanding the information base to include positive changes and reforms as a result of this research are longstanding goals. As a researcher, there is a train of thought that educators and legislators alike aim to realize the benefits from a quality evaluative process that results in students receiving effective teaching and learning.

The classroom observation of a teacher’s in class routine is one of the more commonly used tools associated with teacher evaluations. The teacher observation has been considered too time consuming and is often seen as ineffective, rarely producing changes in the instructional process (Colby, Bradshaw, & Joyner, 2002; Collins, 2004; Daley & Kim, 2010; Darling-Hammond, 1986). The classroom observation tool has also experienced additional difficulties. For example, The New Teacher Project (TNTP) research (2010) has acknowledged that teacher observations are often seen as deficient when it comes to frequency, focus, differentiation, concrete/beneficial feedback, and provide little impact for the larger educational setting. The
Daley and Kim (2010) article supported these findings when it declared that approximately 75% of teachers interviewed reported that they received no feedback relevant to instructional improvement. Continuing this negative pattern of thought could have potentially harmful effects on a process that has good intentions. Using the research performed in this study will allow for a dialogue between teachers, administrators, and legislators too; therefore, a positive effect could be recognized if voices from all sides of the research are heard.

Daley and Kim (2010) furthered this assertion by writing an illuminating piece regarding the effect teachers have on student growth. In their article it was stated that the effectiveness of the teacher displayed in the classroom is more important for student growth than their qualifications or other attributes. Thus the need for quality observations of the teacher’s classroom performance is seen as an important element in addressing student achievement (Daley & Kim, 2010). Feedback has been noted as a deficiency in the evaluative process. It has also been seen as an obstacle in the current reformation of the teacher evaluation system. Providing quality and constructive feedback will allow the growth and expansion of both teacher effectiveness and student production. Given the current changes and accounting for the issues stated in the historical background, it is evident more research is needed in this field.

**Significance of Research Problem**

It was stated in a meeting for the employees of the school district that the district believes in its employees and wants to ensure a thoughtful and productive learning process on the part of the students (School District Superintendent, personal communication, September 5, 2013). Teachers have been fairly suspicious of the reasons for this new system and are uncertain as to whether there are actual classroom and teacher effectiveness benefits. The amount of testing required of these students has led to decreased teaching time and increased the importance of the
results achieved on these assessments and this is a concern of teachers, administrators, and parents, too.

The New York State Education Department (2013) stated:

The purpose of the evaluation system is to ensure that there is an effective teacher in every classroom and an effective leader in every school. The evaluation system will also foster a culture of continuous professional growth for educators to grow and improve their instructional practices (p. 6).

The above is the expressed goal of the APPR evaluation system through the lens of New York State. The above statement appears to have been a long-standing goal of the educational field. Unfortunately, the perception of some in the classroom is not in alignment with that of the state and finding some common ground on the new evaluative tool may be necessary for continued success.

Research Question

The purpose of this Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) study was to examine teacher perceptions as they relate to the lived experiences of classroom teachers in relation to the teacher evaluation process in New York. The teacher evaluation process was generally defined as the classroom observation process that is required under new legislation throughout New York.

The central research question for the study was: What are the experiences of teachers in a small, rural, upstate New York school district with the Annual Professional Performance Review and how do they make sense of these experiences as it relates to informing their practice?
Positionality Statement

Upon graduating with my Bachelor of Arts degree, I began my professional career working in the private sector. I have held various positions in the retail industry ranging from sales associate to middle management thus having personal experiences with both sides of the evaluation debate. These experiences have allowed me to understand the value of receiving and providing constructive feedback that is intended to enhance performance. While I was in the training program at my last job in the retail industry I realized the enjoyment I received from helping others and I enrolled in the teacher education program at The College of Saint Rose. During my final year in the retail banking industry, I completed the required coursework and received my masters of science and pursued a teaching career.

Thirteen years ago, I began my career as a Spanish teacher. My first teaching job was at a small Catholic school in Amsterdam, New York. Working in a private school afforded me the opportunity to teach what I wanted as I was not subject to all of the state education regulations. I enjoyed my time there and the academic freedoms were wonderful; however, I was not satisfied with other aspects of my job and decided to move on. I began teaching at a small, rural district with huge financial constraints. While only spending one year there, I was fortunate enough to form relationships with several union representatives and began to see how the politics and process of negotiations work.

Upon leaving this small, rural district, I relocated to another district, which is where I always wanted to teach. The friendships I have forged in my current district have allowed me to be an active member in our teachers’ union. I have held positions on the board of representatives, the executive team, and have been serving on the negotiation team for the past
three years. In addition to serving on the negotiation team, I have been serving a dual role and am also a member of our Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) Committee.

**Biases.** I have had a personal hand in the current evaluation system contractually agreed upon by the school district and the teachers’ association. While I was not a member of the original APPR committee, I have since become involved in the negotiations process and have taken a role in preparing the other members of our faculty. Furthermore, three of my colleagues and I presented at the 2012 Superintendent’s Conference Day in which all faculty members received training on using the Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching as our classroom evaluation tool (The Danielson Group, 2011). It is worth mentioning that the Danielson Framework (The Danielson Group, 2011) was not the first choice of the original APPR committee. Unfortunately, I am unaware of the reasons the original committee felt the Teacher Evaluation and Development Model (NYSUT, A Union of Professionals, 2013) was more appropriate for our school district. I am, however, aware that the choice to switch evaluation tools was made as a result of the choices made by other unions in our area. The other Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) districts made the decision to switch to the Danielson Framework; therefore, the original APPR committee felt compelled to switch to the Danielson Framework currently being utilized by the other local districts (APPR committee, personal communication, 2012). These experiences have influenced my perceptions and created a bias because I personally believe we have an APPR contract that is teacher friendly and administrators who are not looking to do harm to the faculty.

Additionally, my experiences with this process have been very positive. The administration and the teachers’ union have had an amicable process in dealing with the APPR negotiations. All participants realize the challenging situation we are experiencing because of
these new changes to the evaluation process and have taken the stance that this process is one that needs to be completed collaboratively or it will not work. This approach in combination with the belief that this process is fluid and subject to changes have aided in both sides feeling as though they are respectfully represented at the table. Furthermore, the agreed upon APPR contract is reviewed at the end of every year to ensure the evaluations are assessing what is deemed necessary and important.

Finally, my experiences last year, while requiring a great deal of work and attention to detail, proved beneficial to me when the process was complete. The relationship I now have with my principal is better than it has ever been. My scores exceeded my expectations and I was provided with constructive feedback I can use in the future. I also understand and am fully aware that these personal experiences are not what others have experienced. Other teachers in my home district have stated their extreme displeasure with the new system multiple times, so my positive experiences may create an added bias in not being able to understand the more contentious side of the evaluation process. Therefore, I will have to pay special attention to my selection of participants to allow for both sides of the discussion while also paying attention to the wording of my questions so I gain their truthful perceptions.

Challenges. A nuance with the APPR evaluation tool is that our principals receive their ratings based on the rating of their faculty; therefore, for me the methodology and outcome can potentially be flawed. Teachers and principals realize the double-edged sword this nuance presents us with and this is a challenge both the administration and the teachers have to work together to overcome. It has also been said that this reciprocal pairing of scores will result in more non-productive evaluations on the part of the principal; however, I have yet to experience this aspect of the evaluation process.
Theoretical Framework

A social constructivist approach was the broad and overarching framework that was used in this research study. Creswell (2013) posited that individuals strive to make meaning of their personal experiences with a given circumstance. This subjective meaning produces complex and various views on any given topic. The participants are active learners and build their respective views based on their experiences, thus constructing their own knowledge and becoming an integral part of the research process. In practical terms, the participants were asked open-ended, broad questions which, when combined with their social interactions, allowed for their interpretations to come into focus (Creswell, 2013). Therefore, because the emphasis of this study was on the interactive processes as noted by the various participants, the social constructivist framework was applied.

Schön’s (1987) theory of reflection-on-action was the more specific framework that guided this study. The central concept of the theory focuses around the critical cognitive reflection that takes place after the event has been completed in hopes of informing and improving future practice (Finlay, 2008). When considering the goal of improving future practice, this reflection is considered possible when meaningful connections are made with the experience. As cited by Finlay (2008), Fish and Coles (1998) advanced the research conducted by Schön in so much as stating that because professionals live in a world that is unstable and lacks in predictability, the need for flexibility and creativity when dealing with a problem is required thus applying reflection-on-action. Additionally, the work of Schön appears to relate to the educational field and this study specifically in the manner that notes the need of a novice professional to follow a specific set of rules and procedures, reflection-in-action, whereby a veteran or more experienced professional can adapt simultaneously in the action; however, it is
also noted that both novice and veteran professionals alike benefit from the experience of reflection (Finlay, 2008).

While Schön is one of the primary philosophers one may think of when considering reflective practices, Stefl-Mabry, Dequoy, and Stevens (2012) and Sellars (2013) noted that the theories and works of Donald Schön were in part influenced by the work of philosopher John Dewey. Kinsella (2010), a more contemporary scholar, took the connection between Dewey and Schön one step further when writing that Schön himself acknowledged the strong connection between their theories by stating his (Schön’s) theories were a revision of theories previously examined by Dewey. Additionally, Kinsella (2010) also wrote that resemblances exist between the works of the two theorists and “(1) the link between intentional reflection and action; and (2) the notion of an artistry and aesthetics of practice” (p. 7) are two of the main factors Schön attributes to the work of Dewey.

Sellars (2013) stated that Valli, a contemporary scholar from the educational system, framed a portion of her research in direct correlation to Schön’s reflection theories. The work of Valli, as cited by Sellars (2013) acknowledges the ongoing nature of reflective practices. It is noted that the reflective practices relate to the in-class experiences and the examination that takes place after the experience is complete. Zeichner and Liston (1996), as cited by Finlay (2008), are additional scholars that incorporated Schön’s work in their research by creating five levels of reflection that take place in the teaching practice. The five levels they describe are:

1. Rapid reflection – immediate, ongoing and automatic action by the teacher.
2. Repair – in which a thoughtful teacher makes decisions to alter their behaviour in response to students’ cues.
3. Review – when a teacher thinks about, discusses or writes about some element of their teaching.

4. Research – when a teacher engages in more systematic and sustained thinking over time, perhaps by collecting data or reading research.

5. Retheorizing and reformulating – the process by which a teacher critically examines their own practice and theories in the light of academic theories (p. 4).

These examinations of teaching and learning informed the research performed in this study.

Utilizing Schön’s (1987) framework guided the participants to reflect on their performance and interaction with the APPR process upon receiving feedback from their trained evaluator. This occurred and was demonstrated in the face-to-face meeting between the teacher to be evaluated and the evaluator upon completion of the observation, as well as, in the processing of scores as seen on their individual composite score sheet. It is during the face-to-face meeting where teacher and evaluator allow individual reflections on the overall classroom observation to be discussed. To this end, it is at the completion of the process when the reflection-on-action takes place (Quan, Yang, & Chen, 2010). With regard to the composite score sheet, this is where the trained evaluator provides the classroom teacher with his/her score in addition to providing observable behaviors noted throughout the course of the observation. The data obtained from this numeric rating is another set of information to reflect upon when considering improvements that can be made within the classroom setting. When both of these reflective experiences work in concert, the reflection-on-action process is acknowledged.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of this research was to examine the teacher evaluation system in New York. The teacher evaluation process has seen renewed interest as of late, especially given the desire for accountability from educators and school districts with regards to overall student performance (Darling-Hammond, Wise, & Pease, 1983; Lofton, Hill & Claudet, 1997). The history and process of the teacher evaluation, with specific attention paid to the evaluation approach taken in New York State, are noted in this literature review. Moreover, this chapter looks at some of the issues that have been noted by researchers when considering different methodologies utilized on the evaluation process. At the conclusion of this chapter a comprehensive overview of various components that affect the teacher evaluation systems is presented while also looking towards exploring possible recommendations for the future.

Problem Statement

The overall process of teacher evaluations and how to use the data collected to inform practices that relate to classroom procedures in the hopes of making teaching and learning more effective are heated topics that have taken center stage in the discussions about education. Exploring formative and summative evaluation processes, as well as recognizing the vast array of tools currently employed in teacher evaluation systems, have been the focus of public attention and research within that last few decades (Larsen, 2005). Therefore, the purpose of examining current literature is to identify some of the options related to the process of the teacher evaluation systems and how teachers use the data provided to them through the new evaluation process to inform their practice in the classroom. In order to address this research topic, the literature review provides a historical background and the evolution of the evaluation system,
explores the notion that the teacher is the greatest influence on student achievement, and explores how to use the data obtained in the observation process to inform teaching, a topic that is still unclear and up for debate.

**Teacher Evaluations**

In recent years, there has been a renewed interest in the teacher evaluation process and this is especially true throughout the state of New York. Since 2001, when No Child Left Behind (NCLB) became law, the notion of quality as it relates to the classroom teacher has been a main topic in the educational landscape (Graham, 2007). Along with the legislative reforms of NCLB, this act provided a definition on what credentials a “highly qualified” teacher was supposed to hold. Listed in this definition are the requirements for being deemed highly qualified and they include attaining a bachelor’s degree, holding a state license, and demonstrating competency in the curricular area or subject being taught (Corcoran, 2010). While taking that list of qualifications into consideration, literature has also noted that professional elements such as those that lead to certification may have very little to do with student achievement outcomes (Rockoff & Speroni, 2010). The Race to the Top (RTTT) initiative has also spurred the discussion about “quality” teacher evaluations. Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) is one of the tools introduced as a means to achieve the desired results in the teacher evaluation process; therefore, educators in the State of New York are playing an integral part in the discussion about teacher evaluation (Engage NY, n.d.).

**What Constitutes a Teacher Evaluation?**

The history of the teacher evaluation process has held the long-standing practice of the teacher observation since the early 18\(^\text{th}\) century (Hazi & Rucinski, 2009b) and has remained
relatively unchanged since the 20th century and the role of the principal was integrated into the system (Attinello, Lare, & Waters, 2006).

Throughout the 1700’s the role of “teacher” was not considered to be a professional career. Members of the local government and clergy were considered to be the most appropriate choice for selecting the community teacher(s). At that time, members of the clergy were considered to be well read and some of the more educated members of society and were therefore entrusted to make decisions about the education of the community at large. However, due to the lack of specific requirements with regard to effective standards for teaching, community members who served as members of the supervisory council were considered to have complete jurisdiction over the hiring and firing of community teachers. This lack of a formal “contract” created a system where teacher feedback was subjective and varied dependent on the views of the supervisor(s) in charge (Marzano, Frontier, & Livingston, 2011). It was not until 1923 when Burton introduced the initial concept of evaluating teachers that a more formal structure for teacher observations and evaluations was set in place. This new process set in motion by Burton should have an emphasis on improving the effectiveness of the classroom teacher (Hazi & Rucinski, 2009b).

Throughout the 1920’s and into the 1930’s information about the classroom observation was presented in a similar format as it is still performed today. The evaluator would enter the classroom in a manner that is non-disruptive, sit in the back portion of the classroom and observe the happenings of the classroom making notations and observing behaviors and interactions between the students and the teacher. From this point forward the procedures for the classroom observation were born. Upon completion of the observation, a meeting would take place whereby the evaluator would present his/her findings regarding the classroom performance. The
presentation of observations would be conducted in a manner as to not seem overly accepting of the teacher’s performance so that the criticisms that would be forthcoming did not seem out of place (Hazi & Rucinski, 2009b).

Frederick Taylor’s work with scientific methods then brought about one of the next major changes to the evaluation system, rating scales that could measure teacher effectiveness. Taylor made the supposition that if scientific measures could be used to examine the behaviors of effective factory workers then the same process could be applied to teachers. This notion was supported by the likes of Edward Thorndike and Ellwood Cubberley in that a scoring system could be also be used to rate and eventually transform the ineffective practices of struggling teachers (Marzano et al., 2011; Hazi & Rucinski, 2009b). Along the same time period, the prescriptive checklist of the classroom observation also came into play. This checklist was considered more time efficient for the evaluator especially since in the course of one observation period, the evaluator could assess as many as forty-four (44) items ranging from the salient features of the classroom to the interactions between teacher and student (Hazi & Rucinski, 2009b). Almost simultaneously, William Wetzel, first proposed the idea of using student learning to assess the effectiveness of the teacher. While Wetzel did not go so far as to approach academics in terms of factory input and output like Taylor and Cubberley, he did feel as though the evaluation process needed to include more components. His proposal included using student assessments, objective data, and consistent methods to assess teacher effectiveness (Marzano et al., 2011). The science behind the educational process continued to develop throughout the 1930’s and continued on through the period of the great depression but was without controversy then, too (Marzano et al., 2011).
According to Marzano et al. (2011) after World War II, a new shift began to take hold in education and these efforts focused on two areas: teacher autonomy and defining and expanding the role of the supervisor. Both of these focal areas brought rise to the need for a productive evaluation system. Because there was a diminished focus on standardized assessments there was an increased desire to learn about the role of the individual teacher and developing his/her set of skills. While the consideration for the human side of teaching was being explored, so was the role of the administrator. The list of responsibilities for a building administrator was growing longer and required attention, thus classroom observations became a major focus. The importance of constructive feedback and remaining in the classroom for a substantial period of time are two of the more integral components that came out of this literature on this topic.

The reforms that took place directly after World War II led nicely into the next era of change to the process, clinical supervision. According to Marzano et al. (2011) there was no other reformation that gained as much momentum as this reform which started in the 1950’s and continued through the 1980’s. During the era of clinical supervision, as a researcher, one could recognize the beginning stages of today’s teacher evaluation system. One noted exception is that the clinical supervision era involved a five stage process. The phases and similarities between the clinical supervision era and today include-the stages of the pre-observation conference and the classroom observation; however the noted difference is the remaining three stages. The final three stages of the initial era now more commonly occur during the post-observation conference (Marzano et al., 2011). There is also the notion that during the clinical era the connection between teacher and evaluator was considered a professional development process by which the teacher felt a partner in the overall system and the entire classroom experience was to be considered in the evaluation; yet what ended up happening was the five stages became the
prescriptive checklist often seen during today’s observation process. Lastly, the clinical reforms of the preceding era continued to develop and change through the visions of Madeline Hunter and Charlotte Danielson versus the more developmental and less prescriptive approaches of the reflective practitioner leading us to today’s desire for accountability and change (Marzano et al., 2011).

**Evolution of the Teacher Evaluation**

It has been said that the past is the greatest indicator of the future; therefore understanding where we came from and where we need to go are intentionally intertwined. Ellett and Teddlie (2003) provide a brief history of the evolution of teacher evaluation that may provide valuable information on the current evaluation process. Their research looks historically on the teacher evaluation system from the 1900s and synthesizes the changes that have occurred over time.

As stated previously, the moral and ethical standards of teachers were primary concerns for evaluation purposes from 1900-1950. It was suggested that good teachers during these years demonstrated high moral and ethical standards, had basic reading skills, and were looked upon as good role models. Ellett and Teddlie (2003) provided a synopsis about the beginning teaching career of Ellett’s grandfather, Grandpa Price, as he was evaluated and certified by his superintendent during the early 1900s while teaching in Kentucky. It is interesting to note that many of the components of the teacher evaluation from those early years are similar to those of today’s teacher evaluations -- the realm of personal and subjective classroom observations. Two major differences are that the procedures used during that time period lacked the formalities of the system used in current day education and the superintendent spent the entire day in the classroom as opposed to a shorter, more impersonal period of time. It is also significant to note
that while the community appointed Grandpa Price as the classroom teacher, he had no formal training in teaching and no knowledge of the processes necessary to obtain his certification.

Ellett and Teddlie (2003) proceeded to expand their literature into the 1950-1960 era where teacher behavior and student outcomes lead to developments in the field of effective teaching models. This focus was in part due to the federal funding associated with competency-based teacher education (CBTE) programs at the collegiate level. The CBTE programs were the beginnings of a teacher preparatory program whereby the curriculum taught would focus on concepts and skills associated with effective teaching. It is also relevant to note that Ellett and Teddlie (2003) also acknowledged that during this time educational systems also became increasingly reliant on paper and pencil examinations in order to receive a teaching license. Several of these reformations also came during the time period that endured a major push to create a set of research based literature. This literature was designed to identify the methodologies associated with classroom based effective teaching.

Moving the literature along, Ellett and Teddlie (2003), stated classroom observation research in the 1970s led to the initial framework of teacher evaluation systems because links between teaching practices and student outcomes were being researched. Then from the 1980s to present day came the era of reform. Nearly every aspect of teaching was examined during this era of reform. These reform efforts started with teacher preparation programs, proceeded to look at student assessment procedures and techniques, and extended through to the more recently implemented voucher programs. Also taking place during the 1980s was a shift away from locally driven teacher evaluation methodologies to a more governmental approach taking shape in many districts today (Ellett & Teddlie, 2003). Additionally, in the 1980s and 1990s states implemented on-the-job training utilized for career development and certification renewal, which
added to the evolution of the teacher preparatory and evaluation processes (Ellett & Teddlie, 2003; Lofton et al., 1997).

**Today’s Teacher Evaluation**

Two categories have emerged as central purposes of teacher evaluation: formative and summative assessment of teacher performance (Duke, 1990); however their stated purposes have rarely been viewed as a success (Lofton et al., 1997). These two central tenets can be expanded to encompass a variety of other smaller more independent reasons for performing the evaluations that include both personal and organizational goals (Darling-Hammond et al., 1983). On the teacher performance side, there are connections made between the teacher and the framework of the classroom versus the ability of the district to make more managerial decisions from an organizational standpoint (Wise, Darling-Hammond, McLaughlin, & Bernstein, 1985). Furthering this point is the research performed by Conley and Dixon (1990). Their research posits that the evaluation report can also provide potential benefits when illustrating a connection between the organizational and teacher sides of the evaluation. Utilizing the evaluation report as an added tool places added emphasis on the need for clear communication and goal setting, as well as building a relationship of trust between evaluator and teacher.

Additionally, these two categories are in direct conflict with each other and place the principal or evaluator in conflict mode as well (Darling-Hammond et al., 1983; McGreal, 1982; Popham, 1988). Larsen (2005) supported this notion by explaining when the evaluation is summative in nature, the purpose is to determine the effectiveness of the teacher rather than providing useful guidance and constructive feedback utilized in a more formative setting. Wise, Darling-Hammond, McLaughlin, and Bernstein (1985) stated that in order for a teacher
evaluation process to succeed, both the organizational and the teacher aspects of the evaluation must be achieved using a balanced approach.

**Formative assessment.** Formative evaluations are generally seen as a means to improvement and growth (Darling-Hammond et al., 1983; Popham, 1988; Haefele, 1993; Peterson, 2004). Darling-Hammond et al. (1983) have identified that one of the main formative reasons for teacher evaluation is to provide staff development opportunities. This offers support from the perspective that teachers prefer an evaluative system that recognizes effort and promotes personal growth while providing some form of job protection. Darling-Hammond (1986) followed this article with additional research that asserted the general purposes of the evaluation are to provide feedback to the individual teacher, allow for support through professional development and as a basis for teacher retention. Teacher portfolios that are designed with the goal of promoting professional growth can be used as a viable option in that a more constructivist approach may be implemented. Compiling a more comprehensive set of records that exemplifies multiple methods of assessment and an individual approach to the evaluation may enhance the effectiveness of the overall evaluation (Attinello, Lare, & Waters, 2006).

**Summative assessment.** Summative evaluations are generally more focused on areas of teacher promotion and retention and accountability (Darling-Hammond et al., 1983; Popham, 1988; Haefele, 1993; Peterson, 2004; Kyriakides & Demetriou, 2007) and in some cases monetary compensation (Popham, 1988). Teacher competency, tenure status, and licensure decisions appear to have a more tenuous impact because the legal system comes into the equation when teacher dismissal is a desired consequence (Haefele, 1993; Peterson, 2004). Summative evaluations are seen as limiting teacher autonomy and creativity within the
classroom and therefore place additional stressors on teachers (Larsen, 2005). Furthermore, while summative assessments are seen as a solution to disallow or remove more incompetent teachers, they are also viewed as a prescriptive checklist that impedes growth and fosters a system of negative emotions and distrust (Larsen, 2005).

Moreover, administrators and boards of education are legally required to have a substantial amount of irrefutable evidence in order to dismiss an ineffective teacher and this is one of the primary concerns surrounding summative evaluations. It has been stressed that even if the summative assessment was not positive the decision to dismiss the teacher is often not made. The reasons for this decision vary due to financial concerns, strong teachers’ unions, poorly implemented evaluation systems, and pre-existing biases (Haefele, 1993; Peterson, 2004). Because teachers are evaluated using a summative format these fears and influences have placed administrators and, at times, teachers in the position of advocating for a more objective set of standards (Newton, 1980).

**Models to Follow**

Changes to the teacher evaluation system have allowed for the creation and use of new tools while also expanding the options for researching if and how these tools can influence the effectiveness of the teaching process. Keeping this in mind, some of the evaluative changes have been perceived as positive and beneficial while others have not been seen to have such an effect on classroom practices. The same sentiments can be said for the overall teacher evaluation process and the individual tools used to determine quality and “effective” teaching. The presentation of the following models exemplifies some of the current systems being implemented throughout the educational system.
Performance based evaluations. Behavioral-based evaluations are one method currently being used in the teacher evaluation system. This behavioral-based system appears to be more of a prescriptive checklist whereby all teachers are evaluated on the same set of skills (Peterson & Comeaux, 1990). Policy makers recognize the advantage of utilizing this format is that the system is applicable for all grade levels and disciplines (Hill & Grossman, 2013) while other researchers, such as (Newton, 1980), have commented on the benefits of this objective approach.

Framework for teaching. In 1996, Charlotte Danielson introduced her “Framework for Teaching” which exhibits this system of evaluation. Embedded in this standards-based framework are four domains which are broken down into 22 components and further disaggregated into 76 elements. Implementing this tool has often been seen as complicated and requires a great deal of time by both teachers and administrators. While teachers believed that their efforts would be beneficial to teaching performance, the results did not support this assertion (Schumacher, 2010). One reason could be the complexity of the Framework and the increased burden it places on administration and faculty. This complexity brings more focus on the process and less on the final outcome. Personal motivation and professional development have been seen as negative factors in his study, so making these a priority in the tool and its implementation may be keys to success (Schumacher, 2010).

The teacher evaluation system. The Teacher Evaluation System (TES) implemented in Cincinnati is another example of a performance based evaluation system. In this system the teachers are observed four times per year with three of these observations being performed by peers and one observation being performed by their administrator. The TES rubric is based upon the aforementioned “Framework for Teaching” developed by Danielson -- there are four levels of teacher performance. According to the research on the TES system it is suggested that
teachers who are evaluated using this system do improve their classroom teaching (Taylor & Tyler, 2012).

**Mixed methodology evaluations.** On the other end of the spectrum a more individual approach to teacher evaluation system exists. In this evaluative approach, teachers take an active role in their assessment and development while continuing to receive observational feedback from their administration. This evaluative tool is supported by the findings of Shakman, Cook, Riordan, Fournier, Sánchez, and Brett (2012); five states, Delaware, Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas, incorporate multiple tools including observations and self-assessments in the evaluative system.

It has also been suggested that allowing multiple avenues for evaluation has been seen as achieving success. Colby et al. (2002) reiterated that changing the evaluative tool to be more personal to the individual teachers and district can create stronger connections for all of the stakeholders within the district. Utilizing the teacher portfolio as a tool can complete this process. Additional examples of information that may be useful in evaluating teachers could be student data from test scores, student achievement levels, parental input, board certifications, professional achievements, school involvement, and more (Peterson, 2004). Research performed by Gelfer and Filler (2006) noted the attributes of including mixed methodologies in a comprehensive, year-long teacher portfolio as a means of assessment. Including a portfolio section in the evaluation process enables the teacher to compile examples of their best practices including sample work, observations, and personal reflection, as well as other information deemed appropriate by the evaluator or the individual teacher (Gelfer & Filler, 2006). Researchers have also affirmed that the information needs to be relevant to each individual teacher because not all methods and tools will be applicable to all teachers (Peterson, 2004).
The Professional Assessment and Comprehensive Evaluation System. The Professional Assessment and Comprehensive Evaluation System (PACES) is a learner-centered approach to teacher evaluations that has also been explored as of late. The PACES system has grounded its development on a few basic premises: self-reflection, self-assessment, collaboration, group work, and classroom observation(s). The development of this system is seen as a foundation for formative assessments where teachers are learners and work in concert with administrators to recognize their strengths and weakness and construct personal meanings around that learning (Ovando, 2001; Davis, Ellett, & Annunziata, 2002).

The Professional Development System for Teacher Appraisal. The Professional Development System for Teacher Appraisal (PDSTA) approach also focuses on a learner-centered environment similar to the PACES system and in the research noted by Ovando (2001) appeared to have positive feedback from the teachers included in the study. As with the PACES system, this learner-centered approach allows for individual professional development on multiple levels; however, this system was locally developed instead of state or governmentally developed. Collaborative work with peers, professional responsibilities and student performance are three of the seven domains inherent in this program.

The TAP System. Another recently developed tool is known as the TAP System. This system incorporates multiple measures of evaluation including more frequent classroom visits, which is supported by the research of Peterson and Comeaux (1990) and increasing student improvements through observable data relating to teacher effectiveness (Daley & Kim, 2010). The TAP system recognizes four central tenets that are centered on teacher observations (announced and unannounced), accountability, opportunities for professional development and growth, and recognition of achievement through additional compensation. This model
incorporates the teacher evaluation, which is a year-long process whereby the teacher is rated on their level of proficiency in the areas of planning and preparation of the instruction, the learning environment of the classroom, the actual classroom instruction, and professional responsibilities. A student achievement component is also included in addition to the teacher component when using a value added approach. Utilizing this component means student scores from standardized state assessments are calculated as part of an overall teacher composite score. It must be noted that the use of student scores is not designed to be punitive to the teacher, it is simply to provide another measure of accountability. All of the gathered information is then compiled and presented for teacher and administrator review also allowing for a self-reflection component on the part of the teacher, and, if applicable, a bonus in the form of salary compensation. It is also worth noting that while this system has not been in practice for a long period of time, positive results have been noticed in the schools that have implemented the TAP Systems for teacher evaluation (Daley & Kim, 2010).

**The New York State Model.** In 2010 in New York a recent and “ground breaking” transformation to the teacher evaluation system was implemented. This transformation took place when New York State won a portion of the RTTT federally funded grant. Receiving the funding came with certain requirements and as a result, New York had to develop and adopt a new system for evaluating its teachers. The new evaluative system has been a lengthy, litigious, and taxing process that has directly affected the classroom teacher.

The new process by which a teacher has been evaluated is now partially dependent on the performance of his/her students because as much as 40 percent of a teacher’s evaluation is dependent upon the results of his/her students on standardized tests or post-assessments. While this type of objective assessment has been commonplace in mathematics and English Language
Arts, with this new format all curricular areas are required to administer a standardized assessment, if applicable, or a district approved post-assessment to ensure rigor within the subject content. Student scores on standardized tests and/or post-assessments are not the only assessment tool used to evaluate teachers. A minimum of two classroom observations are also performed yearly by a trained evaluator and are placed in two categories; announced or formal observations versus unannounced or informal observations with a pre- and post- conference often required for the completion of the formal observation. Upon completion of these observations a numeric rating is calculated and the teacher is assigned a label of Highly Effective, Effective, Developing, or Ineffective for the classroom observation portion of their evaluation. This observation score is then combined with their student assessment scores to determine their yearly composite score. This composite score is also accompanied by the same assigned labels used in the classroom observation component and once all scores are compiled they are made available to any parent of a child in their classroom who asks for the information (Engage NY, n.d.).

While all of these changes are being implemented, it is important to note that the State Education Department now has final approval of each district’s APPR document. Additionally, this is considered to be a fluid process and changes made to a district’s APPR document need to be resubmitted to the State Education Department for additional approval. There are other qualifications added to the APPR regulations: there is now a linking of the rating of the teacher to the rating of the principal, all evaluations have to be completed and provided to the teacher by September 1 of the school year immediately following the year in which the evaluation was performed, and each district’s funding is also tied to its state approved APPR plan. As of the most recent notification, the majority of school districts within New York State has submitted
their APPR documentation and are working on finalizing any required changes to receive final approval from the State Education Department (Engage NY, n.d.).

**Evaluative Function and Purpose**

Research has also documented that classroom evaluations appear to have little overall impact on teacher effectiveness (Hazi & Rucinski, 2009b). Ellett and Teddlie (2003) posed the question “What are the appropriate means and ends of education?” (p. 101). This same question could be rephrased and placed in the debate concerning teacher evaluations. Confirmed by the research of Hazi and Rucinski (2009b), teachers and administrators rarely see the value in using the classroom observation as the only tool and the feedback given to the teacher usually does not result in any substantial change in the classroom.

When utilizing teacher observations for evaluative purposes, concerns have been noted. The New Teacher Project (TNTP) research (2010) has acknowledged deficiencies in the number of times in which standardized observations occur throughout the year, the individualization of the process, the constructive nature of the administrator feedback, and overall provide little impact upon the educational goals. Additional findings presented by the TNTP are also supported by Daley and Kim (2010) in so much as the majority of the teachers who participated in classroom observations and were then interviewed received either no feedback or found the feedback to be lacking in relevance and non-beneficial to their classroom performance. Daley and Kim (2010) also expanded the research to include student achievement in the discussion when they stated that the effectiveness of the teacher in the classroom is more important for student growth than his/her qualifications or other attributes. This attribute possibly reinforces the desire for quality observations and is seen as an important factor in addressing student achievement (Daley & Kim, 2010).
What Signifies Effective Teachers

Research has concluded that there is a relationship between effective teachers and students achievement. This notion is influential when one considers one of the greatest influences on student performance is the teacher (Johnson-Leslie, 2007). Regrettably, a concrete definition of effective teaching is difficult to encounter (Ding & Sherman, 2006; Graham, 2007). This lack of an accurate definition creates problems when conducting empirical research; however, researchers have made progress in this field despite the lack of a concrete definition for “effective” teachers. It is interesting to note that research has concluded that when examining the positive characteristics of effective teachers one cannot make the assumption that ineffective teachers have the opposite traits, especially when considering personal subjectivity and experience (Johnson-Leslie, 2007).

According to Stronge, Ward, and Grant (2011) there are four components that impact teacher effectiveness. The four listed factors are the delivery method used in the instruction, the type of student assessment utilized in the classroom, the classroom environment where the learning occurs, and the personality traits of the respective teacher. Each of these components have smaller sub-factors that exist within the confines of the larger structure; thus acknowledging that within any situation multiple factors influence the overall nature of a classroom. That being said, when the final conclusion of the research is analyzed, Stronge et al. (2011) concluded that the classroom teacher is a major influence when it comes to the success of students.

Taking the notion that teacher traits play a vital role in student success further, Polk (2006) examined the personal traits of effective teachers. The following list is a comprehensive
representation of the research conducted by Polk (2006); yet it is by no means the only set of factors that play a pivotal role in student/teacher rapport:

…good prior academic performance, communication skills, creativity, professionalism, pedagogical knowledge, thorough and appropriate student evaluation and assessment, self-development or lifelong learning, personality, talent or content area knowledge, and the ability to model concepts in their content area (p.23).

These ten characteristics encompass multiple areas of the teaching experience including lesson planning and preparation, classroom instruction, and self-reflection or professional standards occurring outside of the classroom and which are observed by students and administrators alike.

In a similar vein, while the terminology differs, the findings of Polk (2006) are also supported by research of Leslie-Johnson (2007). The overlapping themes that are included in the work of each researcher are in the areas of teacher training and preparation, assessment strategy and usage, as well as creating an atmosphere of respect and professionalism between themselves and their students.

Professional Concerns

As with most any reform, concerns and trepidations exist amongst educators. There is no set formulary for using the data received from the observation process to inform their practice; thus some teachers are concerned with the end goal of these reforms. These concerns exist for job satisfaction and job security while the system in New York is still changing (District Administrator, personal communication, 2015). Nevertheless, teachers continue to adapt and teach while the evaluation system continues to evolve.

Power. The function of power is another factor in developing and sustaining successful teacher evaluation systems. “Power over” and “power with” (p. 340) are two very relevant
terms in defining the environment in which teacher evaluations are instituted (Stronge & Tucker, 1999). The impact of which definition is chosen leads to the very spirit of how the process will develop and move forward. When boards of education, administrators, and teachers work in collaboration using a “power with” strategy all groups develop a sense of ownership and trust in the final product; therefore, they want to see the evaluative system succeed. Conversely, when administration and teachers view the process as being implemented using more of a “power over” strategy there is less buy-in and therefore more issues ensue (Stronge & Tucker, 1999). Allowing teachers to have input in the evaluation process is an aspect that has been supported whereby when teachers are actively involved in the process their commitment and involvement is on a more personal level (Duke, 1990; Wise et al., 1995).

**Maintaining control: local districts or governmental agencies.** There has been a longstanding debate as to who has the power to determine the teacher evaluation process - local districts? or larger governmental bodies? As with any public debate there are opinions supporting both sides of the aisle. There are positives and negatives, when considering the research surrounding this aspect, with both levels of power controlling the process.

In the research noted by Colby et al. (2002), administrators and teachers perceived the evaluation process differently based upon whether the tool was a state-mandated tool or an alternative assessment. Those administrators using a state-mandated tool saw the evaluation as a separate entity, which was in direct opposition to those administrators using alternative forms for assessment. The results of the study also showed the same oppositions in the fact that the state-mandated system was seen to have little impact on professional development and student learning while those districts using alternative assessment felt the process was connected to school and teacher improvement (Colby et al., 2002). Machell (1995) also noted that if local
districts are going to be successful in developing and maintaining a teacher evaluation procedure, teachers must be treated with respect and considered part of the solution. Contreras (1999) reached similar results when examining the perceptions of teachers who assumed personal involvement and input in the evaluation process. When teachers believed they were active participants in their evaluations, in addition to receiving training and knowledge about the district policies surrounding the evaluation system, their perceptions about the effectiveness of the evaluation also increased (Contreras, 1999). Additionally, legislators fear if they are not in control of the system, the assessment of teachers will not be an accurate representation of the teacher’s performance; therefore noting a lack of trust between participants (Darling-Hammond, 1986).

Collins (2004) discusses some of the issues of control; however, the research he noted had taken place in Turkey. Similar complexities and issues with regards to public schools were noted; however, the one major difference was the school used in this research was privately funded. The teachers that participated in his research saw the governmental controls as stressful due to the biases of the evaluator and the impersonal feel of the evaluation; however, they also believed that when the school based system was in place the evaluations were lacking in structure and valuable feedback. Additional concerns about the school-based system ranged from student and parent input to the more punitive aspects of the evaluation process. All of this notwithstanding, teachers still felt that the school-based system was valuable to quell parental issues; thus recognizing both systems have their place in the discussion (Collins, 2004).

**Implementation strategy.** It has been communicated that the implementation is almost as important as the tool used to evaluate teachers (O’Pry & Schumacher, 2012; Ovando, 2001). Clearly communicated strategies and a collaborative working environment can provide beneficial
results when implementing a new teacher evaluation system. These functions of change not only need to be included in the implementation stage, they need to continue throughout the entire process as needs and additional factors develop and require action (Stronge & Tucker, 1999). This impact of implementation also comes from Darling-Hammond et al. (1983) when they expressed the notion that the fundamentals around the organization, including morale, policies, and structure can influence the success of the procedures being explored. In additional research performed by Lofton et al. (1997) teacher frustration over lack of knowledge was also expressed as having a negative impact on the process; thus encompassing the need for evaluator and teacher training (Wise et al., 1985).

**Evaluator training.** In addition to the implementation of the system the training received by the evaluator can also contribute to the tool’s success. The level of comprehensive training received by the administrator or evaluator is widely viewed as having an impact on the effectiveness of the evaluation system (Haefele, 1993; Looney, 2011; McGreal, 1982). Research has shown that evaluator training is one area that is significantly lacking in most districts; so, Haefele (1993) posits that more sufficient and rigorous training will lead to a more reliable and valid assessment. Additionally, Machell (1995) extended the notion of training to go beyond classroom techniques and to incorporate a more human resources aspect as well. When considering teachers’ perception of the evaluator, it is important to note that their perception is greatly influenced by the training received by evaluators; thus influencing the teacher’s perceived effectiveness of the evaluation as a whole (Haefele, 1993; Machell, 1995). This tenet was supported by the research on reversing the “Widget Effect” whereby one of the recommended policy changes is to ensure evaluators receive proper training and are accountable for the proper use of the evaluative tool (Borko, Liston, & Whitcomb, 2009).
**Time to self-reflect.** Self-reflection through a post-observation meeting may be an additional option leading to a greater appreciation for the observation results. It is during this meeting time where the teacher and the evaluator have an opportunity to discuss individual strengths and weaknesses demonstrated throughout the evaluation. This added time also allows the teacher to participate in a dialogue with the evaluator and it is perhaps through this discussion insights are gained. While the impact of this conference depends on both parties, it also applies directly to the training received by the evaluator. The desire and ability of the evaluator to clearly state observable behaviors and then set clear goals for future assessments is pivotal (Haefele, 1993). Machell (1995) also noted that teachers who had the opportunity for self-reflection and were able to collaborate with their administrators and develop a plan for growth had a more positive perception of the evaluation. It was this practice that was implemented in Nevada and the results demonstrated that when teachers become self-reflective learners they adjust their performance when such changes are needed (Sawyer, 2001).

**Discussion and Implications**

Research has noted several avenues for improving the teacher evaluation system. Among them are the recommendations of Darling-Hammond (1986) who made some very explicit recommendations for improving the teacher evaluation system. These recommendations are comprehensive and begin from the initial selection of those choosing the teaching profession. The recommendations include: peer review, rigorous selection of teaching candidates, ongoing review of teacher practices by well-trained peers and administrators using multiple methods, implementing a strong support system to evaluate and address observed issues within a classroom, a collaborative environment for continued development, and the inclusion of teacher voices in their professional development (Darling-Hammond, 1986, McGreal, 1992).
Additionally, Hill and Grossman (2013) noted that utilizing a system that is content specific allows for individualized feedback and a strong possibility of positive teacher development. This belief is also supported by Christensen (1986) in that it notes that administrators must recognize the individual needs of the teachers and apply different techniques that would be of assistance to that individual teacher. Further research conducted by Peterson and Comeaux (1990) and McGreal (1992) extends this notion in that the needs of a novice teacher are possibly different than the needs of a veteran teacher and therefore their evaluations may be more beneficial if the purposes suited their individual needs. The content-specific system is not limited to classroom teachers only but may also include school-related personnel and in the future administrators, too (Sawyer, 2001). Evaluators and teachers must examine whether the true purpose of the evaluation is to assess the professional abilities and skills of the teacher or to have the teacher visibly demonstrate that they have achieved the preconceived expectations set forth by public policy (Larsen, 2005).

In summary, the research of Machell (1995) noted several common factors amongst “effective” evaluation systems. Within the factors exist several of the components stated throughout this literature review. They include, but are not limited to: a clear purpose for the evaluation, evaluator training, meaningful assessments, and trust between administrator and faculty. These components have an impact on the teacher evaluation as well (Machell, 1995).

Conclusion

Daley and Kim (2010) exemplify some of the more important aspects to consider when selecting and implementing a teacher evaluation system.

Thus, one would also expect a useful evaluation system to provide constructive, real-time feedback to teachers for professional growth during the school year in
a context of applied, on-site teamwork. And there should be evidence that the quality of teaching actually improves over time (pp. 38-39).

While this seems accurate, quality teaching must be learned and practiced from the beginning. The need for teacher preparatory programs to incorporate the new model(s) into the curriculum and evaluator feedback needs to be impactful. Changing a system where there is a negative perception by the recipient due to a top-down approach, as noted by Stronge and Tucker (1999), are shown to have a lesser impact than when active teacher participation is employed.
Chapter Three: Research Design

Introduction

As a result of receiving Race to the Top (RTTT) funding, changes were recently implemented with regards to the teacher evaluation system in New York State. Historically, teacher observations were the primary tool used to evaluate teacher performance; however the new Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) plan now requires the utilization of student scores on standardized tests or district approved pre- and post- assessments as an additional means of evaluating a teacher’s effectiveness in the classroom (Engage NY, n.d.). While teacher observations have been used as an integral part of growth and reflection for novice and veteran teachers alike, it is less clear how teachers can utilize student test scores to improve their practice.

Research Paradigm

An interpretivist lens was selected as the guiding framework for this research. According to Creswell (2013) utilizing an interpretivist approach, more specifically a social constructivist approach, demonstrates how individuals make subjective and personal connections to their learning resulting in multiple realities. This approach was beneficial to this study in that the researcher was more inclined to rely on the participants to construct and understand the learning that has occurred as a result of their own personal experiences with the process. To further justify the selection of an interpretivist framework, the work of Ponterotto (2005) was also applicable. The selection of an interpretivist framework as opposed to a post-positivist framework was relevant to this study because the research was not interested in providing an explanation for the phenomenon, nor was the researcher interested in examining a cause and effect relationship between the phenomena examined within this study. Rather, the research was
more concerned with understanding the personal experiences held by each participant. Furthermore, because of the nature of this research study, the researcher was interested in utilizing a smaller sample size; therefore, the focus needs to be on a more qualitative, constructivist/interpretative approach rather than a quantitative and post-positivist approach. In this particular research study, the experiences and perceptions of the participants were a main focal point in the data collection process and it was their lived experiences with the APPR process that were explored, thus again enhancing the reasons for using a qualitative approach (Lincoln & Guba, 2000).

Research Design

A qualitative study design was chosen for this study as it aligned with both the defined purpose of this study and an interpretivist paradigm. Features of qualitative design include natural setting, researcher as key instrument, multiple sources of data, participants’ meanings, emergent design, interpretive and holistic account (Creswell, 2013). Each characteristic is essential to the function of a qualitative study and must provide the researcher with a guide to conduct their study. The interviews were conducted within the buildings where the classroom is located for each participant. This particular aspect was especially important as part of the classroom observation is geared toward the classroom environment; therefore the natural setting provides both justification for the methodology and allows the researcher to gather additional data through probative questions, if applicable. The importance of the natural setting lends itself nicely to the researcher as a key participant as the researcher may utilize the setting to obtain additional information through the use of the interview questions. In addition, in order to conduct the research for this study, the researcher used the APPR contract, the interview process, and personal memos to ascertain the desired information. Using these multiple sources allowed
the researcher to gather information from a variety of sources and consider several aspects when formulating categories and themes without using preconceived notions with regards to the information. It has been stated prior that the researcher was interested in the individual perceptions of each participant and that their personal meanings and experiences played a vital role in developing the themes that emerged as a result of this study. This characteristic of qualitative inquiry was essential to this study because the individual experiences of each participant guided the interviews and allowed multiple perspectives to surface. Additionally, the researcher cannot discount their own background and how that influences the interpretation of the collected data. This notion is detailed further in the hermeneutic section of the research tradition. Lastly, as stated in the prior section, the desire to not examine the cause and effect relationship but rather to acknowledge the multiple factors that influence the phenomena are pertinent to this study. In summation, a qualitative design allows for the various perspectives and lived experiences of the teachers reflecting on their journey through learning the new APPR regulations.

**Research Tradition**

When considering the aforementioned information and the fact that the researcher was primarily interested in the study of personal experiences as they relate to the teacher evaluation process, an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) approach made a great deal of sense (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009).

The theoretical underpinnings of IPA research date back to the mid 1990’s and were introduced in a paper written by Smith. This new approach centered on developing a research method that was directly applicable to the study of psychology. Since IPA was introduced, the applications of this methodology have expanded into other disciplines while still remaining
strongly grounded in the psychological foundations upon which it was formulated. The theoretical framework of the IPA methodology was focused on three philosophical traditions; phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiography (Smith et al., 2009).

Phenomenology rooted itself in the desire to comprehend human experiences and has four major philosophers that are associated with this style of research. Husserl, one of the primary philosophers, was interested in bringing the research back to a more natural state and used phrases like “intentionality” and “consciousness” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 13) within the confines of his research. A primary concern of Husserl was to examine the entire experience rather than focusing on the final outcome. This concern was noted in the process of separating from and then reflecting on the experience which is being examined. Heidegger, a disciple of Husserl, took the foundations set forth by Husserl and extended them in both the phenomenological and hermeneutics frameworks. One major contribution of Heidegger was the notion of “intersubjectivity” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 17) and this refers to the multi-faceted connection of the individual with the experience. Merleau-Ponty and Sartre are the last two philosophers associated with the foundations in IPA research. Both of these philosophers continue the work of Husserl and Heidegger while adding their own individual aspects in relation to this methodology. A major contribution of Merleau-Ponty was that while one can empathize with the experiences of another, no one can actually understand the experience because of the personal connection with each lived experience. Sartre, on the other side, explored the concept of “nothingness” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 19) and stated that what is not seen and examined is as important as what is present. This is relevant to the prior concepts associated with Merleau-Ponty because as people travel through life there is just as much, if not more, attention paid to what is expected in comparison to what actually exists (Smith et al., 2009).
Hermeneutics is the second foundational framework of IPA research and this notion corresponds to the interpretation of the experiences and is associated with three philosophers: Schleiermacher, Heidegger, and Gadamer. Schleiermacher contends that the voice of the analyzer offers a unique perspective and provides a personal frame for the research. The language and the structures used by the writer can often provide shape for the research and the interpretation of that research. Heidegger asserts that interpretation cannot be a standalone perception. The prior experiences of the other influences the interpretation of the lived experience and for this Heidegger uses the phrase “fore-conception” (Smith et al, 2009, p. 25). Lastly, Gadamer, concentrates his attention on the past and the present interpretation of the experience. The focus of allowing the preconceived and the developing interpretations to form a new connection with the experience is essential to the overall IPA process (Smith et al., 2009).

Idiography, the final component of IPA research is attentive to the specific rather than the populace. This statement is not to say that an individual is the focus of the research, but rather the relationship that exists between the individual and the world around that experience. This component explains why the selection of participants is purposeful and may only involve a small, select number of individuals especially since the phenomenon is as essential as the participants who have experienced that phenomenon (Smith et al., 2009).

Research Question

Using the lens of Schön’s (1987) reflection-on-action theory, this study explored teacher perceptions towards the new evaluation system in a small, rural school district in upstate New York and how these teachers made sense of the evaluation data provided to them to enhance the quality of their instruction and towards the end of improving student learning by answering the following central research question: What are the experiences of teachers in a small, rural,
upstate New York school district with the Annual Professional Performance Review and how do they make sense of these experiences as it relates to informing their practice?

Participants

The research site was a Pre-K through 12 public school that employed seventy-six full time teachers. Thirty-nine teachers were employed at the elementary level while thirty-four teachers were in classrooms at the junior-senior high school level. In addition, there was a shared teacher who was employed by the Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), as well as travel teachers who worked in both building; thus, they have been included in the overall total, but are not included in the individual building totals (Secretary to the Superintendent, personal communication, 2014). The first year under the new APPR contract was the 2012-2013 academic year; therefore, the 2014-2015 school year will be the third experience with the APPR evaluative tool for the teachers in the school district.

Participants were selected through purposeful sampling. This strategy ensured that the participants for the study had direct experience with the phenomena under study, the APPR contract. Purposeful sampling is used in IPA studies to allow for participants to have a shared experience (Smith et al., 2009). The selection criteria for participants was based upon number of years in current position, grade level taught, and curriculum taught. More specifically, the researcher interviewed six teachers in the junior-senior high school building. The selected teachers instructed students in the seventh grade through twelfth grade during the 2014-2015 academic year and taught six different curricular areas. The six curricular areas are not further defined as to protect the anonymity of the participants; however, they encompass both core and non-core curricular disciplines.
To provide further definition to this selection process, the researcher interviewed a minimum of one participant with different levels of teaching experience; novice, intermediate, and veteran. The reason behind selecting three experience levels was a novice teacher is still in the initial stages of developing their classroom style(s) whereas an teacher who has been teaching for a more significant time period has a more established routine and may view the processes and their personal experiences in a different manner.

The researcher also covered a wide range of curriculum with the selected participants. Through conversations with teachers in the district, the researcher realized that some curricular area teachers felt that the Danielson Framework is less conducive to their curricular area and/or grade level taught; therefore researching the perspectives of teachers receiving observations in various disciplines was an area of interest for this study. Ultimately, the researcher selected participants from multiple disciplines and with a range of teaching experience to interview.

**Recruitment and Access**

All participation was voluntary and followed the guidelines set forth by the Internal Review Board (IRB) at Northeastern University. Purposefully selected full-time teachers who completed the APPR evaluation process during the 2014-2015 academic year were given the opportunity to participate in this study.

The researcher, with the assistance of the district office, received a list of all teachers employed by the district. Contained on this list was the names of the teachers, their tenure area and the year in which each teacher was appointed by the board of education. Additional information contained on this list was secondary areas of tenure the teacher had been granted and if any leaves of absences were taken, including when and for how long, and any prior service to the district granted to each teacher. While this list did not state specifically how many years the
teacher had been in the profession because they may have worked in another district prior to their current district, the researcher had a starting point to begin developing a list of available teachers to interview.

A secondary list, provided to the researcher, contained the contact information for the teachers employed by the district. After receiving this list, the researcher emailed teachers within the district using the district server and asked for their participation (Appendix B). After sending the initial email, the researcher contacted in person the teachers the researcher selected to be interviewed. All of the contacted teachers agreed to participate in the study. In the end, participants were selected in a manner as to allow for representation of various curricular areas, while accounting for the number of years they had worked in the teaching field.

The teachers were placed in one of three levels, a novice teacher with one to ten years work experience, a mid-level teacher with eleven to twenty years work experience, and a veteran teacher with twenty-one to thirty years work experience. Once placed in a category with respect to experience level, the researcher then verified curriculum to ensure representatives from multiple disciplines were represented in this study.

**Protection of Human Subjects**

The Northeastern University Institutional Review Board protocols were followed with regards to the protection of human subjects. The confidentiality of participant names and personal information were and will continue to be guarded. The researcher asked for a signed informed consent form from all participants (Appendix C), and all participants were allowed to exit the study if at any point in time they felt this was an appropriate action. While there was minimal risk to participants in this study, participants were referred to using pseudonyms to ensure protection of each participant’s identity (Appendix D).
Data Collection

The study used the three interview approach recommended by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) for the collection of data. The interview protocols used in this study were informed from analysis of the documentation associated with the contractual APPR plan, the literature cited in Chapter Two, and Schön’s (1987) reflection-on-action theory (Appendix E) using the approach of Rubin and Rubin (2011). This method was chosen because it allowed for a more conversational approach towards data collection in which the author can hear the data that emerges from the participants’ response in a relaxed and informal dialogue. Interviews lasted between 30 and 90 minutes and took place in a location that was convenient and desired by the participant. All interviews were digitally recorded using a Sony® ICD – PX 333 digital voice recorder.

The first segment of the interview process lasted between ten and fifteen minutes and was conducted to collect the signed informed consent of each participant. At that time, the researcher was also able to acquire accurate demographic data from each of the participants. The second segment of the interview process lasted approximately twenty to thirty minutes and involved the semi-structured interview which was designed to align with the central question presented previously. In this interview, the researcher used a list of probes and prompts to navigate the interview protocol presented in Appendix E. The final interview lasted approximately five to ten minutes and was completed as a member check. This also provided the researcher an opportunity to attain any clarifying remarks related to the data obtained in the semi-structured interview segment and contact information for future questions if needed.

Lastly, reflective research memos were collected throughout the study to record the thoughts, perceptions and biases of the researcher as they engaged with the study. These memos
were used to provide the researcher with personal notations regarding any hypothesis or relationship that has been demonstrated through the research collected. This is an important addition to this study as the researcher was able to refer back and reference important information that had been previously observed. These reflective memos were also individually referenced with a date and concept (Groenewald, 2008).

Data Storage

All of the original data was collected and stored in a locked file cabinet at the home of the researcher with back-up copies placed on a SanDisk® Cruzer Glide™ USB Flash Drive with SecureAccess™ software also stored in a locked file cabinet at the home of the researcher. The researcher was the only person with access to this cabinet and the key was kept in a separate location to ensure the highest level of security. Additionally, back-up copies of materials were stored using Google Drive on the researcher’s personal computer which is password protected and also stored at the home of the researcher. This material will be kept for a period of three years prior to being destroyed by the researcher.

Data Analysis

The interviews were transcribed using the computer software services Rev.com and examined for emerging themes. These themes were then categorized into smaller groups to create a better description of the data. This data was then re-examined for validity, reliability, and trustworthiness. Based on the relative lack of prior data on this thesis topic, the researcher selected an inductive approach to complete the data analysis. This was conducted using the multi-stage approach of Smith et al. (2009).

- **Step 1: Reading and re-reading.** In performing this step, the researcher listened to the recorded interview of each participant while reading the transcription of that interview.
Completing this step allowed the researcher to develop a sense of how the participant engaged throughout the interview process. Following the initial reading of and listening to the transcript, the researcher read and re-read the transcription which allowed the researcher to engage with the information and the participant then became the focal point of the analysis.

- **Step 2: Initial noting.** This step is designed to familiarize the analyst with the interview transcription and included two rounds of coding. The analyst began the process with open coding and, in particular, began to note comments pertaining to the descriptive, linguistic, and conceptual language used by the participant. Eventually, the analyst began to note comparisons and contrasts, nuances, and slight contradictions in what the participant said; thus beginning the second round of coding using the process of pattern coding. At this point, the analyst also began to examine critically the word choices and implicit meanings behind the statements that were made throughout the interview (Saldaña, 2013).

- **Step 3: Developing emergent themes.** As the researcher progressed towards this step, the reliance on the transcript was lessened as the focus now became reducing the data while still maintaining the integrity of the complex information. The whole and the parts were examined and a new map was then created by analytically examining the codes and data extricated in the prior steps of the analysis.

- **Step 4: Searching for connections across emergent themes.** In this step, there was a chronological map of the information presented and by using that map, the analyst then examined how these themes align. While there was not a prescriptive checklist as to how
the analyst should complete this mapping, it was important that the analyst remained open minded as to allow the other transcripts to relate with each respective interview.

- **Step 5: Moving to the next case.** This step involved completing the prior steps with the remaining sets of interviews. The process for each interview followed the same steps; however, it was imperative to allow each theme to be developed from each interview.

- **Step 6: Looking for patterns across cases.** In this final step, the researcher looked for patterns to emerge when comparing all of the transcripts. Examining similarities between the cases, as well as making connections between each case, allowed the analyst to develop a combined set of themes noted in each case respectively.

**Trustworthiness**

One of the main goals when conducting research is for the study to be considered trustworthy. That is, as stated by Lincoln and Guba (1985), whether an audience will find the outcomes of the study “worth paying attention to” (p. 290). One manner in which the researcher accounted for trustworthiness was with member checking. Upon completion of each individual interview, the researcher shared the transcribed interview with the participant in either a face-to-face setting or via personal email as this allowed the participant to make corrections to any material discussed throughout the interview process. Additionally, by providing the participant with the transcription, the opportunity existed for the participant to make any additional comments or inquiries and placed some level of responsibility for the accuracy of information on the participant as well.

Additional components of trustworthiness as stated by Lincoln and Guba (1985) are truth value, applicability, consistency, and neutrality. One manner in which the researcher accommodated the need for these measures was through the field notes and memos taken
throughout the research process. It is the referencing of these memos that assisted the researcher in accounting for credibility and trustworthiness in the research (Groenewald, 2008).

Limitations

While this study was conducted in a small, rural upstate New York district, the information may not be applicable to school districts throughout the state or extend to other states in the country. The location and size may be cause for concern. The district is small in terms of student and teacher population and these numbers may not allow for some of the information to be generalized to other districts.

Additionally, smaller districts are faced with challenges not seen in larger school systems. Certain components of the negotiated APPR contract refer to administrative judgments as a deciding factor in the termination of teachers. The issue in a smaller district is that some administrators hold multiple positions and this may also not allow for the material to be generalized to larger districts.

There is also the issue of the Danielson Framework as the evaluative tool used on the classroom observation. If a district employs another tool for classroom observations, some of the experiences noted by the teachers in this district may not apply to the other tool. Each classroom evaluative tool has inherent qualities and structures that are not seen as applicable to other methods and therefore may not be considered the best comparative tool in regards to this research.

Lastly, the principal evaluation component is a potential threat to the internal validity. When considering that the composite score of the principal was, in part, based on the ratings received by the teachers he/she evaluates, a conflict of interest may be a potential outcome. While there is no direct implication of impropriety; in the end, the evaluator becomes the
professional being evaluated. Moreover, this evaluation was based on the body of work completed by the employees under their supervision.

In conclusion, not all districts throughout New York will be able to use the data obtained by this study; however, smaller, more rural districts may find the information contained in this thesis relevant and applicable to their situation.
Chapter Four: Research Findings

The purpose of this research was to examine teacher perceptions as they relate to the lived experiences of classroom teachers in relation to the teacher evaluation process in New York. Six junior-senior high school teachers were selected using the purposeful sampling procedure in order to gain the perceptions of teachers from multiple disciplines. The questions were developed and aligned with Schön’s reflection-on-action theoretical framework. All interviews took place at the convenience of the participant; however, the specific location varied within the building where they taught. All interviews were recorded and then transcribed within a day of the interview. The central research question for the study was: What are the experiences of teachers in a small, rural, upstate New York school district with the Annual Professional Performance Review and how do they make sense of these experiences as it relates to informing their practice?

Examining teacher perceptions as they relate to the APPR process was a primary goal of this research. Three experience levels were represented by six faculty members from a small rural, upstate New York district. Moreover, these six participants represented six different disciplines for the purpose of this research. It is essential to note that all of the participants chose their pseudonyms and that their biographical information provided is extremely limited to protect their identity. What can be acknowledged is that the vast experiences represented by the participants provided the researcher with a wealth of information and personal stories.

This chapter is organized into the following sections: participant profiles, description of themes, and ultimately, a discussion of themes in relation to participants. The primary focus of each discussion point is the voice of the participant. Therefore utilizing quotations from each interview is an essential component contained within this chapter.
Participant Profiles

**Claire.** Claire has been placed in the category that represents teachers in the middle or intermediate stage of their career.

**Mr. Knight.** Mr. Knight is also a classroom teacher in the middle stage of his career and thus has been placed in the intermediate category of teaching experience.

**Stan.** Stan is in the beginning of his career and was placed in the category representing the novice stage of classroom teaching experience.

**Neil.** Neil is a veteran teacher with over twenty-one years of experience as a classroom teacher.

**Mary Laquesha.** Mary Laquesha is also a member of the veteran teacher category. She also has over twenty-one years of teaching experience.

**Desiree.** Desiree was placed in the category representing teachers at the intermediate or middle stage of their career by virtue of having under twenty-one years of classroom instruction.

Report of Participant Findings

**Claire.** Maintaining accountability while balancing the needs of her students is a goal Claire is working to achieve.

Establishing an atmosphere of family was an important factor in cultivating the classroom environment. On multiple occasions Claire mentioned the terms family and collaboration throughout her interview. This was noted by the researcher through her choice of words when referring to not only her students, but also when she was referring to her classroom. For example, “I was always on that my classroom is like our home…” and “The kids know that we are a family…” In addition, Claire made multiple references to contacting parents as often as possible. She provides her students with her school and home phone numbers and is always
willing to engage in a conversation that will promote a more positive learning environment for her students.

**Collaboration amongst colleagues provided additional support when working with APPR.** In terms of collaboration, Claire noted that colleagues from other curricular areas and other districts have been an integral part of her classroom this year, too. Claire noted that collaboration is not always easy because teachers, in general, do not always approach their classrooms in the same manner yet faculty members are willing to work together and do what is best for the students. Lastly, one of the most poignant moments that demonstrated her desire to create a collaborative environment was when Claire professed, “I just feel we are a team…” and “It’s not just me that runs the ship …” when referring to her colleagues. For the researcher, this was a clear statement about how she approaches her classroom on a daily basis.

**Stress influenced her choices when implementing changes to her classroom.** Claire also mentioned the word stress multiple times throughout the course of the interview. More specifically, “stress” was the term used by Claire when answering questions related to personal learning, the APPR process as a whole, and final reflections shared with the researcher. When discussing the evaluation, Claire noted “I do what I can do. Yes, it stresses me out.” When speaking of the prior evaluation system, it was indicated that administrators used to come in a classroom and observe a lesson in a more interactive manner, whereas now, the administrators must directly relate the classroom occurrences with a specific standard on the observation form. Claire noted their heads are more often looking down and preoccupied with "Is she doing this, look?" and qualifying their observations with observable data as opposed to the prior system of evaluation and observation. This change in procedure has influenced a more formal lesson being
taught for the observation as opposed to allowing for a more natural and hands-on approach to the observation process.

**Claire took a slower approach to classroom instruction in hopes of nurturing their learning.** Allowing time for the review process and to slow down the speed in which information is presented are other changes Claire shared. Claire reminded herself and her colleagues that time is an important factor and “you just go slow” when teaching content material to the students in her classroom. Not only is this true for the observation component in her classroom but this practice also applies to her daily activities as well. Noting her personal approach in that, “I just notice I'm slowing down more, because I've got to just ... have to realize they've got to be accountable… what we're going to do today, what did you do yesterday.” While this is in contrast to other views, Claire wanted to ensure her students had sufficient time to learn the material well and would rather take this approach with her students than have them leave her classroom with a minimal understanding of too many curricular areas. This emergent theme can be linked directly to the prior theme of stress noted in Claire’s interview especially when considering that Claire herself acknowledges that the students and the teacher are now accountable for the information provided to and retained by the students on a yearly basis.

**Finding your fit proved to be difficult when planning for and preparing curriculum.** In addition to stress and slowing down, the word difficult came up many times while interviewing Claire. Claire remarked on her personal difficulties with finding a fit between her students and the classroom observation. She also perceived that the manner in which she approaches her classroom does not fit with the components of the Danielson Framework. Claire stated, “I just feel that for the administrator coming in, especially in a classroom like I have, I think it's difficult. I think if we had our own little evaluation form …” A level of frustration was
heard by the researcher when Claire stated “I just think we’re not allowed to do what we want to do. Like hands-on things.” Another concern for Claire is the desire to have student driven lessons when using the Danielson Framework for the observation tool. She acknowledged that her student population has a difficult time carrying out this type of performance and in order to accomplish classroom tasks she has to create student groupings or initiate the classroom discussion herself.

A genuine concern for her students was a primary focus when discussing the teacher evaluation system and how it affected her classroom. Claire stated, “I've been very blessed this year. They're great students. They're absolutely wonderful human beings. I need to be worried about my students being happy and being safe and learning something, and that their parents are happy.” And “Deep in my heart, I feel that every day the kids want to come to school and that's all that matters.” Once again noting Claire takes time to review the classroom material and connect the themes that are learned to one another. She adjusts her plans to connect what her students are learning today with what they learned yesterday and how that will relate to tomorrow’s lesson are all extra components that are built in to each lesson and unit plan. These statements also relate to the themes of creating a family-like environment and a slowed down approach to her lessons while also connecting and showing the respect she has for her classroom, her students, and her environment.

Accountability played a major role in the classroom when APPR is a consideration. Claire’s unequivocally stated the she does not have an issue with being held accountable for her performance and expects the same of her students. Her statement “I don't think it's bad that we're held accountable, obviously.” was a clear acknowledgement of her willingness to participate in the evaluation process; however, she also recalled the prior system saying “We had that
(accountability) before. We could either pick to have the principal come and do observations per our contract, or do something else.” As far as her students are concerned, she states “I've got to just ... have to realize they've got to be accountable.” This observation is crucial for the performance of the students and the teacher.

**All of the extra responsibilities connected to APPR created an overwhelming experience for Claire.** When asked to describe APPR in one word Claire chose extra. When asked why that was her choice she stated “because I think it’s extra work, extra worry, extra things we need to think about.” The perceptions that Claire has associated with APPR when coupled with the descriptive word choice of extra allowed the researcher to connect all of the themes together and hear the concern and trepidation Claire has felt and will continue to feel throughout this ongoing process.

In analyzing the data obtained during the interview with Claire, it was evident, to the researcher, that she is not a supporter of the manner in which the teacher evaluation system was implemented. That being said, while Claire did acknowledge an understanding of the reasons behind the requirement of an evaluation system, she also stated she found it difficult to fit into a checklist of prescriptive expectations. This especially seemed to be a concern when contemplating the accountability associated with herself and her students.

**Mr. Knight.** While Mr. Knight, understands the need for teacher evaluation he finds the current system impedes his ability to implement cooperative learning and his overall teaching philosophy.

**The testing component of APPR compelled Mr. Knight to change his student assessment methodology.** Mr. Knight stated in his interview that one of the biggest changes he has made as a result of APPR is the testing component. For example, he stated “Probably the
biggest adjustments have been the pre-tests and post-tests. I never gave a pre-test before. I've never usually tested anyway.” These changes acknowledge his past practices and that he traditionally approached his classroom using a more hands-on technique; however, as a result of APPR he had to change his approach in regards to grading and testing. Additionally, this new approach created the need for summative assessments and has restricted his ability to continue that hands-on tradition in his classroom. This was noted when he stated “getting students ready for that final post-test” is a priority at the end of the year. This final post-test is used in conjunction with the pre-test given to each student at the beginning of the year for his SLO students, in order to assess student growth. Admittedly, these were strategies never used as a means for student assessment in his classroom before the introduction of APPR.

**Taking time to review benefited both students and teachers.** The review time acknowledged by Mr. Knight was one that he also correlated with the emergent theme of testing. Preparing his students for his summative assessment is another large change noted by Mr. Knight when he stated “I spend much more time at the end of the semester reviewing…” Therefore, when the end of his courses are approaching, he increases the time spent reviewing with his students. That being said, reviewing with his students is not the only review process Mr. Knight experienced. He also noted that personally, he has spent more time reflecting on his teaching. The manner in which he teaches the lesson in class and making certain he is “doing it in the best way” for his students and himself have become focal points for his classroom performance overall. Mr. Knight also commented that, “it's kind of made me go back and rethink about things that I teach and the way in which I do it.” Taking this time to reflect on what you are doing while with your students and to ensure that you are providing your students with the best
educational atmosphere are qualities that Mr. Knight has recognized as having a direct
correlation with the APPR process.

Reaching out to colleagues connected coworkers and curriculum. Mr. Knight another
also felt the need to collaborate and connect with other teachers in his curricular area. He noted
this was especially important when creating the post-test or summative assessment administered
to his students at the completion of the course. Speaking with other colleagues and “bouncing
ideas off each another” was a technique Mr. Knight believed was essential to the process. The
culmination of this communication between Mr. Knight, colleagues from other districts, and
prior colleagues influenced the final copy of his student post-assessment for approval by the
district as Mr. Knight sought their insight and expertise prior to that final submission.

The top down implementation strategy influenced Mr. Knight’s view of APPR.
Phrases like “forced upon us,” “dictated for us,” and “have to follow the parameters and do
what’s asked of us” were three phrases that came up while discussing the APPR process. The
utilization of these phrases came up especially when discussing how he made decisions about
what changes to incorporate in his classroom post APPR. It was evident to the researcher that
these phrases convey his negative belief with regards to the implementation of the process as a
whole. While Mr. Knight acknowledged that he does not disagree with the idea behind APPR
and the evaluation of teachers, he also openly admitted that he is not pleased with the
implementation strategies and that he is not certain the process is accomplishing what it was
designed to do when the system was initially put into place.

The classroom observation process resulted in methodological changes to daily
operations. On a daily basis, it was brought up that very few procedures and methodologies
have changed. That said, when it came to the observation component, a more “formal”
classroom atmosphere has been presented. The perceived need to make certain all of the requirements are being observed caused Mr. Knight to switch things up and employ a less hands-on approach to his classroom on observation day. He likened the observation component to a “kind of dog and pony show” in which the teacher employs strategies and methodologies not normally used during a normal class day in order to fit in to what he perceives the evaluator is looking to see. For example, Mr. Knight indicated he might ask a few more questions at the beginning of the class to engage the students on an introductory level or he may take more time at the end of the class to review what was taught during that class period.

Mr. Knight likened his perception of the APPR process to tedious work. When the researcher asked Mr. Knight to summarize the APPR process in one word, he chose tedious. This word choice is reflective of his feelings toward requiring teachers to do extra work that is unwarranted. Stating, “There's a lot of formal things that I don't know if are necessary. It just seems like a lot of extra work, and for me, that extra work when it's not really warranted, in my idea, to me, seems tedious.” Additionally, he noted that the process requires “jumping through hoops” in order to attain a high score and with those requirements came a great deal of additional work on the part of the teacher.

Mr. Knight focused a significant amount of his comments on assessing his students’ knowledge and learning. It was stated on multiple occasions that his preference is to allow his students to have a more hands-on approach to learning and he does not feel this system affords him (and his students) that opportunity. The testing component has, in his view, shaped the learning environment in his classroom and not necessarily in a manner that he appreciates.

Stan. Even though Stan acknowledges the need for testing, he believes integrating student interests into the classroom promotes discussions and student learning.
Expectations and reality yielded different meaning for different teachers. Stan felt that while he does not like the APPR process as a whole, “It's not as bad as I thought it was going to be, because I heard from more mature teachers that the sky was falling at times.” As a relatively new teacher, Stan had very little practice with the prior system of evaluation; thus, some of his conversations with other professionals played an integral part of his initial opinions of APPR. Stan explained that while he understood the need for the system to be in place, he would like to see a more equitable evaluation where students are the focal point and blame takes a back seat to the population he is there to serve.

Student interests were a distant focal point for classroom instruction. Stan expressed his desire to incorporate student interests into his lessons. Unfortunately, after a period of time in the classroom, Stan realized that the time factor would not allow him to delve as deeply into those discussions as he would like. When asked about making classroom adjustments, Stan noted “I kind of went away from what I thought would be a good learning experience to make sure that I get scored well enough.” He also stated “there have been times where I would have liked to have gone into more depth on specific topics with the kids because it was interesting to them and it seemed like it presented itself well for a project, but because we have to cover certain things that the kids are going to be tested on at the end of the year, I did not do those projects.” Furthermore, when discussing the learning environment within his classroom, Stan, once again, reiterated his inclination to design some more project-based lessons that encompass the vast interests of his student population into his curriculum; thus leading to a more engaged classroom.

Following a schedule was challenging when balancing needs and desires. Stan also noted on more than one occasion he wished he had time to digress and integrate additional learning opportunities for his students into his classroom. He revealed that the main factor in not
accomplishing this task was that he was “trying following a strict schedule.” This scheduling conflict also concerned Stan when discussing his overall reflection on the APPR process. This scheduling issue was further chronicled by Stan when he identified his displeasure with the effects being measured had on his classroom because this measurement intruded on “the way kids learn and the enjoyment that they could have in the classroom.”

**Test procedures produced a significant change in the classroom.** When asked about how decisions were made about what changes to incorporate in his classroom, Stan replied “It was just a lot of test-based stuff.” Based on prior practice Stan had designed his tests using “a lot of short response writing as well as multiple choice questions” that he individually developed. However, realizing that his students needed to be prepared for next year's Regents Examination, he decided to add more multiple choice questions that were taken from past Regents tests. Moreover, he began to discuss the Regents and consistently referred back to those examinations when reviewing for his tests. Stan also indicated his belief that these past Regents Examinations did not incorporate as high-level thinking as it could thus affecting student learning and preparation by stating “I used a lot of old regents questions, which I don't think are as high level thinking as it could be. I did it because I'm kind of playing to the test.”

**Connecting APPR with activities outside the classroom aided in establishing a rapport with students.** Stan has an enthusiasm for getting to know his students and being involved in their lives. This was evident when he discussed how much he volunteered and interacted with his students along with his explicit statement, “I like to be involved in the student's lives.” In particular, Stan associated his interaction with his students to the Danielson Framework and this occurred in two separate instances. The first instance was when he referenced Domain 4 of the rubric and his outside participation in activities related to the school,
but not necessarily the classroom. He acknowledged this involvement by asking himself “Are you doing outside activities?” The second reference came when asking about the Danielson Framework as a whole. “Overall I like Danielson.” He made this statement because he liked how the framework included, yet went beyond deciphering if your students know the correct answer to include the interactions you have with your students and how the classroom environment can affect their learning.

**Concern for students after they leave the academic setting and enter “the real world” was expressed.** When choosing the word Stan associated with his description of the APPR process, he elected concerning. This word summed up all of his perceptions; that he explained his choice by saying, “There's been a lot of times where I’ve worried about how the kids are going to do at the end of the year. I've worried about my effectiveness, not just on the test, but am I actually teaching the kids things that they can take to the real world, and how well everything is going.”

The researcher recognized Stan’s aspirations to incorporate the interests of his students into his classroom. Much to his dismay, a variety of issues made him feel as though he could not attain the level of student interest he would prefer. Testing and time were two of the major factors Stan noted in his inability to include more student interests in the curriculum.

**Neil.** Acknowledging the need for evaluations yet disagreeing with the generic approach of the APPR process was a concern for Neil as he worked through the educational components.

**Preparation is a key component in preparing for the APPR classroom observation.** When discussing the observational component of the APPR process and making adjustments, Neil remarked that scheduling was a factor in the system. Neil recognized all teachers invest a great deal of time and effort in creating the lesson plan that is to be observed, and then due to a
scheduling conflict or unforeseen circumstances that observation had to be postponed or even
cancelled, caused a great deal of distress. This scheduling snafu then creates a snowball effect --
the teacher had to revise their schedule or create another lesson at a different point in time with
the students paying the price. Furthermore, Neil exercised the reverse chronological method
when planning and preparing his lessons. “I would kind of work backwards from the APPR
documentation, and, you know, design my lessons based on that.” This statement acknowledges
using the APPR tool as a guidepost, and taking the end result into consideration when preparing
the coursework and curriculum.

**APPR requirements produced an artificial feeling to the observation process.** When
considering his lesson plans, Neil noted that there is an artificial feel to the actual time the
administrator is in the classroom. For him, this is a result of attempting to cover all aspects of
the classroom evaluation rubric. As he noted, this is not necessarily an easy process because not
every lesson lends itself to demonstrate all of the components within the rubric. He assesses
each lesson to ensure that he has clearly shown, through observable means, that each rubric
component has been included in the lesson plan. Again, with a teacher’s reputation at stake, it
was vital to make certain all of the I’s were dotted and the T’s were crossed. Concurrently,
including the “buzz words,” “key phrases,” and appropriate “wait time” are also part of the
artificial feel to the observation process. Moreover, playing to the strengths of all personnel in
your classroom and utilizing a collaborative environment are two additional tools that can be
utilized in this setting.

**Teaching was considered to be an art form and not a scientific method.** Curricular
knowledge and vocabulary does not make you an effective teacher. Practice, experience, and
time are needed to develop the skills and personality associated with a teaching. Neil stated “It's
less a science and more an art, and that's why some people are just naturally better at it than others.” Therefore, while a teacher can approach the classroom in a scientific manner there are teachers who just have a natural ability to engage with students and affect the learning that transpires in a classroom setting. In terms of APPR, perhaps a one size fits all approach to the teacher evaluation system and the evaluative tool used in the classroom observation does not necessarily lend itself to a scientific conclusion. Perhaps there are other factors, more teacher or curriculum specific factors that need to be taken into consideration when determining effective teaching.

The process of APPR was not required to receive feedback on student learning. Going hand in hand with the notion that teaching is a form of art is the idea that paying attention to your students provides you with a great deal of feedback without the formality of the APPR process. After several years in the classroom Neil has developed and fine-tuned his own procedures to gain instant feedback from his students. Facial expressions, in-class formative assessments, and overall summative assessment scores have provided Neil with the quick feedback that is needed to gauge his students understanding. Stating “I don't really need someone else to tell me what I'm doing wrong and doing right, because you can see it in the faces of your students, shows that feedback can come quickly in a natural setting. This data has informed his practices and allowed him to decide whether to continue on with the lesson because his students are understanding the material or whether he needs to make changes to the lesson because there is a disconnect in the communication and understanding. Neil also noted that the feedback can come in the form of assessment data as well. “You can see it in the results from test to test or quiz to quiz.” While this is a more formal assessment, Neil utilized this type of
data to determine whether he needed to go back and review the material or whether there is a solid understanding on the part of the students.

**A new level of student interaction was introduced in classroom instruction.**

According to Neil, the new process has not affected certain areas of his classroom. Some of the examples he provided dealt with how he started his class, the expectations he set for his students, and classroom discipline; however, the same could not be said for the way his students interact with each other and the adults in the room. He acknowledged that he has, at times, taken a secondary role in the classroom by allowing the students to lead the discussions and connect with the lessons at another level. He accomplished this by “having students talk to each other more, question each other, before we brought it to a classroom discussion where I was facilitating.”

This new approach has created a more student-led classroom where he would ask them to talk with each other or partner up to discuss the material as opposed to being a teacher led atmosphere like the older system utilized. Thus APPR has assisted in students taking a more predominate role in the classroom; thus becoming more accountable for their own learning.

**Being left alone allowed Neil to develop his own impression and understanding of APPR.** Neil noted in his interview that he see himself as “the facts man.” Neil had stated that he tends to remain at a distance regarding the drama that has been associated with the APPR process. This has differed from the other participants yet Neil felt completely comfortable being left to his own devices to work through the process noting “I definitely learn best when left alone, to be honest with you.” Similarly, Neil reflects on his lessons regularly and incorporates changes on a yearly basis to try and find what works best in his curricula. Furthermore, this re-evaluation is also used to find best practices for his students and their overall performance. For
Neil, he recognizes that he connects to the evaluative changes and processes on an individual level and prefers to examine the system using that approach.

**When considering years of experience and professional growth Neil acknowledged feeling smothered by the process.** Neil chose the word smothering as his descriptor of the APPR process. Even though Neil understands the reason behind the teacher evaluation, he also noted his displeasure with the system as a whole. This was done when he stated “I know it's a strange way to put the whole process. But, like I said, many of us have jumped through a lot of hoops to get to the point where we are now, and I believe that once that last hoop has been jumped through, then we should be left alone, and our results should speak for themselves.”

Neil used a reflective process as he journeyed through the system. Neil commented about using student feedback and constant reflection to adjust the curriculum taught in his courses. The researcher also surmised that Neil associated an unnatural feeling to the classroom observation, which corresponds to the information provided throughout the literature regarding this process.

**Mary Laquesha.** Mary Laquesha experienced unease when APPR began to influence her ability to teach beyond the test and connect learning to future experiences.

**The speed in which new information is presented caused Mary Laquesha to expand her teaching techniques.** Mary Laquesha explained that due to the rapid nature of the new material that is being developed and the state is expecting to be taught, it is difficult to do everything on your own, “I know that I'm going to need some assistance.” Additionally, Mary Laquesha stated that the students are once again paying the price because teachers are struggling to keep up with all of the changes and they need time to collaborate with other colleagues to gain advice and find new ways to approach all the new material that has been developed. Once again,
facing the dilemma that “I've got to look for different avenues of finding ways to present the material that the kids are going to see” while also managing the time factor and scheduling issues has caused a great deal of stress for Mary Laquesha.

**Accounting for the student population was a requirement in implementing classroom changes.** Mary Laquesha felt that her approach was dependent upon the population of students in the classroom. She recognized that some of her classes need to be “spoon fed” the material while others were a bit more independent and could be left to work some issues out on their own. In a similar vein, the interest levels of the students were also a concern for Mary Laquesha. Noting that homework was not a priority for the students and by recognizing “They don't like to do homework,” Mary Laquesha re-designed her curriculum so the in-class work had a greater point of emphasis and made an impression on her students. Having noted these factors, Mary Laquesha associated the APPR process with a scenario of predictions. In terms of her approach to APPR, she stated “The predicting after you've had the students in your class a week is ridiculous.” As far as her approach to and outcome for this past year she noted “I was terrible at the predictions because I guess my predictions were my hopes for these kids and what I thought they were capable of doing.”

**The APPR testing parameters appeared to influence the feeling of apprehension on the part of Mary Laquesha.** For the first time in Mary Laquesha’s career, she felt as though she was “teaching to the test” and she did not like that feeling or approach. Mary Laquesha commented that “I have always taught beyond the test,” and when it came time for the students to take their summative assessment they were amply prepared and in some cases the students acknowledged the examination was “very, very simple” and that perhaps they were “over-prepared.” This year, it was not that way for Mary Laquesha. This feeling was due to a
combination of student population and the fear that if you were not performing to a certain standard you would be considered an ineffective teacher. Furthermore, this constant feeling of needing to “look over your shoulder” affected Mary Laquesha’s stress level and in turn her overwhelming need to use the summative assessments as the guiding factor for her classroom.

**Making changes on the fly was deemed important to keep the learning process moving forward.** When noting how changes were introduced and implemented in her classroom, Mary Laquesha stated she “made the changes on the fly.” She would assess student understanding and if the kids weren't getting the material, she would change her approach and start teaching in another manner. Because she “wanted to make sure that different learning styles could get the material,” using multiple techniques was not new for Mary Laquesha; however, she noticed this year perhaps she made more decisions while in the process of teaching as opposed to prior years.

**Review time did not only occur in class, but throughout the course of the day.** Mary Laquesha noticed a dichotomy in her time for review. Covering all of the material for the sake of the test became an issue because she felt review time was also essential for the success of her students. Reflecting on at what point in the year she would start the review process, Mary Laquesha noticed that because her students still needed to get through more material she was unable to start that review process at that normal time of year. This could be partially due to her need to consistently review material throughout the course in its entirety, but this also led Mary Laquesha to once again feel as though the test was dictating her teaching. In making accommodations for this time issue Mary Laquesha noted, “I always have kids in my room at lunchtime… I was more driven to make sure that they were doing their homework while they're sitting in … Or have them come up from lunch and make them sit right by me and walk them
through it.” Also when reflecting on a prior year, Mary Laquesha noted that the students in a prior year who were able to receive extended review performed at a higher level on a particular summative assessment taken at the end of this year.

Mary Laquesha questioned whether the evaluation system is the most effective manner to measure performance. Ineffective was the word choice Mary Laquesha elected when describing her perception of the APPR process. While Mary Laquesha does not disagree with the need for the teacher evaluation, she made this word choice because “…people are not teaching to the best of their abilities. They're teaching to a test, and I don't think that's the appropriate way.” When reflecting on her personal educational experiences, she realized her teachers did not preoccupy themselves with the tests, rather, they were more concerned with “helping you get the understanding that you need to be successful.”

Like Claire and the others, Mary Laquesha demonstrated a concern for the well-being of her students. Additionally, she also commented several times on the level of importance placed on the summative test. Noting that her prior experiences and educational goals do not align with this aspect of the process. Citing the need to adjust for student population, curriculum, as well as time to become familiar with the new requirements, were primary factors in her apprehensive approach to the evaluative system.

Desiree. Desiree noted a sense of unfairness and inequity when contemplating the implementation and measurement strategies of APPR.

Uncertainties were mentioned when scheduling the classroom observations. In conjunction with the APPR contract, a classroom teacher develops a lesson plan to be observed. They have spent a great deal of time and energy creating a well-designed lesson with multiple opportunities for students to engage with and learn the material, but at the last minute there has
to be a scheduling change. This is what happened with Desiree. Using prior material as a backdrop for the lesson that was to be observed “threw everything off completely.” As a result of this conflict Desiree had to present the material “out of sequence” causing frustration and forcing all the participants involved to adjust their schedules, materials, and expectations. Thankfully, according to Desiree, all participants were able to adjust to the change; nevertheless, frustration and aggravation were part of the overall process.

**Accounting for the student voice in the classroom was a process Desiree included in her classroom.** When reflecting on instructional strategies, Desiree recognized that she had created a more “student centered” atmosphere in her classroom. While she stated this was always a goal, she felt as though she was more “cognizant of it” as she progressed through the year. She also tried to influence the students to “hold themselves accountable,” and make certain “that they are actively involved.” Additionally, she employed “more specific days designated for re-teaching than I had done before.” This was accomplished using “mini lessons more so as we went throughout but now it has to be very clear to the students that we are making sure that we are re-teaching skills that some or all or whatever may have had difficulty especially after you review the data from different assessments.” Furthermore, Desiree brought strategies that she used in her upper level classes down to the other class that she taught. This provided students an opportunity to lead a classroom discussion and present their respective sides of the issue.

**Fairness and equity were not terms Desiree associated with APPR.** “In terms of APPR, I think it's a good idea overall that teachers are held accountable and that there are steps for that. However, I don't think that our current system is fair and it is stressful for me and for my colleagues because everything is not where it should be.” Desiree also commented on the unfairness that starting this year students were opting out of state assessments. From her
perspective, this created a concern of accuracy because certain students who opted out would have been at different academic levels; thus creating a system of inequity. This then led to the question “why should those teachers be penalized overall, if they are, I don't know if they will be or not based upon results that are not at all accurate?”

**Lacking viable feedback was still a concern for effecting change.** Desiree also noted an issue of receiving accurate and appropriate feedback when using a numerical system of classroom observation. While acknowledging a guideline is needed, she also noted that there is still a concern when determining what the difference is “between a three and a four.” As a teacher, you receive a number but what do you do with that number? What does that number mean? Even after having a discussion with the evaluator, there is still some confusion and you may not understand why that was your score; noting that this approach is still somewhat “nebulous and hazy.” Additionally Desiree acknowledged her willingness to be observed while also commenting on her desire to receive more suggestions for improvement rather than just a number or statement that said you did this well or you need to improve on this activity. “You know it's … whatever we get a good score, it's fine and you go from there but it doesn't do as much as I guess what I'm looking for.” She also felt, “I don't get the feedback as much as I could. If you want to get better it’s nice knowing what you're doing wrong. Tell me to focus on this specifically and then I could get better.”

**Teamwork was encouraged when working through the APPR process.** Desiree also commented on her desire to interact and engage with other colleagues in a collaborative manner. This collaboration allowed her to see a bigger picture and gain the perspectives of those teachers in different disciplines and different grade levels. While she acknowledged that she put a great deal of time and effort into working with other colleagues, she noted the reward was that this
practice afforded her the opportunity the “inform my own practice which is always good.” When relating teamwork and collegiality to APPR Desiree declares, “I think that our school honestly does a good job in terms of getting us the professional development we need to move through ...” and “I also think that through different opportunities for professional development I've been able to meet with my department more … so I think we're being provided with more opportunities and supported with more opportunities for professional development than we were before.”

**Feeling higher levels of frustration were experienced by Desiree when reflecting on the implementation of the APPR process.** Frustrating was the word provided to me by Desiree when she was asked to describe her overall perception of APPR. Considering the unfairness for all teachers and believing that certain levels are more targeted than others are primary concerns for Desiree. Providing further support of this word choice, Desiree stated “I think there's a lot of time wasted jumping through hoops that does not need to be wasted. The time should be spent developing lessons and interacting with students and all that type of thing.”

Desiree, like other participants, does not approve of the methods used in implementing the new teacher evaluation system; however, she does appreciate the opportunities she has experienced in terms of collaboration. Included in those collaborative opportunities, she noted being able to see the bigger picture and the role she plays in that picture. That said, she also commented on her desire to receive feedback that is more personalized and can provide her with a better understanding of improvements she can make to her instruction in addition to confirming what she is doing well and why it is seen in that light.

**Report of All Participant Findings**

Upon completion of analyzing the emergent themes from each participant respectively three super-ordinate themes emerged. In turn, these themes can then be linked to the original
research question and connect to the literature associated with the teacher evaluation process. Moreover, the research performed in this study aligned the response of the participants to the theoretical framework of Schön’s (1987) reflection-on-action in that each participant was asked to reflect on the actions of this past year that were associated with the APPR process and examine how those actions are now perceived after some time to absorb and interact with that information.

**Super-ordinate Themes**

1. After reflecting on their practices, the teachers are concerned about the learning experiences of their students.

2. After reflecting on their practices, the teachers identify the purpose of the teacher evaluation system, yet experience trepidation when considering how the process is practiced.

3. After reflecting on their practices, the teachers acknowledge the benefits of collaboration for themselves and their students.

In discussing the three super-ordinate themes, the information presented will include specific information taken from the participant interviews and combine that information into what was presented through the literature review. This section will include both aspects of research as recommended by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009).

Super-ordinate theme one states: After reflecting on their practices, the teachers are concerned about the learning experiences of their students. All participants acknowledged their concern in terms of creating the best learning experiences for their students and being an effective teacher. When discussing student learning, Stan stated “… am I actually teaching the kids things that they can take to the real world, and how well everything is going.” He also
commented that when using the Danielson Framework, he finds this to be a useful tool because “it does get to the heart of not necessarily if your kids know right or wrong for an answer, but how do you interact with your kids.” Desiree also noted similar concerns by referencing “I think there's a lot of time wasted jumping through hoops that does not need to be wasted. The time should be spent developing lessons and interacting with students and all that type of thing.” Mr. Knight added to the discussion when he claimed “…it's kind of made me go back and rethink about things that I teach, and the way in which I do it, and if I am really doing it in the best way for my students and for me as well.” Lastly, Mary Laquesha commented “Now, teachers don't feel they can (deal with personal situations) because, again, they have to be able to get this effective or highly effective rating because they don't want to be put on the TIP plan…”

Super-ordinate theme two states: After reflecting on their practices, the teachers identify the purpose of the teacher evaluation system; yet experience trepidation when considering how the process is practiced. Every participant remarked on their acceptance of an evaluation system; however, they all respectively commented on their skepticism of the implementation and manner in which the current system is practiced. Neil provided this synopsis when asked about his overall feelings about APPR.

“The APPR process. I understand its point for existing. There are a lot of teachers who were tenured and probably shouldn't have been tenured, and this is probably the end result of that. I particularly like our old method for teachers here who are tenured, which was a menu system versus APPR, because it gave you much more freedom to choose something in your area of interest, which could vary from year to year and it has. But that is gone now, and we are stuck with this cookie cutter type of design, and that's not my style.”

Claire’s reply to this question was in a similar vein. She provided the following answer.
I don't think it's bad that we're held accountable, obviously. We had that before. We could either pick to have the principal come and do observations per our contract, or do something else. I don't have a problem with that. The plans, I just think is just so much stressor, and just so much time waster like, ‘Oh my God, I got to get this ready.’ Now it’s like, ‘Oh my points, if I don't get ...’ Believe me, I do think I make a difference in my children's lives and that's all that matters. I don't really care about these points, but they get you so worked up, it's like, ‘Oh my God! Oh my God!’ Where before, it was like, ‘Yeah, she's going to come in and do an observation.’ Now, we're so worried about things. I need to be worried about my students being happy and being safe and learning something, and that their parents are happy. It's this number stuff that ... it just stresses, but I'm to the point where whatever happens, happens. Deep in my heart, I feel that every day the kids want to come to school and that's all that matters.

Mr. Knight felt similarly:

I feel as though it ... I'm trying to find the best way to put it ... I'm not a big fan of the way it's currently implemented. I think it's not a bad idea, but I really think that I don't know if it's really, the way it's implemented, doing what's it's supposed to do. I think that it's kind of a broken system.

Super-ordinate theme three states: After reflecting on their practices, the teachers acknowledge the benefits of collaboration for themselves and their students. The participants noticed that they increasingly utilized a network of colleagues which fostered a more collaborative system since the implementation of APPR. When planning for his testing process specifically, Mr. Knight contacted former and current colleagues to assist him with this process.

“One of the things that forced me to kind of do through APPR is making connections with fellow
“teachers in other districts” was a prime example of this new collaborative environment. This collaborative environment provides teachers an opportunity for feedback that is specific to the discipline they teach. Desiree made a connection to the APPR process stating, “I also think that through different opportunities for professional development I've been able to meet with my department more … so I think we're being provided with more opportunities and supported with more opportunities for professional development than we were before.” This reflection once again provides support for peer interaction and an opportunity to see the bigger picture and the role the teacher plays in the overall APPR fabric. Lastly, while Mary Laquesha feels comfortable in her knowledge, she also realizes that even after twenty-one plus years in the classroom setting, “You know you've got to get assistance from other people.”

Claire’s Themes

Establishing an atmosphere of family was an important factor in cultivating the classroom environment.

Collaboration amongst colleagues provided additional support when working with APPR.

Stress influenced her choices when implementing changes to her classroom.

Claire took a slower approach to classroom instruction in hopes of nurturing their learning.

Finding your fit proved to be difficult when planning for and preparing curriculum.

A genuine concern for her students was a primary focus when discussing the teacher evaluation system and how it affected her classroom.

Accountability played a major role in the classroom when APPR is a consideration.

All of the extra responsibilities connected to APPR created an overwhelming experience for Claire.
Mr. Knight’s Themes

The testing component of APPR compelled Mr. Knight to change his student assessment methodology. Taking time to review benefited both students and teachers. Reaching out to colleagues connected coworkers and curriculum. The top down implementation strategy influenced Mr. Knight’s view of APPR. The classroom observation process resulted in methodological changes to daily operations. Mr. Knight likened his perception of the APPR process to tedious work.

Stan’s Themes

Expectations and reality yielded different meaning for different teachers. Student interests were a distant focal point for classroom instruction. Following a schedule was challenging when balancing needs and desires. Test procedures produced a significant change in the classroom. Connecting APPR with activities outside the classroom aided in establishing a rapport with students. Concern for students after they leave the academic setting and enter “the real world” was expressed.

Neil’s Themes

Preparation is a key component in preparing for the APPR classroom observation. APPR requirements produced an artificial feeling to the observation process. Teaching was considered to be an art form and not a scientific method. The process of APPR was not required to receive feedback on student learning. A new level of student interaction was introduced in classroom instruction. Being left alone allowed Neil to develop his own impression and understanding of APPR. When considering years of experience and professional growth Neil acknowledged feeling smothered by the process.
Conclusions

It does not appear that the debate over the teacher evaluation system, from its purposes to its effectiveness, will cease any time in the near future. The components that determine and are associated with effective instruction and effective teachers are difficult to attain and agree upon. While effective teaching has been and will continue to be a longstanding goal for educators,

Mary Laquesha’s Themes

The speed in which new information is presented caused Mary Laquesha to expand her teaching techniques.

Accounting for the student population was a requirement in implementing classroom changes.

The APPR testing parameters appeared to influence the feeling of apprehension on the part of Mary Laquesha.

Making changes on the fly was deemed important to keep the learning process moving forward.

Review time did not only occur in class, but throughout the course of the day.

Mary Laquesha questioned whether the evaluation system is the most effective manner to measure

Desiree’s Themes

Uncertainties were mentioned when scheduling the classroom observations.

Accounting for the student voice in the classroom was a process Desiree included in her classroom.

Fairness and equity were not terms Desiree associated with APPR

Lacking viable feedback was still a concern for effecting change.

Teamwork was encouraged when working through the APPR process.

Feeling higher levels of frustration were experienced by Desiree when reflecting on the implementation of the APPR process.
politicians, parents, and students alike, the variables associated with the personnel, the tools, and the exclusive definition of this ideal seem to be unattainable. Furthermore, the tools used to measure this comprehensive system create a less than idyllic situation. The form and function of the process do not align to create a system that promotes the desired outcome. The two often utilized purposes of the evaluative process create a conflicting environment; therefore, without compromise and cooperation the desired result seems to be impossible to attain.
Chapter Five: Discussion of Research Findings

This chapter seeks to unite the research findings of the individual participants presented in Chapter four with the literature review and the theoretical framework. Also included in this chapter is a discussion of additional opportunities for future research, an action plan, and study limitations.

The summative analysis, which appears first in Chapter 4, was completed using the five step data analysis process outlined by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009). In order to gain a better view of the themes that emerged from each interview respectively and holistically, a display of each participant’s emergent themes was created and incorporated into Chapter 4. The analytical process of subsumption was used by the researcher during the data analysis. During the subsumption process, the researcher “brings together a series of related items.” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 97). While not all of the themes that will be discussed as research findings appear in the graphic organizer of emergent themes, the practice of comparing and contrasting amongst participants allowed a new map to be brought to the forefront.

Super-ordinate Themes

1. After reflecting on their practices, the teachers are concerned about the learning experiences of their students.

2. After reflecting on their practices, the teachers identify the purpose of the teacher evaluation system, yet experience trepidation when considering how the process is practiced.

3. After reflecting on their practices, the teachers acknowledge the benefits of collaboration for themselves and their students.
In discussing the three super-ordinate themes, the information presented will acknowledge information that was presented through the literature review in addition to the theoretical framework. This section will include both aspects of research as recommended by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009).

**Super-ordinate theme one states: After reflecting on their practices, the teachers are concerned about the learning experiences of their students.** Literature reports that a precise definition of effective teaching is difficult to attain (Ding & Sherman, 2006; Graham, 2007). Effective teaching encompasses multiple components that are difficult to research; however progress has been achieved in that arena. While exploring teacher effectiveness, Stronge, Ward, and Grant (2011) commented on four components related to teacher effectiveness. In their research, the four components included classroom and teacher specific traits alike. This research was furthered by Polk (2006) and Leslie-Johnson (2007).

Another aspect of the literature review that relates to this super-ordinate theme is that the purpose of the evaluation also plays a role in the overall process. Darling-Hammond et al. (1983), Popham (1988), Haefele, (1993), Peterson (2004), and Kyriakides and Demetriou (2007) posit that when using the evaluation as a means for accountability a summative format is used. On the other hand, the formative evaluation process promotes growth and improvement (Darling-Hammond et al., 1983; Popham, 1988; Haefele, 1993; Peterson, 2004). These opposing purposes create a juxtaposition. The summative process which aligns with the accountability is in direct opposition to the formative purpose of growth and improvement. Shouldn’t there be a process that can account for both purposes and aligns with a positive and beneficial outcome?

With regards to the theoretical framework, according to Schön’s (1987) theory of reflection-on-action, one of the goals in completing the reflective process is to inform and
improve future practice (Finlay, 2008). Each participant used the time to reflect on what occurred in his or her classroom throughout the year. In doing so, they wanted to ensure they were meeting the needs of their students and providing their students with the most effective and successful practices. In fact, Neil and others commented several times on the need to re-teach material to ensure all students were receiving the instruction in the best format that corresponded to their learning style. Whether this re-teaching came in the form of stylistic changes or actual material changes was dependent upon the needs of the students; however, the initial changes came as a partial result of reflecting on their classroom practices.

Additionally, Finlay (2008) and Fish and Coles (1998) connect Schön’s reflection-on-action theory to that of being flexible and adjusting practices as needed. This is connected to the classroom setting and Mary Laquesha’s statement that she made adjustment “on the fly.” In relating this theory to the world of practice, this would make sense because by virtue of her experience in the classroom environment, she should be able to adapt quickly and make the needed adjustments within a shorter timeframe than a novice teacher who may need more time to reflect on that particular situation.

**Super-ordinate theme two states: After reflecting on their practices, the teachers identify the purpose of the teacher evaluation system; yet experience trepidation when considering how the process is practiced.** Implementation, according O’Pry and Schumacher (2012) and Ovando (2001) is nearly as important as the tool used in the evaluation process. Additionally, clear communication of implementation strategies and a work environment that is viewed as a collaborative effort offer the participants a more beneficial outlook on the process (Stronge & Tucker, 1999). The top-down strategy which the current evaluative system used for implementation also provides a feeling of apprehension. When participants work in
collaboration and promote a “power with” strategy, all groups feel a sense of participation and ownership in the outcome; thus, have a vested interest in the success of the system. On the contrary, when a “power over” strategy is used, the participants feel less connected to the product and are less likely to buy into the system, which in turn produces more issues with the implementation and sustainability of the process (Stronge & Tucker, 1999).

A social constructivist approach applies to this situation in that the participants have derived their own meanings and perceptions based on their individual experiences. Creswell (2013) speculated when individuals experience a life event, they strive to make meaning from that event. This personal connection, in turn, produces multifaceted views on any given topic because each person relates to that experience on an individual basis. Being an active learner in this situation implies that the participants will build upon their existing knowledge base and continue to expand their perspectives based on their relationship with the observation system.

The theoretical framework, of Schön’s (1987) theory of reflection-on-action, is applicable in this situation since one must again be flexible as very few life occurrences are static. While this situation does not explicitly correspond to this framework, the desire to continue to evolve and adjust practices is essential. This is also evident in that this evaluation process is considered to be fluid and ever changing. The practice that was in place during the 2014-2015 academic year is in the process of changing again; thus, more adjustments are coming to the process.

**Super-ordinate theme three states: After reflecting on their practices, the teachers acknowledge the benefits of collaboration for themselves and their students.** When connecting this theme to the literature, other models used in the teacher evaluation system consider the use of collaboration and multiple methods in the overall process. This collaboration is found in both the PACES system (Ovando, 2001; Davis, Ellett, & Annunziata, 2002) and the Professional
Development System for Teacher Appraisal (PDSTA) system. The PDSTA approach also focuses on a learner-centered environment similar to the PACES system and in the research noted by Ovando (2001) appeared to have positive feedback from the teachers included in the study. While the two aforementioned systems also include the administration in the collaborative process, the positive responses when utilizing the cooperative collaboration is noted regardless of the participants. Research performed by Darling-Hammond (1986) also made recommendations for improving the teacher evaluation system. Included in her recommendations was the use of peers and colleagues from the inception of employment and throughout the tenure of the teaching career.

The theoretical framework, of Schön’s (1987) theory of reflection-on-action, is appropriate in that part of the goal is improving future practice. This reflection is considered possible when meaningful connections are made with the experience. When a situation occurs and the participants are able to use the perspectives of multiple professionals who bring different experiences to the table, the outcome can be positive and beneficial. It is through the creation of new meanings and new experiences that additional reflections transpire. By allowing colleagues to participate in the learning environment, on either an active or a passive basis, the outside experiences and perspectives of each individual are then brought to the situation. In turn, these personal experiences lend themselves to the active construction of a new outcome and new learning experiences from which one can reflect and draw new perspectives and make new meanings.

**Implications for Practice**

Utilizing a qualitative research approach was beneficial for the research conducted on the APPR process in New York because the process was recently implemented and little research
has been performed in this area. This research could provide a launching pad for a positive relationship between the teachers and the administrators within the district. In turn, this study could also open lines of communication that could aid in development of the APPR process allowing for professional growth for the teacher and a positive impact on the classroom. The newness of this process creates a void in the teacher evaluation research pertaining to New York State and APPR and could possibly benefit from a closer look at the process and product. Given the fluidity of the district APPR document, gaining the perspectives of the teacher can provide another lens through which the classroom observation system can be viewed. Additionally, researchers have not had time to collect, compile, and analyze data with regard to the new process for teacher evaluations; therefore, additional research could prove beneficial to invested parties.

By examining this topic, teachers and administrators can use the qualitative data collected to determine the different viewpoints and perceptions of the evaluation process in their respective districts. One viewpoint is that teachers are now required to be observed annually and an increased workload is a result of this contractual change. The increase in workload includes, but is not limited to, additional paperwork, meetings, and training sessions. In terms of paperwork, each teacher is now responsible for completing Domain 1 of the Danielson Framework, which generally takes about an hour or more per observation. In terms of the additional meetings, each teacher is now required to attend a minimum of two extra meetings per year with the trained evaluator. Lastly, members of the teachers’ union have attended additional training sessions annually to prepare for changes to the APPR agreement. These sessions have been conducted by outside organizations and internal trainers based on the topic and scale of presentation (District employees, personal communication, 2014). Additionally, some veteran
teachers also consider the new evaluative system to be another trend or fad in the teaching system and this opinion has influenced their impressions about the current reforms occurring in this area (District employees, personal communication, 2014).

Taking this research another step forward, a mentor system may be created so teachers can assist each other in developing skills that will aid in their development; thus benefiting teachers, administrators, and students. Creating a mentor system aids veteran and novice teachers alike. Establishing partnerships that strengthen the respective weaknesses of each teacher while introducing both teachers to different styles of classroom management and teaching techniques that can be incorporated into the classroom has the potential for promoting lasting change. Lastly, teacher retention is another main obstacle experienced by novice teachers and this bond that extends beyond the classroom creates another outlet for that novice teacher to mature and experience the joys of a life-long career.

To expand the research beyond the confines of the classroom, the information received as a result of this research may also be shared with universities that conduct teacher preparatory programs. Considering the teacher evaluation system currently implemented is one that will likely be practiced by the teachers in the process of completing the degree requirements for their teaching program the information gained could be of potential use in this venue, also. Additionally, providing pre-service teachers with a specific example of the evaluative tool and how that evaluation can be conducted may allow for alignment of classroom planning and self-reflection prior to their actual engagement with the process. This ability to align standards and practices may aid in the development of better lesson planning and preparation for classroom practice.
Lastly, boards of education and parents may also be informed as a result of this research. Another aspect of the plan is that parents are permitted to access the APPR score for the teacher their child is learning from in that academic year. Providing accurate information to the board members and the parents will also allow a concrete dialogue to occur and potentially inform the process as well. Constructing a system that aids in the development of community engagement is an additional benefit and supports the district, the students, and the community at large.

Looking forward, a researcher must be aware of the possible reactions to the study being conducted. On a small scale, the faculty and administration in the school district where the research will be performed are interested in learning more about the process and the product; therefore, due to the ongoing and constant revisions associated with the district’s APPR plan, the results could have a lasting impact on this small rural district. While the ultimate opinions of all the district staff are not currently known, the hope is that the final product of this study will be insightful and impactful. On a larger scale, because district APPR contracts are very specific to what has been agreed upon by the teachers’ union and the district, the effects of this research may or may not apply to their respective situations. There are distinct differences in processes between larger and smaller districts; thus, some of the findings will not be applicable to all districts within New York State. However, the perceptions teachers hold with regards to the evaluation process, a main focus of the research, and how to better understand the use of student data, is applicable on a larger scale.

Additionally, using the Schön reflection-on-action allows for real time changes on the part of the teacher, thus affecting the learning process of the teacher and the student alike. The investment of a teacher in the evaluation system can have a significant impact upon the process and allowing that voice to be heard may aid in developing a better understanding of the process
and the outcome. This understanding, from a practical standpoint, has the potential to be incorporated in the application of the initial process and the annual revisions necessary to incorporate changes on the part of the state, the district, or the teachers’ union respectively.

Examining the results of this research may provide critical information that can be used to maintain a healthy and continuous dialogue that will benefit the school system and provide additional information as to how to proceed in the future. Because the participants view the agreed upon APPR contract as a living and breathing document that will allow for changes both now and in the future, the responses given by the participants can provide the APPR committee with a starting point for revisions to the contractual agreement. Successful development and continual annual review of an APPR plan within the district benefits the teachers and the district as well as the community. Financial funding is a side effect of the APPR implementation process; therefore, continued financial support is another positive outcome for the community. Furthermore, if the district and the teachers continue to have an amicable relationship, students and parents also benefit from the continued successes negotiated within the school community. Lastly, other local districts will be consulting with each other about the approved APPR plans and if the results of this research impact the approved plan in the district where the research took place, other districts may benefit, extending the life of the research and hopefully resulting in positive impacts throughout the local area.

**Areas for Future Research**

The APPR process in New York State is in its infancy. The teachers and the district where the research occurred were at the beginning of what seems to be a fluid and rapidly changing landscape in education. The goal of this research was to examine the perceptions of teachers but there are many additional avenues for future research. This study, in particular,
dealt with a small, rural school district in upstate New York. The potential for other districts with a different geographical setting and/or population could have vastly different perceptions on the process. Another avenue for further research would be to examine the perceptions of the administrators who have been charged with evaluating their faculty. This process has affected their roles and duties which could potentially cause a ripple effect and provide more information and insight at another level. The legislature and state education department personnel played a pivotal role in the new process, and gaining their perspectives would be another means of furthering the research in the field.

**Action Steps**

In terms of actionable steps, it is important to note that the legislature and the state education department recently passed revisions to the system that was in place during the 2014-2015 academic year. One of the first actions that needs to be addressed is the creation of new APPR contracts for each district in the state. This process will be conducted on an individual basis in each district and involves familiarizing the plan development team members of the changes to the process. Some of the changes are non-negotiable and have already been decided, while other are up for negotiation. Those items that are able to be negotiated will require that the team members work in concert with the administration to construct the remainder of the document. Once a formula has been generated, the template can begin to come together and the review process will begin again.

This review, at the district level, will result in the final contract that is to be presented to the school association and eventually be sent for approval by the state education department. As of this moment, there are many questions that exist surrounding the new policies and procedures and these changes will also need to be addressed in the future. On a personal note, my next
action steps are to take the information I received as a result of conducting this research back to my district and assist the APPR team to construct a meaningful document that satisfies the regulations and hopefully includes some teacher feedback as well.

**Limitations of the Research**

Limitations to this study include the small number of participants interviewed. While the researcher attempted to include teachers from multiple disciplines, only a fraction of the teaching population was represented. In addition, not every discipline taught in the district was able to be represented. Due to the vast number of teachers and different disciplines taught that were not interviewed for this study, some of the results may not be generalizable to the larger population. Furthermore, the location and size of the school are two other limitations to this study. Certain negotiated items limited the policies available to the administration and the teachers’ association when considering possible solutions. These issues may not arise when there is a larger faculty and administrative pool to draw from. In terms of geography, the rural setting also limits the research study in that the issues and problems faced in a more urban setting could differ greatly, making it more difficult to generalize the results.

In the words of Neil:

I just hope that APPR continues to be an evolving process based on teacher input. They really have to listen to teachers instead of listening to just researchers who’ve never been in the classroom with high school students.

In summary, the debate over the teacher evaluation process has been ongoing for many decades, and perhaps even centuries. It seems that all parties involved would like to create an effective system that allows for students to learn and achieve at high levels while also holding
teachers accountable for the situations within their control. However, the purposes for and the
goals of the teacher evaluation process in New York do not align with each other or this goal.
The teachers interviewed acknowledge the need for an evaluative system; however, the strategies
used when implementing the process were where several issues arise.
References:


## Appendix A Danielson Framework Revised

### Domain 1: Planning and Preparation

#### 1a: Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy

In order to guide student learning, teachers must have command of the subjects they teach. They must know which concepts and skills are central to a discipline, and which are peripheral; they must know how the discipline has evolved into the 21st century, incorporating such issues as global awareness and cultural diversity, as appropriate. Accomplished teachers understand the internal relationships within the disciplines they teach, knowing which concepts and skills are prerequisite to the understanding of others. They are also aware of typical student misconceptions in the discipline and work to dispel them. But knowledge of the content is not sufficient; in advancing student understanding, teachers are familiar with the particularly pedagogical approaches best suited to each discipline.

The elements of component 1a are:

- Knowledge of content and the structure of the discipline
  
  *Every discipline has a dominant structure, with smaller components or strands, central concepts and skills*

- Knowledge of prerequisite relationships
  
  *Some disciplines, for example mathematics, have important prerequisites; experienced teachers know what these are and how to use them in designing lessons and units.*

- Knowledge of content-related pedagogy
  
  *Different disciplines have “signature pedagogies” that have evolved over time and found to be most effective in teaching.*

Indicators include:

- Lesson and unit plans that reflect important concepts in the discipline
- Lesson and unit plans that accommodate prerequisite relationships among concepts and skills
- Clear and accurate classroom explanations
- Accurate answers to student questions
- Feedback to students that furthers learning
- Inter-disciplinary connections in plans and practice
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<tr>
<th>Ia: Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy</th>
<th>Ineffective</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Highly Effective</th>
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<td>In planning and practice, teacher makes content errors or does not correct errors made by students. Teacher’s plans and practice display little understanding of prerequisite relationships important to student learning of the content. Teacher displays little or no understanding of the range of pedagogical approaches suitable to student learning of the content.</td>
<td>Teacher is familiar with the important concepts in the discipline but displays lack of awareness of how these concepts relate to one another. Teacher’s plans and practice indicate some awareness of prerequisite relationships, although such knowledge may be inaccurate or incomplete. Teacher’s plans and practice reflect a limited range of pedagogical approaches to the discipline or to the students.</td>
<td>Teacher displays solid knowledge of the important concepts in the discipline and how these relate to one another. Teacher’s plans and practice reflect accurate understanding of prerequisite relationships among topics and concepts. Teacher’s plans and practice reflect familiarity with a wide range of effective pedagogical approaches in the discipline.</td>
<td>Teacher displays extensive knowledge of the important concepts in the discipline and how these relate both to one another and to other disciplines. Teacher’s plans and practice reflect understanding of prerequisite relationships among topics and concepts and a link to necessary cognitive structures by students to ensure understanding. Teacher’s plans and practice reflect familiarity with a wide range of effective pedagogical approaches in the discipline, anticipating student misconceptions.</td>
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**Critical Attributes**

- Teacher makes content errors.
- Teacher does not consider prerequisite relationships when planning.
- Teacher’s plans use inappropriate strategies for the discipline.
- Teacher is familiar with the discipline but does not see conceptual relationships.
- Teacher’s knowledge of prerequisite relationships is inaccurate or incomplete.
- Lesson and unit plans use limited instructional strategies and some are not be suitable to the content.
- The teacher can identify important concepts of the discipline, and their relationships to one another.
- The teacher consistently provides clear explanations of the content.
- The teacher answers student questions accurately and provides feedback that furthers their learning.
- The teacher seeks out content-related professional development.
- In addition to the characteristics of “Effective”:
  - Teacher cites intra- and inter-disciplinary content relationships.
  - Teacher is proactive in uncovering student misconceptions and addressing them before proceeding.

**Possible Examples**

- The teacher says, “The official language of Brazil is Spanish, just like other South American countries.”
- The teacher says, “I don’t understand why the math book has decimals in the same unit as fractions.”
- The teacher has students copy dictionary definitions each week to help his students learn to spell difficult words.
- The teacher plans lessons on area and perimeter independently of one another, without linking the concepts together.
- The teacher plans to forge ahead with a lesson on addition with regrouping, even though some students have not fully grasped place value.
- The teacher always plans the same routine to study spelling: pre-test on Monday, copy the words 5 times each on Tuesday and Wednesday, test on Friday.
- The teacher’s plan for area and perimeter invites students to determine the shape that will yield the largest area for a given perimeter.
- The teacher realized her students are not sure how to use a compass, so she plans to practice that before introducing the activity on angle measurement.
- The teacher plans to expand a unit on civics by having students simulate a court trial.
- In a unit on 19th century literature, the teacher incorporates information about the history of the same period.
- Before beginning a unit on the solar system, the teacher surveys the class on their beliefs as to why it is hotter in the summer than in the winter.
Teachers don’t teach content in the abstract; they teach it to *students*. In order to ensure student learning, therefore, teachers must not only know their content and its related pedagogy, but the students to whom they wish to teach that content. In ensuring student learning, teachers must appreciate what recent research in cognitive psychology has confirmed: namely that students learn through active intellectual engagement with content. While there are patterns in cognitive, social, and emotional developmental stages typical of different age groups, students learn in their individual ways and may come with gaps or misconceptions that the teacher needs to uncover in order to plan appropriate learning activities. In addition, students have lives beyond school, lives that include athletic and musical pursuits, activities in their neighborhoods, and family and cultural traditions. Students whose first language is not English, as well as students with other special needs must be considered when planning lessons and identifying resources that will ensure their understanding.

The elements of component 1b are:

- Knowledge of child and adolescent development
  - *Children learn differently at different stages of their lives*

- Knowledge of the learning process
  - *Learning requires active intellectual engagement*

- Knowledge of students’ skills, knowledge, and language proficiency
  - *Children’s lives beyond school influence their learning*

- Knowledge of students’ interest and cultural heritage
  - *Children’s backgrounds influence their learning*

- Knowledge of students’ special needs
  - *Children do not all develop in a typical fashion*

Indicators include:

- Teacher gathers formal and informal information about students for use in planning instruction
- Teacher learns student interests and needs for use in planning
- Teacher participation in community cultural events
- Teacher-designed opportunities for families to share heritage
- Database of students with special needs
### 1b: Demonstrating Knowledge of Students

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<td>Teacher demonstrates little or no understanding of how students learn, and little knowledge of students’ backgrounds, cultures, skills, language proficiency, interests, and special needs, and does not seek such understanding.</td>
<td>Teacher indicates the importance of understanding how students learn and the students’ backgrounds, cultures, skills, language proficiency, interests, and special needs, and attains this knowledge for the class as a whole.</td>
<td>Teacher understands the active nature of student learning, and attains information about levels of development for groups of students. The teacher also purposefully seeks knowledge from several sources of students’ backgrounds, cultures, skills, language proficiency, interests, and special needs, and attains this knowledge for groups of students.</td>
<td>Teacher actively seeks knowledge of students’ levels of development and their backgrounds, cultures, skills, language proficiency, interests, and special needs from a variety of sources. This information is acquired for individual students.</td>
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### Critical Attributes

- Teacher does not understand child development characteristics and has unrealistic expectations for students.
- Teacher does not try to ascertain varied ability levels among students in the class.
- Teacher is not aware of student interests or cultural heritages.
- Teacher takes no responsibility to learn about students’ medical or learning disabilities.

### Possible Examples

- The lesson plan includes a teacher presentation for an entire 30-minute period to a group of 7-year olds.
- The teacher plans to give her ELL students the same writing assignment she gives the rest of the class.
- The teacher plans to teach his class Christmas carols, despite the fact that he has four religions represented amongst his students.

- The teacher’s lesson plan has the same assignment for the entire class, in spite of the fact that one activity is beyond the reach of some students.
- In the unit on Mexico, the teacher has not incorporated perspectives from the three Mexican-American children in the class.
- Lesson plans make only peripheral reference to students’ interests.

- The teacher creates an assessment of students’ levels of cognitive development.
- The teacher examines students’ previous year’s folders to ascertain the proficiency levels of groups of students in the class.
- The teacher administers a student interest survey at the beginning of the school year.

- The teacher plans his lesson with three different follow-up activities, designed to meet the varied ability levels of his students.
- The teacher plans to provide multiple project options; students will self-select the project that best meets their individual approach to learning.
- The teacher encourages students to be aware of their individual reading
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|             | • The teacher knows that some of her students have IEPs but they’re so long, she hasn’t read them yet. | • The teacher plans activities based on student interests.  
• The teacher knows that five of her students are in the Garden Club; she plans to have them discuss horticulture as part of the next biology lesson.  
• The teacher realizes that not all of his students are Christian, so he plans to read a Hanukah story in December.  
• The teacher plans to ask her Spanish-speaking students to discuss their ancestry as part of their Social Studies unit studying | levels and make independent reading choices that will be challenging, but not too difficult.  
• The teacher attended the local Mexican heritage day, meeting several of his students’ extended family members.  
• The teacher regularly creates adapted assessment materials for several students with learning disabilities. |


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<th>Domain 1: Planning and Preparation</th>
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<td>1c: Setting Instructional Outcomes</td>
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<td>NYS Teaching Standard 2 Element 4</td>
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<td>NYS Teacher Standard 5 Element 1</td>
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- Teaching is a purposeful activity; even the most imaginative activities are directed towards certain desired learning. Therefore, establishing instructional outcomes entails identifying exactly what students will be expected to learn; the outcomes do not describe what students will *do*, but what they will *learn*. The instructional outcomes should reflect important learning and must lend themselves to various forms of assessment so that all students are able to demonstrate their understanding of the content. Insofar as the outcomes determine the instructional activities, the resources used, their suitability for diverse learners, and the methods of assessment employed, they hold a central place in Domain 1.

- Learning outcomes are of a number of different types: factual and procedural knowledge, conceptual understanding, thinking and reasoning skills, and collaborative and communication strategies. In addition, some learning outcomes refer to dispositions; it’s important not only for students to learn to read, but educators also hope that they will *like* to read. In addition, experienced teachers are able to link their learning outcomes with others both within their discipline and in other disciplines.

The elements of component 1c are:

- Value, sequence, and alignment
  - *Students must be able to build their understanding of important ideas from concept to concept*

- Clarity
  - *Outcomes must refer to what students will learn, not what they will do, and must permit viable methods of assessment*

- Balance
  - *Outcomes should reflect different types of learning: such as knowledge, conceptual understanding, and thinking skills*

- Suitability for diverse students
  - *Outcomes must be appropriate for all students in the class*

Indicators include:

- Outcomes of a challenging cognitive level
- Statements of student learning, not student activity
- Outcomes central to the discipline and related to those in other disciplines
- Permit assessment of student attainment
- Differentiated for students of varied ability
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<th>1c: Setting Instructional Outcomes</th>
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<td>Outcomes represent low expectations for students and lack of rigor, nor do they all reflect important learning in the discipline. Outcomes are stated as activities, rather than as student learning. Outcomes reflect only one type of learning and only one discipline or strand, and are suitable for only some students.</td>
<td>Outcomes represent moderately high expectations and rigor. Some reflect important learning in the discipline, and consist of a combination of outcomes and activities. Outcomes reflect several types of learning, but teacher has made no attempt at coordination or integration. Most of the outcomes are suitable for most of the students in the class based on global assessments of student learning.</td>
<td>Most outcomes represent rigorous and important learning in the discipline. All the instructional outcomes are clear, written in the form of student learning, and suggest viable methods of assessment. Outcomes reflect several different types of learning and opportunities for coordination. Outcomes take into account the varying needs of groups of students.</td>
<td>All outcomes represent rigorous and important learning in the discipline. The outcomes are clear, written in the form of student learning, and permit viable methods of assessment. Outcomes reflect several different types of learning and, where appropriate, represent opportunities for both coordination and integration. Outcomes take into account the varying needs of individual students.</td>
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**Critical Attributes**

- Outcomes lack rigor.
- Outcomes do not represent important learning in the discipline.
- Outcomes are not clear or are stated as activities.
- Outcomes are not suitable for many students in the class.
- Outcomes represent a mixture of low expectations and rigor.
- Some outcomes reflect important learning in the discipline.
- Outcomes are suitable for most of the class.
- Outcomes represent high expectations and rigor.
- Outcomes are related to “big ideas” of the discipline.
- Outcomes are written in terms of what students will learn rather than do.
- Outcomes represent a range of outcomes: factual, conceptual understanding, reasoning, social, management, communication.
- Outcomes are suitable to groups of students in the class, differentiated where necessary.
- In addition to the characteristics of “Effective”:
  - Teacher plans reference curricular frameworks or blueprints to ensure accurate sequencing.
  - Teacher connects outcomes to previous and future learning.
  - Outcomes are differentiated to encourage individual students to take educational risks.
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<th>Possible Examples</th>
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<tr>
<td>A learning outcome for a fourth grade class is to make a poster illustrating a poem.</td>
<td>Outcomes consist of understanding the relationship between addition and multiplication and memorizing facts.</td>
<td>One of the learning outcomes is for students to “appreciate the aesthetics of 18th century English poetry.”</td>
<td>The teacher encourages his students to set their own goals; he provides them a taxonomy of challenge verbs to help them strive for higher expectations.</td>
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<td>All the outcomes for a ninth grade history class are factual knowledge.</td>
<td>The outcomes are written with the needs of the “middle” group in mind; however, the advanced students are bored, and some lower-level students struggle.</td>
<td>The outcomes for the history unit include some factual information, as well as a comparison of the perspectives of different groups in the run-up to the Revolutionary War.</td>
<td>Students will develop a concept map that links previous learning goals to those they are currently working on.</td>
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<td>The topic of the social studies unit involves the concept of “revolutions” but the teacher only expects his students to remember the important dates of battles.</td>
<td>Despite having a number of ELL students in the class, the outcomes state that all writing must be grammatically correct.</td>
<td>The teacher reviews the project expectations and modifies some goals to be in line with students’ IEP objectives.</td>
<td>Some students identify additional learning.</td>
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<td>Despite having a number of ELL students in the class, the outcomes state that all writing must be grammatically correct.</td>
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<td>Domain 1:</td>
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<tr>
<td>1d: Demonstrating Knowledge of Resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>NYS Teaching Standard 1 Elements 5,6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>NYS Teaching Standard 2 Elements 1-6</td>
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<tr>
<td>NYS Teaching Standard 3 Elements 5,6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Student learning is enhanced by a teacher’s skillful use of resources; some of these are provided by the school as “official” materials; others are secured by teachers through their own initiative. Resources fall into several different categories: those used in the classroom by students, those available beyond the classroom walls to enhance student learning, resources for teachers to further their own professional knowledge and skill, and resources that can provide non-instructional assistance to students. Teachers recognize the importance of discretion in the selection of resources, selecting those that align directly with the learning outcomes and which will be of most use to the students. Accomplished teachers also ensure that the selection of materials and resources is appropriately challenging for every student; texts, for example, are available at various reading levels to make sure all students can access the content and successfully demonstrate understanding of the learning outcomes. Furthermore, expert teachers look beyond the school for resources to bring their subjects to life and to assist students who need help in both their academic and non-academic lives.

The elements of component 1d are:

- Resources for classroom use
  - Materials that align with learning outcomes
- Resources to extend content knowledge and pedagogy
  - Those that can further teachers’ professional knowledge
- Resources for students:
  - Materials that are appropriately challenging

Indicators include:

- District provided materials
- Range of texts
- Guest speakers
- Internet resources
- Materials provided by professional organizations
- Teacher continuing professional education courses or professional groups
- Community resources
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1d: Demonstrating Knowledge of Resources</th>
<th>Ineffective</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Highly Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher is unaware of resources for classroom use, for expanding one’s own knowledge, or for students available through the school or district.</td>
<td>Teacher displays basic awareness of resources available for classroom use, for expanding one’s own knowledge, and for students through the school, but no knowledge of resources available more broadly.</td>
<td>Teacher displays awareness of resources available for classroom use, for expanding one’s own knowledge, and for students through the school or district and external to the school and on the Internet.</td>
<td>Teacher’s knowledge of resources for classroom use, for expanding one’s own knowledge, and for students is extensive, including those available through the school or district, in the community, through professional organizations and universities, and on the Internet.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Critical Attributes

- The teacher only uses district-provided materials, even when more variety would assist some students.
- The teacher does not seek out resources available to expand his/her own skill.
- Although aware of some student needs, the teacher does not inquire about possible resources.
- The teacher uses materials in the school library, but does not search beyond the school for resources.
- The teacher participates in content-area workshops offered by the school, but does not pursue other professional development.
- The teacher locates materials and resources for students that are available through the school, but does not pursue any other avenues.
- Texts are at varied levels.
- Texts are supplemented by guest speakers and field experiences.
- Teacher facilitates Internet resources.
- Resources are multi-disciplinary.
- Teacher expands knowledge with professional learning groups and organizations.
- Teacher pursues options offered by universities.
- Teacher provides lists of resources outside the class for students to draw on.

### Possible Examples

- For their unit on China, the students accessed all of their information from the district-supplied textbook.
- Mr. J is not sure how to teach fractions, but doesn’t know how he’s expected to learn it by himself.
- A student says, “It’s too bad we can’t go to the nature center when we’re doing our unit on the environment.”
- For a unit on ocean life; the teacher really needs more books, but the school library only has three for him to borrow.
- The teacher knows she should learn more about teaching literacy, but the school only offered one professional development day last year.
- The teacher thinks his students would benefit from hearing about health safety from a professional; he contacts the school nurse to visit his classroom.
- The teacher provides her 5th graders a range of non-fiction texts about the American Revolution; no matter their reading level, all students can participate in the discussion of important concepts.
- The teacher took an online course on Literature to expand her knowledge of great American writers.
- The teacher distributes a list of summer reading materials that would help prepare his 8th graders transition to high school.
- The teacher is not happy with the out-of-date textbook; his students will critique it and write their own text for social studies.
- The teacher spends the summer at Dow Chemical learning more about current research so she can expand her knowledge base for teaching Chemistry.
- The teacher matches students in her Family and Consumer Science class with local businesses; the students spend time shadowing employees to understand how their classroom skills might be used on the job.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain 1: Planning and Preparation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1e: Designing Coherent Instruction</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NYS Teaching Standard 2 Elements 1-3, 5, 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designing coherent instruction is the heart of planning, reflecting the teacher’s knowledge of content and the students in the class, the intended outcomes of instruction, and the available resources. Such planning requires that educators have a clear understanding of the state, district, and school expectations for student learning, and the skill to translate these into a coherent plan. It also requires that teachers understand the characteristics of the students they teach and the active nature of student learning. Educators must determine how best to sequence instruction in a way that will advance student learning through the required content. It requires the thoughtful construction of lessons that contain cognitively engaging learning activities, the incorporation of appropriate resources and materials, and the intentional grouping of students. Proficient practice in this component recognizes that a well-designed instruction plan addresses the learning needs of various groups of students; one size does not fit all. At the distinguished level the teacher plans instruction that takes into account the specific learning needs of each student and solicits ideas from students on how best to structure the learning. This plan is then implemented in Domain 3.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The elements of component 1e are:
- **Learning activities**
  - *Instruction designed to engage students and advance them through the content*
- **Instructional materials and resources**
  - *Appropriate to the learning needs of the students*
- **Instructional groups**
  - *Intentionally organized to support student learning*
- **Lesson and unit structure**
  - *Clear and sequenced to advance students’ learning*

Indicators include:
- Lessons that support instructional outcomes and reflect important concepts
- Instructional maps that indicate relationships to prior learning
- Activities that represent high-level thinking
- Opportunities for student choice
- The use of varied resources
- Thoughtfully planned learning groups
- Structured lesson plan
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical Attributes</th>
<th>Ineffective</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Highly Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning activities are boring and/or not well aligned to the instructional goals.</td>
<td>Learning activities are moderately challenging.</td>
<td>Learning activities are matched to instructional outcomes.</td>
<td>In addition to the characteristics of “Effective”:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials are not engaging or do not meet instructional outcomes.</td>
<td>Learning resources are suitable, but there is limited variety.</td>
<td>Activities provide opportunity for higher-level thinking.</td>
<td>Activities permit student choice.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional groups do not support learning.</td>
<td>Instructional groups are random or only partially support objectives.</td>
<td>Teacher provides a variety of appropriately challenging materials and resources.</td>
<td>Learning experiences connect to other disciplines.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson plans are not structured or sequenced and are unrealistic in their expectations.</td>
<td>Lesson structure is uneven or may be unrealistic in terms of time expectations.</td>
<td>Instructional student groups are organized thoughtfully to maximize learning and build on student strengths.</td>
<td>Teacher provides a variety of appropriately challenging resources that are differentiated for students in the class.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The plan for the lesson or unit is well structured, with reasonable time allocations.</td>
<td>Lesson plans differentiate for individual student needs.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**1e: Designing Coherent Instruction**

The series of learning experiences is poorly aligned with the instructional outcomes and does not represent a coherent structure. The activities and are not designed to engage students in active intellectual activity and have unrealistic time allocations. Instructional groups do not support the instructional outcomes and offer no variety.

Some of the learning activities and materials are suitable to the instructional outcomes, and represent a moderate cognitive challenge, but with no differentiation for different students. Instructional groups partially support the instructional outcomes, with an effort at providing some variety. The lesson or unit has a recognizable structure; the progression of activities is uneven, with most time allocations reasonable.

Teacher coordinates knowledge of content, of students, and of resources, to design a series of learning experiences aligned to instructional outcomes and suitable to groups of students. The learning activities have reasonable time allocations; they represent significant cognitive challenge, with some differentiation for different groups of students. The lesson or unit has a clear structure with appropriate and varied use of instructional groups.

Plans represent the coordination of in-depth content knowledge, understanding of different students’ needs and available resources (including technology), resulting in a series of learning activities designed to engage students in high-level cognitive activity. These are differentiated, as appropriate, for individual learners. Instructional groups are varied as appropriate, with some opportunity for student choice. The lesson’s or unit’s structure is clear and allows for different pathways according to diverse student needs.
### Possible Examples

- After memorizing the parts of the microscope, the teacher plans to have his 9th graders color in the worksheet.
- Despite having a textbook that was 15 years old, the teacher plans to use that as the sole resource for his Communism unit.
- The teacher organizes her class in rows, seating the students.
- After the mini-lesson, the teacher plans to have the whole class play a game to reinforce the skill she taught.
- The teacher found an atlas to use as a supplemental resource during the geography unit.
- The teacher always lets students self-select their working groups because they behave better when they can choose who they want to sit with.
- The teacher reviews her learning activities with a reference to high level “action verbs” and rewrites some of the activities to increase the challenge level.
- The teacher creates a list of historical fiction titles that will expand her students’ knowledge of the age of exploration.
- The teacher’s unit on ecosystems lists a variety of high level activities in a menu; students choose those that suit their approach to learning.
- While completing their projects, the teacher’s students will have access to a wide variety of resources that she has coded by reading level so they can make the best selections.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ineffective</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Highly Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>alphabetically; she plans to have students work all year in groups of four based on where they are sitting.</td>
<td>• The teacher’s lesson plans are nicely formatted, but the timing for many activities is too short to actually cover the concepts thoroughly.</td>
<td>• The teacher plans for students to complete projects in small groups; he carefully selects group members based on their ability level and learning style.</td>
<td>• After the cooperative group lesson, students will reflect on their participation and make suggestions for new group arrangements in the future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The teacher’s lesson plans are written on sticky notes in his grade book; they indicate lecture, activity, or test.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• The teacher reviews lesson plans with her principal; they are well structured with pacing times and activities clearly indicated.</td>
<td>• The lesson plan clearly indicates the concepts taught in the last few lessons; the teacher plans for his students to link the current lesson outcomes to those they previously learned.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Good teaching requires both assessment of learning and assessment for learning. Assessments of learning ensure that teachers know that students have learned the intended outcomes. These assessments must be designed in such a manner that they provide evidence of the full range of learning outcomes; that is, different methods are needed to assess reasoning skills than for factual knowledge. Furthermore, such assessments may need to be adapted to the particular needs of individual students; an ESL student, for example, may need an alternative method of assessment to allow demonstration of understanding. Assessment for learning enables a teacher to incorporate assessments directly into the instructional process, and to modify or adapt instruction as needed to ensure student understanding. Such assessments, although used during instruction, must be designed as part of the planning process. Such formative assessment strategies are ongoing and may be used by both teachers and students to monitor progress towards the understanding the learning outcomes.

The elements of component 1e are:
- Congruence with instructional outcomes
  *Assessments must match learning expectations*
- Criteria and standards
  *Expectations must be clearly defined*
- Design of formative assessments
  *Assessments for learning must be planned as part of the instructional process*
- Use for planning
  *Results of assessment guide future planning*

Indicators include:
- Lesson plans indicate correspondence between assessments and instructional outcomes
- Assessment types are suitable to the style of outcome
- Variety of performance opportunities for students
- Modified assessments are available for individual students as needed
- Expectations clearly written with descriptors for each level of performance
- Formative assessments are designed to inform minute-to-minute decision-making by the teacher during instruction
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If: Designing Student Assessments</th>
<th>Ineffective</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Highly Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment procedures are not congruent with instructional outcomes; the proposed approach contains no criteria or standards. Teacher has no plan to incorporate formative assessment in the lesson or unit, nor any plans to use assessment results in designing future instruction.</td>
<td>Some of the instructional outcomes are assessed through the proposed approach, but others are not. Assessment criteria and standards have been developed, but they are not clear. Approach to the use of formative assessment is rudimentary, including only some of the instructional outcomes. Teacher intends to use assessment results to plan for future instruction for the class as a whole.</td>
<td>Teacher’s plan for student assessment is aligned with the instructional outcomes; assessment methodologies may have been adapted for groups of students. Assessment criteria and standards are clear. Teacher has a well-developed strategy for using formative assessment and has designed particular approaches to be used. Teacher intends to use assessment results to plan for future instruction for groups of students.</td>
<td>Teacher’s plan for student assessment is fully aligned with the instructional outcomes, with clear criteria and standards that show evidence of student contribution to their development. Assessment methodologies have been adapted for individual students, as needed. The approach to using formative assessment is well designed and includes student as well as teacher use of the assessment information. Teacher intends to use assessment results to plan future instruction for individual students.</td>
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</table>

### Critical Attributes

- Assessments do not match instructional outcomes.
- Assessments have no criteria.
- No formative assessments have been designed.
- Assessment results do not affect future plans.
- All the learning outcomes have a method for assessment.
- Assessment types match learning expectations.
- Plans indicate modified assessments for some students as needed.
- Assessment criteria are clearly written.
- Plans include formative assessments to use during instruction.
- Lesson plans indicate possible adjustments based on formative assessment data.
- In addition to the characteristics of “Effective”:
  - Assessments provide opportunities for student choice.
  - Students participate in designing assessments for their own work.
  - Teacher-designed assessments are authentic with real-world application, as appropriate.
  - Students develop rubrics according to teacher-specified learning objectives.
  - Students are actively involved in collecting information from formative assessments and provide input.

### Possible Examples

- **The teacher marks papers on the foundation of the U.S. constitution based on grammar and punctuation; for every mistake, the grade drops from an A to a B, B to a C, etc.**
- **After the students present their research on Globalization, the teacher tells them their letter grade at the top.**
- **The district goal for the Europe unit is for students to understand geopolitical relationships; the teacher plans to have the students memorize all the country capitals and rivers.**
- **The teacher’s students received their tests back; each one was simply marked with a letter grade at the top.**
- **Mr. K knows that his students will write a persuasive essay on the state assessment; he plans to provide them with experiences developing persuasive writing as preparation.**
- **Ms. M worked on a writing rubric for her research assessment; she drew on multiple sources to be sure the levels of expectation were clearly defined.**
- **To teach persuasive writing, Ms. H plans to have her class research and write to the principal on an issue that is important to the students: the use of cell phones in class.**
- **Mr. J’s students will write a rubric for their final project on the benefits of solar energy; Mr. J has shown...**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ineffective</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Highly Effective</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>grade; when students asked how he arrived at the grade, he responds, “After all these years in education, I just know what grade to give.”</td>
<td>• The plan indicates that the teacher will pause to “check for understanding” but without a clear process of how that will be done.</td>
<td>• Mr. C creates a short questionnaire to distribute to his students at the end of class; based on their responses, he will organize them into different groups during the next lesson’s activities.</td>
<td>them several sample rubrics and they will refer to those as they create a rubric of their own.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The teacher says, “What’s the difference between formative assessment and the test I give at the end of the unit?”</td>
<td>• A student says, “If half the class passed the test, why are we all reviewing the material again?”</td>
<td>• Based on the previous morning’s formative assessment, Ms. D plans to have five students to work on a more challenging project, while she works with 6 other students to reinforce the concept.</td>
<td>• After the lesson Mr. L asks students to rate their understanding on a scale of 1 to 5; the students know that their rating will indicate their activity for the next lesson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The teacher says, “The district gave me this entire curriculum to teach, so I just have to keep moving.”</td>
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<td>• Mrs. T has developed a routine for her class; students know that if they are struggling with a math concept, they sit in a small group with the teacher during workshop time.</td>
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</table>
An essential skill of teaching is that of managing relationships with students and ensuring that those among students are positive and supportive. Teachers create an environment of respect and rapport in their classrooms by the ways they interact with students and by the interaction they encourage and cultivate among students. An important aspect of respect and rapport relates to how the teacher responds to students and how students are permitted to treat one another. Patterns of interactions are critical to the overall tone of the class. In a respectful environment, all students feel valued and safe.

The elements of component 2a are listed below and are evaluated:

- Teacher interactions with students, including both words and actions
  
  *A teacher’s interactions with students set the tone for the classroom. Through their interactions, teachers convey that they are interested in and care about their students.*

- Student interactions with other students, including both words and actions

  *As important as a teacher’s treatment of students is, how students are treated by their classmates is arguably even more important to students. At its worst, poor treatment causes students to feel rejected by their peers. At its best, positive interactions among students are mutually supportive and create an emotionally healthy school environment. Teachers model and teach students how to engage in respectful interactions with one another and acknowledge respectful interactions among students.*

Indicators include:

- Respectful talk and turn taking
- Respect for students’ background and lives outside of the classroom
- Teacher and student body language
- Physical proximity
- Warmth and caring
- Politeness
- Encouragement
- Active listening
- Fairness
### 2a: Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ineffective</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Highly Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patterns of classroom interactions, both between the teacher and students and among students, are mostly negative, inappropriate, or insensitive to students’ ages, cultural backgrounds, and developmental levels. Interactions are characterized by sarcasm, put-downs, or conflict. Teacher does not deal with disrespectful behavior.</td>
<td>Patterns of classroom interactions, both between the teacher and students and among students, are generally appropriate but may reflect occasional inconsistencies, favoritism, and disregard for students’ ages, cultures, and developmental levels. Students rarely demonstrate disrespect for one another. Teacher attempts to respond to disrespectful behavior, with uneven results. The net result of the interactions is neutral: conveying neither warmth nor conflict.</td>
<td>Teacher-student interactions are friendly and demonstrate general caring and respect. Such interactions are appropriate to the ages of the students. Students exhibit respect for the teacher. Interactions among students are generally polite and respectful. Teacher responds successfully to disrespectful behavior among students. The net result of the interactions is polite and respectful, but impersonal.</td>
<td>Classroom interactions among the teacher and individual students are highly respectful, reflecting genuine warmth, caring, and sensitivity to students as individuals. Students exhibit respect for the teacher and contribute to high levels of civility among all members of the class. The net result of interactions is that of connections with students as individuals.</td>
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### Critical Attributes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ineffective</th>
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<th>Effective</th>
<th>Highly Effective</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Teacher uses disrespectful talk towards students. Student body language indicates feelings of hurt or insecurity. | The quality of interactions between teacher and students, or among students, is uneven, with occasional disrespect. | Talk between teacher and students and among students is uniformly respectful. | In addition to the characteristics of “Effective”:
<p>| Students use disrespectful talk towards one another with no response from the teacher. | Teacher attempts to respond to disrespectful behavior among students, with uneven results. | Teacher responds to disrespectful behavior among students. | Teacher demonstrates knowledge and caring about individual students’ lives beyond school. |
| Teacher displays no familiarity with or caring about individual students’ interests or personalities. | Teacher attempts to make connections with individual students, but student reactions indicate that the efforts are not completely successful or are unusual. | Teacher makes superficial connections with individual students. | When necessary, students correct one another in their conduct towards classmates. |
| | | | There is no disrespectful behavior among students. |
| | | | The teacher’s response to a student’s incorrect response respects the student’s dignity. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• A student slumps in his/her chair following a comment by the teacher.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Students roll their eyes at a classmate’s idea; the teacher does not respond.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Many students talk when the teacher and other students are talking; the teacher does not correct them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Some students refuse to work with other students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher does not call students by their names.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students attend passively to the teacher, but tend to talk, pass notes, etc. when other students are talking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A few students do not engage with others in the classroom, even when put together in small groups.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Students applaud half-heartedly following a classmate’s presentation to the class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher says “Don’t talk that way to your classmates,” but student shrugs his/her shoulders.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Teacher greets students by name as they enter the class or during the lesson.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The teacher gets on the same level with students, such as kneeling beside a student working at a desk.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Students attend fully to what the teacher is saying.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Students wait for classmates to finish speaking before beginning to talk.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Students applaud politely following a classmate’s presentation to the class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Students help each other and accept help from each other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher and students use courtesies such as “please/thank you, excuse me.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Teacher says “Don’t talk that way to your classmates,” and the insults stop.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Teacher inquires about a student’s soccer game last weekend (or extracurricular activities or hobbies).</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Students say “Shhh” to classmates while the teacher or another student is speaking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students clap enthusiastically for one another’s presentations for a job well done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The teacher says: “That’s an interesting idea, Josh, but you’re forgetting....”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students applaud half-heartedly following a classmate’s presentation to the class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher says: “Don’t talk that way to your classmates,” and the insults stop.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Component</td>
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<tr>
<td>2b: Establishing a Culture for Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NYS Teaching Standard 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elements of component 2b are:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Importance of the content and of learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Expectations for learning and achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Student pride in work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicators include:</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Belief in the value of the work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Expectations are high and supported through both verbal and nonverbal behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Quality is expected and recognized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Effort and persistence are expected and recognized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Confidence in ability is evidenced by teacher and students language and behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Expectation for all students to participate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2b: Establishing a Culture for Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>The classroom culture is characterized by a lack of teacher or student commitment to learning, and/or little or no investment of student energy into the task at hand. Hard work is not expected or valued. Medium to low expectations for student achievement are the norm with high expectations for learning reserved for only one or two students.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Critical Attributes**

- The teacher conveys that the reasons for the work are external or trivializes the learning goals and assignments.
- The teacher conveys to at least some students that the work is too challenging for them.
- Students exhibit little or no pride in their work.
- Class time is devoted more to socializing than to learning.
- Teacher’s energy for the work is neutral: indicating neither a high level of commitment nor “blowing it off.”
- The teacher conveys high expectations for only some students.
- Students comply with the teacher’s expectations for learning, but don’t indicate commitment on their own initiative for the work.
- Many students indicate that they are looking for an “easy path.”
- The teacher communicates the importance of learning, and that with hard work all students can be successful in it.
- The teacher demonstrates a high regard for student abilities.
- Teacher conveys an expectation of high levels of student effort.
- Students expend good effort to complete work of high quality.

**Possible Examples**

- The teacher tells students that they’re doing a lesson because it’s on the test, in the book, or is district directed.
- Teacher says: “Let’s get through this.”
- Teacher says: “I think most of you will be able to do this.”
- Students consult with one another to determine how to fill in a worksheet, without challenging classmates’ thinking.
- Teacher does not encourage students who are struggling.
- Some students get to work after an assignment is given or after entering the room.
- Teacher says: “This is important; you’ll need to speak grammatical English when you apply for a job.”
- Teacher says: “This idea is really important! It’s central to our understanding of history.”
- Teacher says: “Let’s work on this together: it’s hard, but you all will be able to do it well.”
- Teacher hands a paper back to a student, saying “I know you can do a better job on this.” The student accepts it without complaint.
- Students get right to work right away when an assignment is given or after entering the room.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>2c: Managing Classroom Procedures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2c: Managing Classroom Procedures</strong></td>
<td>A smoothly functioning classroom is a prerequisite to good instruction and high levels of student engagement. Teachers establish and monitor routines and procedures for the smooth operation of the classroom and the efficient use of time. Hallmarks of a well-managed classroom are that instructional groups are used effectively, non-instructional tasks are completed efficiently, and transitions between activities and management of materials and supplies are skillfully done in order to maintain momentum and maximize instructional time. The establishment of efficient routines, and teaching students to employ them, may be inferred from the sense that the class “runs itself.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NYS Teaching Standard 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Element 4</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NYS Teaching Standard 4</strong></td>
<td><strong>Elements 1-4</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Elements of Component 2c are:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Management of instructional groups</td>
<td>Teachers help students to develop the skills to work purposefully and cooperatively in groups, with little supervision from the teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Management of transitions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Many lessons engage students in different types of activities – large group, small group, independent work. It’s important that little time is lost as students move from one activity to another; students know the “drill” and execute it seamlessly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Management of materials and supplies</td>
<td>Experienced teachers have all necessary materials to hand, and have taught students to implement routines for distribution and collection of materials with a minimum of disruption to the flow of instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Performance of non-instructional duties</td>
<td>Overall, little instructional time is lost in activities such as taking attendance, recording the lunch count, or the return of permission slips for a class trip.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indicators include:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Smooth functioning of all routines</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Little or no loss of instructional time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Students playing an important role in carrying out the routines</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Students know what to do, where to move</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2c Managing Classroom Procedures</td>
<td>Ineffective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much instructional time is lost due to inefficient classroom routines and procedures. There is little or no evidence of the teacher managing instructional groups, transitions, and/or the handling of materials and supplies effectively. There is little evidence that students know or follow established routines.</td>
<td>Some instructional time is lost due to only partially effective classroom routines and procedures. The teacher’s management of instructional groups, transitions, and/or the handling of materials and supplies is inconsistent, leading to some disruption of learning. With regular guidance and prompting, students follow established routines.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Critical Attributes**

- Students not working with the teacher are disruptive to the class.
- There are no established procedures for distributing and collecting materials.
- Procedures for other activities are confused or chaotic.
- Small groups are only partially engaged while not working directly with the teacher.
- Procedures for transitions, and distribution/collection of materials, seem to have been established, but their operation is rough.
- Classroom routines function unevenly.
- The students are productively engaged during small group work.
- Transitions between large and small group activities are smooth.
- Routines for distribution and collection of materials and supplies work efficiently.
- Classroom routines function smoothly.
- In addition to the characteristics of “Effective”:
  - Students take the initiative with their classmates to ensure that their time is used productively.
  - Students themselves ensure that transitions and other routines are accomplished smoothly.
  - Students take initiative in distributing and collecting materials efficiently.

**Possible Examples**

- When moving into small groups, students are confused as to where they are supposed to go, whether they should take their chairs, etc.
- There are long lines for materials and supplies or distributing supplies is time-consuming.
- Students bump into one another lining up or sharpening pencils.
- Roll-taking consumes much time at the beginning of the lesson and students are not working on anything.
- Most students ask what they are to do or look around for clues from others.
- Some students not working with the teacher are not productively engaged in learning.
- Transitions between large and small group activities are rough but they are accomplished.
- Students are not sure what to do when materials are being distributed or collected.
- Students ask some clarifying questions about procedures.
- The attendance or lunch count consumes more time than it would need if the procedure were more routinized.
- Students get started on an activity while the teacher takes attendance.
- Students move smoothly between large and small group activities.
- The teacher has an established timing device, such as counting down, to signal students to return to their desks.
- Teacher has an established attention signal, such as raising a hand, or dimming the lights.
- One member of each small group collects materials for the table.
- There is an established color-coded system indicating where materials should be stored.
- In small group work, students have established roles, they listen to one another, summarize different views, etc.
- Clean-up at the end of a lesson is fast and efficient.
- Students redirect classmates in small groups not working directly with the teacher to be more efficient in their work.
- A student reminds classmates of the rules that they are to play within the group.
- A student re-directs a classmate to the table s/he should be at following a transition.
- Students propose an improved attention signal.
- Students independently check themselves into class on the attendance board.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain 2: The Classroom Environment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In order for students to be able to engage deeply with content, the classroom environment must be orderly; the atmosphere must feel business-like and productive, without being authoritarian. In a productive classroom, standards of conduct are clear to students; they know what they are permitted to do, and what they can expect of their classmates. Even when their behavior is being corrected, students feel respected; their dignity is not undermined. Skilled teachers regard positive student behavior not as an end in itself, but as a prerequisite to high levels of engagement in content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elements of Component 2d are:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is clear, either from what the teacher says, or by inference from student actions, that expectations for student conduct have been established and that they are being implemented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Monitoring of student behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced teachers seem to have eyes “in the backs of their heads;” they are attuned to what’s happening in the classroom and can move subtly to help students, when necessary, re-engage with the content being addressed in the lesson. At a high level, such monitoring is preventive and subtle, which makes it challenging to observe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Response to student misbehavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Even experienced teachers find that their students occasionally violate one or another of the agreed-upon standards of conduct; how the teacher responds to such infractions is an important mark of the teacher’s skill. Accomplished teachers try to understand why students are conducting themselves in such a manner (are they unsure of the content? Are they trying to impress their friends?) and respond in such a way that they respect the dignity of the student. The best responses are those that address misbehavior early in an episode, although this is not always possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicators include:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Clear standards of conduct, possibly posted, and possibly referred to during a lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Absence of acrimony between teacher and students concerning behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Teacher awareness of student conduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Preventive action when needed by the teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Fairness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Absence of misbehavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Reinforcement of positive behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2d Managing Student Behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There appear to be no established standards of conduct, and little or no teacher monitoring of student behavior. Students challenge the standards of conduct. Response to students’ misbehavior is repressive, or disrespectful of student dignity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Critical Attributes**
- The classroom environment is chaotic, with no apparent standards of conduct.
- The teacher does not monitor student behavior.
- Some students violate classroom rules, without apparent teacher awareness.
- When the teacher notices student misbehavior, s/he appears helpless to do anything about it.

**Possible Examples**
- Students are talking among themselves, with no attempt by the teacher to silence them.
- An object flies through the air without apparent teacher notice.
- Students are running around the room, resulting in a chaotic environment.
- Their phones and other electronics distract students and teacher doesn’t do anything.

**Ineffective**
- Teacher attempts to maintain order in the classroom but with uneven success; standards of conduct, if they exist, are not evident.
- Teacher attempts to keep track of student behavior, but with no apparent system.
- The teacher’s response to student misbehavior is inconsistent: sometimes very harsh; other times lenient.

**Highly Effective**
- Standards of conduct appear to have been established.
- Student behavior is generally appropriate.
- The teacher frequently monitors student behavior.
- Teacher’s response to student misbehavior is effective.
- Teacher acknowledges good behavior.

**Effective**
- Classroom rules are posted, but neither teacher nor students refers to them.
- The teacher repeatedly asks students to take their seats; they ignore him/her.
- To one student: “Where’s your late pass? Go to the office.” To another: “You don’t have a late pass? Come in and take your seat; you’ve missed enough already.”

**In addition to the characteristics of “Effective”:**
- Student behavior is entirely appropriate; no evidence of student misbehavior.
- The teacher monitors student behavior without speaking – just moving about.
- Students respectfully intervene as appropriate with classmates to ensure compliance with standards of conduct.

- A student suggests a revision in one of the classroom rules.
- The teacher notices that some students are talking among themselves, and without a word, moves nearer to them; the talking stops.
- The teacher asks to speak to a student privately about misbehavior.
- A student reminds his/her classmates of the class rule about chewing gum.
### Component

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2e: Organizing Physical Space</th>
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#### NYS Teaching Standard 4 Elements 1-4

The use of the physical environment to promote student learning is a hallmark of an experienced teacher. Its use varies, of course, with the age of the students: in a primary classroom, centers and reading corners may structure class activities, while with older students, the position of chairs and desks can facilitate, or inhibit, rich discussion. Naturally, classrooms must be safe (no dangling wires or dangerous traffic patterns), and all students must be able to see and hear what’s going on so they can participate actively. Both the teacher and students make effective use of computer (and other) technology.

Elements of this component are:

- Safety and accessibility
  
  *Physical safety is a primary consideration of all teachers; no learning can occur if students are unsafe or if they don’t have access to the board or other learning resources.*

- Arrangement of furniture and use of physical resources.
  
  *Both the physical arrangement of a classroom and the available resources provide opportunities for teachers to advance learning; when these are skillfully used students can engage with the content in a productive manner. At the highest levels of performance, the students themselves contribute to the physical environment.*

Indicators include:

- Pleasant, inviting atmosphere
- Safe environment
- Accessibility for all students
- Furniture arrangement suitable for the learning activities
- Effective use of physical resources, including computer technology, by both teacher and students
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2e: Organizing Physical Space</th>
<th>Ineffective</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Highly Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The physical environment is unsafe, or many students don’t have access to learning.</td>
<td>The classroom is safe, and essential learning is accessible to most students. The teacher’s use of physical resources, including computer technology, is moderately effective. Teacher may attempt to modify the physical arrangement to suit learning activities, with partial success.</td>
<td>The classroom is safe, and learning is accessible to all students; teacher ensures that the physical arrangement is appropriate to the learning activities. Teacher makes effective use of physical resources, including computer technology.</td>
<td>The classroom is safe, and learning is accessible to all students including those with special needs. Teacher makes effective use of physical resources, including computer technology. The teacher ensures that the physical arrangement is appropriate to the learning activities. Students contribute to the use or adaptation of the physical environment to advance learning.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Critical Attributes**
- There are physical hazards in the classroom, endangering student safety.
- Many students can’t see or hear the teacher or the board.
- Available technology is not being used, even if available and its use would enhance the lesson.
- The physical environment is safe, and most students can see and hear.
- The physical environment is not an impediment to learning, but does not enhance it.
- The teacher makes limited use of available technology and other resources.
- The classroom is safe, and all students are able to see and hear.
- The classroom is arranged to support the instructional goals and learning activities.
- The teacher makes appropriate use of available technology.

**Possible Examples**
- There are electrical cords running around the classroom.
- There is a pole in the middle of the room; some students can’t see the board.
- A white board is in the classroom, but it is facing the wall, indicating that it is rarely, if ever, used.
- The teacher ensures that dangerous chemicals are stored safely.
- The classroom desks remain in two semicircles, even though the activity for small groups would be better served by moving the desks to make tables for a portion of the lesson.
- The teacher tries to use a computer to illustrate a concept, but requires several attempts to make it work.
- There are established guidelines concerning where backpacks are left during class to keep the pathways clear; students comply.
- Desks are moved to make tables so students can work together, or in a circle for class discussion.
- The use of an Internet connection enriches the lesson.
- Students ask if they can shift the furniture to better suit small group work, or discussion.
- A student closes the door to shut out noise in the corridor, or lowers a blind to block the sun from a classmate’s eyes.
- A student suggests an application of the white board for an activity.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>3a: Communicating With Students</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3a: Communicating with Students</td>
<td>Teachers communicate with students for several independent, but related, purposes. First, they convey that teaching and learning are purposeful activities; they make that purpose clear to students. They also provide clear directions for classroom activities, so students know what it is that they are to do. When they present concepts and information, those presentations are made with accuracy, clarity and imagination; where appropriate to the lesson, skilled teachers embellish their explanations with analogies or metaphors, linking them to students’ interests and prior knowledge. Teachers occasionally withhold information from students (for example in an inquiry science lesson) to encourage them to think on their own, but what information they do convey is accurate and reflects deep understanding. And the teacher’s use of language is vivid, rich, and error free, affording the opportunity for students to hear language well used and to extend their own vocabularies. Teacher presents complex concepts in ways that provide scaffolding and access to students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NYS Teaching Standard 2 Element 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>NYS Teaching Standard 3 Elements 1-6</td>
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<tr>
<td>NYS Teaching Standard 4 Element 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>NYS Teaching Standard 5 Element 5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Elements of Component 3a are:
- **Expectations for learning**
  The goals for learning are communicated clearly to students. Even if not conveyed at the outset of a lesson (for example, an inquiry lesson in science) by the end of the lesson students are clear about what they have been learning.
- **Directions for activities**
  Students are clear about what they are expected to do during a lesson, particularly if students are working independently or with classmates without direct teacher supervision. These directions for the lesson activities may be provided orally, in writing, or in some combination of the two.
- **Explanations of content**
  Skilled teachers, when explaining concepts to students, use vivid language and imaginative analogies and metaphors, connecting explanations to students’ interests and lives beyond school. The explanations are clear, with appropriate scaffolding, and, where appropriate, anticipate possible student misconceptions.
- **Use of oral and written language**
  For many students, their teachers’ use of language represents their best model of both accurate syntax and a rich vocabulary; these models enable students to emulate such language, making their own more precise and expressive.

Indicators include:
- Clarity of lesson purpose
- Clear directions and procedures specific to the lesson activities
- Absence of content errors and clear explanations of concepts
- Students understand the content
- Correct and imaginative use of language
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3a: <strong>Communicating with Students</strong></th>
<th>Ineffective</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Highly Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The instructional purpose of the lesson is unclear to students and the directions and procedures are confusing. Teacher’s explanation of the content contains major errors. The teacher’s spoken or written language contains errors of grammar or syntax. Vocabulary is inappropriate, vague, or used incorrectly, leaving students confused.</td>
<td>Teacher’s attempt to explain the instructional purpose has only limited success, and/or directions and procedures must be clarified after initial student confusion. Teacher’s explanation of the content may contain minor errors; some portions are clear; other portions are difficult to follow. Teacher’s explanation consists of a monologue, with no invitation to the students for intellectual engagement. Teacher’s spoken language is correct; however, vocabulary is limited, or not fully appropriate to the students’ ages or backgrounds.</td>
<td>The instructional purpose of the lesson is clearly communicated to students, including where it is situated within broader learning; directions and procedures are explained clearly. Teacher’s explanation of content is well scaffolded, clear and accurate, and connects with students’ knowledge and experience. During the explanation of content, the teacher invites student intellectual engagement. Teacher’s spoken and written language is clear and correct. Vocabulary is appropriate to the students’ ages and interests.</td>
<td>The teacher links the instructional purpose of the lesson to student interests; the directions and procedures are clear and anticipate possible student misunderstanding. Teacher’s explanation of content is thorough and clear, developing conceptual understanding through artful scaffolding and connecting with students’ interests. Students contribute to extending the content, and in explaining concepts to their classmates. Teacher’s spoken and written language is expressive, and the teacher finds opportunities to extend students’ vocabularies.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Critical Attributes**
- At no time during the lesson does the teacher convey to the students what they will be learning.
- Students indicate through their questions that they are confused as to the learning task.
- The teacher makes a serious content error that will affect students’ understanding of the lesson.
- Students indicate through body language or questions that they don’t understand the content being presented.
- Teacher’s communications include errors of vocabulary or usage.
- Vocabulary is inappropriate to the age or culture of the students.
- The teacher refers in passing to what the students will be learning, or it is written on the board with no elaboration or explanation.
- Teacher must clarify the learning task so students can complete it.
- The teacher makes no serious content errors, although may make a minor error.
- The teacher’s explanation of the content consists of a monologue or is purely procedural with minimal participation by students.
- Vocabulary and usage are correct but unimaginative.
- Vocabulary is too advanced or juvenile for the students.

- The teacher states clearly, at some point during the lesson, what the students will be learning.
- If appropriate, the teacher models the process to be followed in the task.
- Students engage with the learning task, indicating that they understand what they are to do.
- The teacher makes no content errors.
- Teacher’s explanation of content is clear, and invites student participation and thinking.
- Vocabulary and usage are correct and completely suited to the lesson.
- Vocabulary is appropriate to the students’ ages and levels of development.

- The teacher points out possible areas for misunderstanding.
- Teacher explains content clearly and imaginatively, using metaphors and analogies to bring content to life.
- All students seem to understand the presentation.
- The teacher invites students to explain the content to the class, or to classmates.
- Teacher uses rich language, offering brief vocabulary lessons where appropriate.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible Examples</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• A student asks: “What are we supposed to be doing?” but the teacher ignores the question.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The teacher states that to add fractions, they must have the same numerator.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Students have a quizzical look on their faces; some may withdraw from the lesson.</td>
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<td>• Students become disruptive, or talk among themselves in an effort to follow the lesson.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The teacher uses technical terms with an elementary class without explaining their meanings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The teacher says “ain’t.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>• “By the end of today’s lesson, you’re all going to be able to factor different types of polynomials.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>• In the course of a presentation of content, the teacher asks of students: “Can anyone think of an example of that?”</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The teacher uses a board or projection device so students can refer to it without requiring the teacher’s attention.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The teacher mispronounces “...”</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The teacher says: “And oh, by the way, today we’re going to factor polynomials.”</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• A student asks: “What are we supposed to be doing?” and the teacher clarifies the task.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Students ask “What do I write here?” in order to complete a task.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The teacher says: “Watch me while I show you how to ....” with students asked only to listen.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• A number of students do not seem to be following the explanation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Students are inattentive during the teacher’s explanation of content.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The teacher says: “Here’s a spot where some students have difficulty:...be sure to read it carefully.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The teacher asks a student to explain the task to other students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• When needed, a student offers clarification about the learning task to classmates.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The teacher explains passive solar energy by inviting students to think about the temperature in a closed car on a cold, but sunny, day, or by the water in a hose that has been sitting in the sun.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The teacher says: “Who would like to explain this idea to us?”</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The teacher pauses during an explanation of the civil rights movement to remind students that the prefix “in” as in “inequality” means “not.” The prefix “un” also means the same thing.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3b: Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques

**Questioning and discussion are the only instructional strategies specifically referred to in the framework for teaching; this reflects their central importance to teachers’ practice. But in the framework, it is important that questioning and discussion are used as techniques to deepen student understanding, rather than serving as recitation, or a verbal “quiz.” Good teachers use divergent as well as convergent questions, framed in such a way that they invite students to formulate hypotheses, make connections, or challenge previously held views. Students’ responses to questions are valued; effective teachers are especially adept at responding to and building on student responses and making use of their ideas. High quality questions encourage students to make connections among concepts or events previously believed to be unrelated, and arrive at new understandings of complex material. Effective teachers also pose questions for which they do not know the answers. Even when a question has a limited number of correct responses, the question, being non-formulaic, is likely to promote thinking by students. Class discussions are animated, engaging all students in important issues and in using their own language to deepen and extend their understanding. They may be based around questions formulated by the students themselves. Not all questions must be at a high cognitive level in order for a teacher’s performance to be rated at a high level; that is, when exploring a topic, a teacher might begin with a series of questions of low cognitive challenge to provide a review, or to ensure that everyone in the class is “on board.” Furthermore, if questions are at a high level, but only a few students participate in the discussion, the teacher’s performance on the component cannot be judged to be at a high level. In addition, in lessons involving students in small-group work, the quality of the students’ questions and discussion in their small groups may be considered as part of this component. In order for students to formulate high-level questions, they must have learned how to do this. Therefore, high-level questions from students, either in the full class, or in small group discussions, provide evidence that these skills have been taught.

Elements of component 3b are:

- **Quality of questions/prompts**
  
  Questions of high quality cause students to think and reflect, to deepen their understanding, and to test their ideas against those of their classmates. When teachers ask questions of high quality, they ask only a few of them, and they provide students with sufficient time to think about their response, to reflect on the comments of their classmates, and to deepen their understanding. Occasionally, for the purposes of review, teachers ask students a series of (usually low-level) questions in a type of verbal quiz. This may be helpful for the purpose of establishing the facts of an historical event, for example, but they should not be confused with the use of questioning to deepen students’ understanding.

- **Discussion techniques**
  
  Effective teachers promote learning through discussion. Some teachers report that “we discussed x” when what they mean is that “I said x.” That is, some teachers confuse discussion with explanation of content; as important as that is, it’s not discussion. Rather, in a true discussion, a teacher poses a question, and invites all students’ views to be heard, and enabling students to engage in discussion directly with one another, not always mediated by the teacher.

- **Student participation**
  
  In some classes a few students tend to dominate the discussion, other students, recognizing this pattern, hold back their contributions. Teacher uses a range of techniques to ensure that all students contribute to the discussion, and enlist the assistance of students to ensure this outcome.

Indicators include:

- Questions of high cognitive challenge, formulated by both students and teacher
- Questions with multiple correct answers, or multiple approaches even when there is a single correct response
- Effective use of student responses and ideas
- Discussion with the teacher stepping out of the central, mediating role
- High levels of student participation in discussion
### 3b: Using Questioning/Prompts and Discussions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ineffective</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Highly Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher’s questions are of low cognitive challenge, single correct responses, and asked in rapid succession. Interaction between teacher and students is predominantly recitation style, with the teacher mediating all questions and answers. A few students dominate the discussion.</td>
<td>Teacher’s questions lead students through a single path of inquiry, with answers seemingly determined in advance. Alternatively the teacher attempts to frame some questions designed to promote student thinking and understanding, but only a few students are involved. Teacher attempts to engage all students in the discussion and to encourage them to respond to one another, with uneven results.</td>
<td>While the teacher may use some low-level questions, he or she poses questions to students designed to promote student thinking and understanding. Teacher creates a genuine discussion among students, providing adequate time for students to respond, and stepping aside when appropriate. Teacher successfully engages most students in the discussion, employing a range of strategies to ensure that most students are heard.</td>
<td>Teacher uses a variety or series of questions or prompts to challenge students cognitively, advance high level thinking and discourse, and promote metacognition. Students formulate many questions, initiate topics and make unsolicited contributions. Students themselves ensure that all voices are heard in the discussion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Critical Attributes**

- Questions are rapid-fire, and convergent, with a single correct answer.
- Questions do not invite student thinking.
- All discussion is between teacher and students; students are not invited to speak directly to one another.
- A few students dominate the discussion.
- Teacher frames some questions designed to promote student thinking, but only a few students are involved.
- The teacher invites students to respond directly to one another’s ideas, but few students respond.
- Teacher calls on many students, but only a small number actually participate in the discussion.
- Teacher uses open-ended questions, inviting students to think and/or have multiple possible answers.
- The teacher makes effective use of wait time.
- The teacher builds on students responses to questions effectively.
- Discussions enable students to talk to one another, without ongoing mediation by the teacher.
- The teacher calls on most students, even those who don’t initially volunteer.
- Many students actively engage in the discussion.

In addition to the characteristics of “Effective”:

- Students initiate higher-order questions.
- Students extend the discussion, enriching it.
- Students invite comments from their classmates during a discussion.
| Possible Examples | • All questions are of the “recitation” type, such as “What is 3 x 4?”  
• The teacher asks a question for which the answer is on the board; students respond by reading it.  
• The teacher only calls on students who have their hands up. | • Many questions are of the “recitation” type, such as “How many members of the House of Representatives are there?”  
• The teacher asks: “Who has an idea about this?” but the same three students offer comments.  
• The teacher asks: “Michael, can you comment on Mary’s idea?” but Michael does not respond, or makes a comment directly to the teacher. | • The teacher asks: “What might have happened if the colonists had not prevailed in the American war for independence?”  
• The teacher uses plural the form in asking questions, such as: “What are some things you think might contribute to…?”  
• The teacher asks: “Michael, can you comment on Mary’s idea?” and Michael responds directly to Mary.  
• The teacher asks a question and asks every student to write a brief response, and then share with a partner before inviting a few to offer their ideas to the entire class. | • A student asks “How many ways are there to get this answer?”  
• A student says to a classmate: “I don’t think I agree with you on this, because…”  
• A student asks of other students: “Does anyone have another idea as to how we might figure this out?”  
• A student asks “What if…?” |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>3c: Engaging Students in Learning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>3c:</strong> Engaging Students in Learning</td>
<td>Student engagement in learning is the centerpiece of the framework for teaching; all other components contribute to it. When students are engaged in learning, they are not merely “busy,” nor are they only “on task.” Rather, they are intellectually active in learning important and challenging content. The critical distinction between a classroom in which students are compliant and busy, and one in which they are engaged, is that in the latter students are developing their understanding through what they do. That is, they are engaged in discussion, debate, answering “what if?” questions, discovering patterns, and the like. They may be selecting their work from a range of (teacher arranged) choices, and making important contributions to the intellectual life of the class. Such activities don’t typically consume an entire lesson, but they are essential components of engagement.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NYS Teaching Standard 2</strong> <strong>Elements 3, 6</strong></td>
<td>A lesson in which students are engaged usually has a discernible structure: a beginning, a middle, and an end, with scaffolding provided by the teacher or by the activities themselves. Student tasks are organized to provide cognitive challenge, and then students are encouraged to reflect on what they have done and what they have learned. That is, there is closure to the lesson, in which students derive the important learning from their own actions. A critical question for an observer in determining the degree of student engagement is “What are the students being asked to do?” If the answer to that question is that they are filling in blanks on a worksheet, or performing a rote procedure, they are unlikely to be cognitively engaged.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NYS Teaching Standard 3</strong> <strong>Elements 1-6</strong></td>
<td>In observing a lesson, it is essential not only to watch the teacher, but also to pay close attention to the students and what they are doing. The best evidence for student engagement is what students are saying and doing as a consequence of what the teacher does, or has done, or has planned.</td>
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<td><strong>Elements of Component 3c are:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Indicators include:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Activities and assignments</td>
<td>• Activities aligned with the goals of the lesson</td>
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<td><em>The activities and assignments are the centerpiece of student engagement, since they determine what it is that students are asked to do. Activities and assignments that promote learning are aligned with the goals of the lesson, and require student thinking that emphasizes depth over breadth, and that may allow students to exercise some choice.</em></td>
<td>• Student enthusiasm, interest, thinking, problem-solving, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Grouping of students</td>
<td>• Learning tasks that require high-level student thinking and are aligned with lesson objectives</td>
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<td><em>How students are grouped for instruction is one of the many decisions teachers make every day. There are many options; students of similar background and skill may be clustered together, or the more advanced students may be spread around into the different groups. Alternatively, a teacher might permit students to select their own groups, or they could be formed randomly.</em></td>
<td>• Students highly motivated to work on all tasks and are persistent even when the tasks are challenging</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Instructional materials and resources</td>
<td>• Students actively “working,” rather than watching while their teacher “works.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The instructional materials a teacher selects to use in the classroom can have an enormous impact on students’ experience. While some teachers are obliged to use a school or district’s officially sanctioned materials, many teacher use these selectively or supplement them with others of their choosing that are better suited to engaging students in deep learning, for example, the use of primary source materials in social studies.</em></td>
<td>• Suitable pacing of the lesson: neither dragging nor rushed, with time for closure and student reflection</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical Attributes</td>
<td>Ineffective</td>
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<td>---------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Few students are intellectually engaged in the lesson.</td>
<td>The learning tasks and activities, materials, resources, instructional groups and technology are poorly aligned with the instructional outcomes, or require only rote responses. The pace of the lesson is too slow or rushed. Few students are intellectually engaged or interested.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning tasks require only recall or have a single correct response or method.</td>
<td>The learning tasks or prompts are partially aligned with the instructional outcomes but require only minimal thinking by students, allowing most students to be passive or merely compliant. The pacing of the lesson may not provide students the time needed to be intellectually engaged.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The materials used ask students only to perform rote tasks. Only one type of instructional group is used (whole group, small groups) when variety would better serve the instructional purpose. Instructional materials used are unsuitable to the lesson and/or the students. The lesson drags, or is rushed.</td>
<td>Some students are intellectually engaged in the lesson. Learning tasks are a mix of those requiring thinking and recall. Student engagement with the content is largely passive, learning primarily facts or procedures. Students have no choice in how they complete tasks. The teacher uses different instructional groupings; these are partially successful in achieving the lesson objectives. The materials and resources are partially aligned to the lesson objectives, only some of them demanding student thinking. The pacing of the lesson is uneven; suitable in parts, but rushed or dragging in others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible Examples</td>
<td>Students are asked to fill in a worksheet, following an established procedure. There is a recognizable beginning, middle, and end to the lesson. Parts of the lesson have a suitable pace; other parts drag or feel rushed.</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical Attributes</th>
<th>Ineffective</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Highly Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Few students are intellectually engaged in the lesson.</td>
<td>The learning tasks and activities, materials, resources, instructional groups and technology are poorly aligned with the instructional outcomes, or require only rote responses. The pace of the lesson is too slow or rushed. Few students are intellectually engaged or interested.</td>
<td>The learning tasks or prompts are partially aligned with the instructional outcomes but require only minimal thinking by students, allowing most students to be passive or merely compliant. The pacing of the lesson may not provide students the time needed to be intellectually engaged.</td>
<td>The learning tasks and activities are aligned with the instructional outcomes and are designed to challenge student thinking, resulting in active intellectual engagement by most students with important and challenging content, and with teacher scaffolding to support that engagement. The pacing of the lesson is appropriate, providing most students the time needed to be intellectually engaged.</td>
<td>Virtually all students are intellectually engaged in challenging content, through well-designed learning tasks, and suitable scaffolding by the teacher, and fully aligned with the instructional outcomes. In addition, there is evidence of some student initiation of inquiry, and student contributions to the exploration of important content. The pacing of the lesson provides students the time needed to intellectually engage with and reflect upon their learning, and to consolidate their understanding. Students may have some choice in how they complete tasks and may serve as resources for one another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning tasks require only recall or have a single correct response or method.</td>
<td>The learning tasks or prompts are partially aligned with the instructional outcomes but require only minimal thinking by students, allowing most students to be passive or merely compliant. The pacing of the lesson may not provide students the time needed to be intellectually engaged.</td>
<td>Learning tasks are a mix of those requiring thinking and recall. Student engagement with the content is largely passive, learning primarily facts or procedures. Students have no choice in how they complete tasks. The teacher uses different instructional groupings; these are partially successful in achieving the lesson objectives. The materials and resources are partially aligned to the lesson objectives, only some of them demanding student thinking. The pacing of the lesson is uneven; suitable in parts, but rushed or dragging in others.</td>
<td>Learning tasks have multiple correct responses or approaches and/or demand higher-order thinking. Students have some choice in how they complete learning tasks. There is a mix of different types of groupings, suitable to the lesson objectives. Materials and resources support the learning goals and require intellectual engagement, as appropriate. The pacing of the lesson provides students the time needed to be intellectually engaged.</td>
<td>In addition to the characteristics of “Effective”: Virtually all students are highly engaged in the lesson. Students take initiative to modify a learning task to make it more meaningful or relevant to their needs. Students suggest modifications to the grouping patterns used. Students have extensive choice in how they complete tasks. Students suggest modifications or additions to the materials being used. Students have an opportunity for reflection and closure on the lesson to consolidate their understanding.</td>
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<td>The materials used ask students only to perform rote tasks. Only one type of instructional group is used (whole group, small groups) when variety would better serve the instructional purpose. Instructional materials used are unsuitable to the lesson and/or the students. The lesson drags, or is rushed.</td>
<td>Some students are intellectually engaged in the lesson. Learning tasks are a mix of those requiring thinking and recall. Student engagement with the content is largely passive, learning primarily facts or procedures. Students have no choice in how they complete tasks. The teacher uses different instructional groupings; these are partially successful in achieving the lesson objectives. The materials and resources are partially aligned to the lesson objectives, only some of them demanding student thinking. The pacing of the lesson is uneven; suitable in parts, but rushed or dragging in others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Possible Examples</td>
<td>Students are able to fill out the lesson worksheet without understanding what it’s asking them to do. The lesson drags, or feels rushed. Students complete “busy work” activities.</td>
<td>Students are asked to fill in a worksheet, following an established procedure. There is a recognizable beginning, middle, and end to the lesson. Parts of the lesson have a suitable pace; other parts drag or feel rushed.</td>
<td>Students are asked to formulate a hypothesis about what might happen if the American voting system allowed for the direct election of presidents. Students are given a task to do independently, then to discuss with a table group, followed by a report-out from each table. There is a clear beginning, middle, and end to the lesson. The lesson is neither rushed nor drags.</td>
<td>Students are asked to write an essay “in the style of Hemmingway.” A student asks whether they might remain in their small groups to complete another section of the activity, rather than work independently. Students identify or create their own learning materials. Students summarize their learning from the lesson.</td>
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### Component 3d: Using Assessment in Instruction

**Assessment of student learning plays an important role in instruction; no longer does it signal the end of instruction; it is now recognized to be an integral part of instruction. While assessment of learning has always been and will continue to be an important aspect of teaching (it’s important for teachers to know whether students have learned what they intend) assessment for learning has increasingly come to play an important role in classroom practice. And in order to assess student learning for the purposes of instruction, teachers must have their finger on “the pulse” of a lesson, monitoring student understanding and, where appropriate, offering feedback to students. Of course, a teacher’s actions in monitoring student learning, while it may superficially look the same as monitoring student behavior, has a fundamentally different purpose. When a teacher is monitoring behavior, he/she is alert to students who may be passing notes, or bothering their neighbors; when teachers monitor student learning, they look carefully at what students are writing, or listen carefully to the questions students ask, in order to gauge whether they require additional activity or explanation in order to grasp the content. In each case, the teacher may be circulating in the room, but his/her purpose in doing so is quite different in the two situations. Similarly, on the surface, questions asked of students for the purpose of monitoring learning, are fundamentally different from those used to build understanding; in the former, teachers are alert to students’ revealed misconceptions, whereas in the latter the questions are designed to explore relationships, or deepen understanding. Indeed, for the purpose of monitoring, many teachers create questions specifically to elicit the extent of student understanding, and use techniques (such as exit tickets) to ascertain the degree of understanding of every student in the class. Indeed, encouraging students (and actually teaching them the necessary skills) of monitoring their own learning against clear standards is demonstrated by teachers at high levels of performance. In this component. But as important as monitoring of student learning and providing feedback to students are, however, they are greatly strengthened by a teacher’s skill in making mid-course corrections when needed, seizing on a “teachable moment.”**

**Elements of Component 3d are:**

- **Assessment Criteria**  
  *It is essential that students know the criteria for assessment. At its highest level, students themselves have had a hand in articulating the criteria for, for example, a clear oral presentation.*

- **Monitoring of student learning**  
  *A teacher’s skill in eliciting evidence of student understanding is one of the true marks of expertise. This is not a hit-or-miss effort, but is planned carefully in advance. But even after carefully planning, monitoring of student learning must be woven seamlessly into the lesson, using a variety of techniques.*

- **Feedback to students**  
  *Feedback on learning is an essential element of a rich instructional environment; without it, students are constantly guessing as to how they are doing, and how their work can be improved. Valuable feedback must be timely, constructive, and substantive, and provide students the guidance they need to improve their performance.*

- **Student self-assessment and monitoring of progress**  
  *The culmination of student assumption of responsibility for their learning is when they monitor their own learning, and take appropriate action. Of course, they can only do this if the criteria for learning are clear and if they have been taught the skills of checking their work against clear criteria.*

**Indicators include:**

- Teacher paying close attention to evidence of student understanding
- Teacher posing specifically-created questions to elicit evidence of student understanding
- Teacher circulating to monitor student learning and to offer feedback Students assessing their own work against established criteria
- Teacher adjusting instruction in response to evidence of student understanding (or lack of it)
- Students assessing their own work against established criteria
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3d: Using Assessment in Instruction</th>
<th>Ineffective</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Highly Effective</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is little or no assessment or monitoring of student learning; feedback is absent, or of poor quality. Students do not appear to be aware of the assessment criteria and do not engage in self-assessment.</td>
<td>Assessment is used sporadically to support instruction, through some monitoring of progress of learning by teacher and/or students. Feedback to students is general, and students appear to be only partially aware of the assessment criteria used to evaluate their work but few assess their own work. Questions/prompts/assessments are rarely used to diagnose evidence of learning.</td>
<td>Assessment is regularly used during instruction, through monitoring of progress of learning by teacher and/or students, resulting in accurate, specific feedback that advances learning. Students appear to be aware of the assessment criteria; some of them engage in self-assessment. Questions/prompts/assessments are used to diagnose evidence of learning.</td>
<td>Assessment is fully integrated into instruction, through extensive use of formative assessment. Students appear to be aware of, and there is some evidence that they have contributed to, the assessment criteria. Students self-assess and monitor their progress. A variety of feedback, from both the teacher and peers, is accurate, specific, and advances learning. Questions/prompts/assessments are used regularly to diagnose evidence of learning by individual students.</td>
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Critical Attributes
- The teacher gives no indication of what high quality work looks like.
- The teacher makes no effort to determine whether students understand the lesson.
- Feedback is only global.
- The teacher does not ask students to evaluate their own or classmates’ work.
- There is little evidence that the students understand how their work will be evaluated.
- Teacher monitors understanding through a single method, or without eliciting evidence of understanding from all students.
- Teacher requests global indications of student understanding.
- Feedback to students is not uniformly specific, not oriented towards future improvement of work.
- The teacher makes only minor attempts to engage students in self- or peer-assessment.
- The teacher’s attempts to adjust the lesson are partially successful.
- Students indicate that they clearly understand the characteristics of high-quality work.
- The teacher elicits evidence of student understanding during the lesson. Students are invited to assess their own work and make improvements.
- Feedback includes specific and timely guidance for at least groups of students.
- The teacher attempts to engage students in self- or peer-assessment.
- When necessary, the teacher makes adjustments to the lesson to enhance understanding by groups of students.
- In addition to the characteristics of “Effective”:
  - There is evidence that students have helped establish the evaluation criteria.
  - Teacher monitoring of student understanding is sophisticated and continuous: the teacher is constantly “taking the pulse” of the class.
  - Teacher makes frequent use of strategies to elicit information about individual student understanding.
  - Feedback to students is specific and timely, and is provided from many sources, including other students.
  - Students monitor their own understanding, either on their own initiative or as a result of tasks set by the teacher.
  - The teacher’s adjustments to the lesson are designed to assist individual students.
| Possible Examples | A student asks: “How is this assignment going to be graded?”
A student asks: “Does this quiz count towards my grade?”
The teacher forges ahead with a presentation without checking for understanding.
The teacher says: “good job, everyone.” | Teacher asks: “Does anyone have a question?”
When a student completes a problem on the board, the teacher corrects the student’s work without explaining why.
The teacher, after receiving a correct response from one student, continues, without ascertaining whether all students understand the concept. | The teacher circulates during small group or independent work, offering suggestions to groups of students.
The teacher uses a specifically-formulated question to elicit evidence of student understanding.
The teacher asks students to look over their papers to correct their errors. | The teacher reminds students of the characteristics of high-quality work (the assessment criteria), suggesting that the students themselves helped develop them.
While students are working, the teacher circulates providing substantive feedback to individual students.
The teacher uses popsicle sticks or exit tickets to elicit evidence of individual student understanding.
Students offer feedback to their classmates on their work.
Students evaluate a piece of their writing against the writing rubric and confer with the teacher about how it could be improved. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>3e: Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>3e. Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness</strong></td>
<td>“Flexibility and responsiveness” refer to a teacher’s skill in making adjustments in a lesson to respond to changing conditions. When a lesson is well planned, there may be no need for changes during the course of the lesson itself. Shifting the approach in mid-stream is not always necessary; in fact, with experience comes skill in accurately predicting how a lesson will go, and being prepared for different possible scenarios. But even the most skilled, and best prepared, teachers will on occasion find that either a lesson is not going as they would like, or that a teachable moment has presented itself. They are ready for such situations. Furthermore, teachers who are committed to the learning of all students persist in their attempts to engage them in learning, even when confronted with initial setbacks. Elements of component 3e are:</td>
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<td><strong>NYS Teaching Standard 3</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Elements 1-6</strong></td>
<td>• Lesson adjustment&lt;br&gt;Experienced teachers are able to make both minor and (when needed) major adjustments to a lesson, a mid-course correction. Such adjustments depend on a teacher’s store of alternate instructional strategies, and the confidence to make a shift when needed.</td>
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<td><strong>NYS Teaching Standard 5</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Elements 2, 4</strong></td>
<td>• Response to students&lt;br&gt;Occasionally during a lesson an unexpected event will occur which presents a true “teachable moment.” It is a mark of considerable teacher skill to be able to capitalize on such opportunities.</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>NYS Teaching Standard 7</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Elements 1, 4</strong></td>
<td>• Persistence&lt;br&gt;Committed teachers don’t give up easily: when students encounter difficulty in learning (which all do at some point) these teachers seek alternate approaches to help their students be successful. In these efforts, teachers display a keen sense of efficacy. Indicators include:</td>
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<td>• Incorporation of student interests and events of the day into a lesson</td>
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<td>• Visible adjustment in the face of student lack of understanding</td>
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<td>• Teacher seizing on a “teachable moment”</td>
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### Critical Attributes

**Ineffective**
- Teacher ignores indications of student boredom or lack of understanding.
- Teacher brushes aside student questions.
- Teacher makes no attempt to incorporate student interests into the lesson.
- The teacher conveys to students that they have difficulty learning, it is their fault.
- In reflecting on practice, the teacher does not indicate that it is important to reach all students.

**Developing**
- Teacher’s efforts to modify the lesson are only partially successful.
- Teacher makes perfunctory attempts to incorporate student questions and interests into the lesson.
- The teacher conveys to students a level of responsibility for their learning, but uncertainty as to how to assist them.
- In reflecting on practice, the teacher indicates the desire to reach all students, but does not suggest strategies to do so.

**Effective**
- Teacher successfully makes a minor modification to the lesson.
- Teacher incorporates students’ interests and questions into the heart of the lesson.
- The teacher conveys to students that she has other approaches to try when the students experience difficulty.
- In reflecting on practice, the teacher cites multiple approaches undertaken to reach students having difficulty.

**Highly Effective**
- In addition to the characteristics of “Effective”:
  - Teacher successfully executes a major lesson readjustment when needed.
  - Teacher seizes on a teachable moment to enhance a lesson.
  - The teacher conveys to students that he won’t consider a lesson “finished” until every student understands, and that he has a broad range of approaches to use.
  - In reflecting on practice, the teacher can cite others in the school and beyond who she has contacted for assistance in reaching some students.

### Possible Examples

**Ineffective**
- The teacher says: “We don’t have time for that today.”
- The teacher makes no attempt to adjust the lesson based on student confusion.
- The teacher says: “If you’d just pay attention, you could understand this.”

**Developing**
- The teacher says: “I’ll try to think of another way to come at this and get back to you.”
- The teacher says: “I realize not everyone understands this, but we can’t spend any more time on it.”
- The teacher re-arranges the way the students are grouped in an attempt to help students understand the lesson.

**Effective**
- The teacher says: “That’s an interesting idea; let’s see how it fits.”
- The teacher illustrates a principle of good writing to a student using his interest in basketball as context.
- The teacher says: “Let’s try this way”, and then uses another approach.

**Highly Effective**
- The teacher stops in mid-stream in a lesson, and says: “This activity doesn’t seem to be working! Here’s another way I’d like you to try it.”
- The teacher incorporates the school’s upcoming championship game into an explanation of averages.
- The teacher says: “If we have to come back to this tomorrow, we will; it’s really important that you understand it.”
Reflecting on teaching encompasses the teacher’s thinking that follows any instructional event, an analysis of the many decisions made both in planning and implementation of a lesson. By considering these elements in light of the impact they had on student learning, teachers can determine where to focus their efforts in making revisions, and what aspects of the instruction they will continue in future lessons. Teachers may reflect on their practice through collegial conversations, journal writing, examining student work, informal observations and conversations with students, or simply thinking about their teaching. Reflecting with accuracy, specificity and ability to use what has been learned in future teaching is a learned skill; mentors, coaches and supervisors can help teachers acquire and develop the skill of reflecting on teaching through supportive and deep questioning. Over time, this way of thinking and analyzing instruction through the lens of student learning becomes a habit of mind, leading to improvement in teaching and learning.

Elements of component 4a are:

- **Accuracy**
  
  *As teachers gain experience, their reflections on practice become more accurate, corresponding to the assessments that would be given by an external and unbiased observer. Not only are the reflections accurate, but teachers can provide specific examples from the lesson to support their judgments.*

- **Use in future teaching**
  
  *In order for the potential of reflection to improve teaching to be fully realized, teachers must use their reflections to make adjustments in their practice. As their experience and expertise increases, teachers draw on an ever-increasing repertoire of strategies to inform these plans.*

Indicators include:

- Accurate reflections on a lesson
- Citations of adjustments to practice, drawing on a repertoire of strategies
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4a Reflecting on Teaching</th>
<th>Ineffective</th>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher does not know whether a lesson was effective or achieved its instructional outcomes, or teacher profoundly misjudges the success of a lesson. Teacher has no suggestions for how a lesson could be improved.</td>
<td>Teacher has a generally accurate impression of a lesson’s effectiveness and the extent to which instructional outcomes were met. Teacher makes general suggestions about how a lesson could be improved.</td>
<td>Teacher makes an accurate assessment of a lesson’s effectiveness and the extent to which it achieved its instructional outcomes and can cite general references to support the judgment. Teacher makes a few specific suggestions of what could be tried another time the lesson is taught.</td>
<td>Teacher makes a thoughtful and accurate assessment of a lesson’s effectiveness and the extent to which it achieved its instructional outcomes, citing many specific examples from the lesson and weighing the relative strengths of each. Drawing on an extensive repertoire of skills, teacher offers specific alternative actions, complete with the probable success of different courses of action.</td>
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### Critical Attributes
- The teacher considers the lesson but draws incorrect conclusions about its effectiveness.
- The teacher makes no suggestions for improvement.
- The teacher has a general sense of whether or not instructional practices were effective.
- The teacher offers general modifications for future instruction.
- The teacher accurately assesses the effectiveness of instructional activities used.
- The teacher identifies specific ways in which a lesson might be improved.

### Possible Examples
- **Despite evidence to the contrary, the teachers says, “My students did great on that lesson!”**
- **The teacher says: “That was awful; I wish I knew what to do!”**
- **At the end of the lesson the teacher says, “I guess that went okay.”**
- **The teacher says: “I guess I’ll try x next time.”**
- **The teacher says: “I wasn’t pleased with the level of engagement of the students.”**
- **The teacher’s journal indicates several possible lesson improvements.**
- **The teacher says: “I think that lesson worked pretty well, although I was disappointed in how the group at the back table performed.”**
- **In conversation with colleagues, the teacher considers different group strategies for improving a lesson.”**
An essential responsibility of professional educators is keeping accurate records of both instructional and non-instructional events. This includes student completion of assignments, student progress in learning, and records of non-instructional activities that are part of the day-to-day functions in a school setting, including such things as the return of signed permission slips for a field trip and money for school pictures. Proficiency in this component is vital, as these records inform interactions with students and parents, and allow teachers to monitor learning and adjust instruction accordingly. The methods of keeping records vary as much as the type of information that is being recorded. For example, records of formal assessments may be recorded electronically, using spreadsheets and databases, allowing for item analysis and individualized instruction. A less formal means of keeping track of student progress may include anecdotal notes that are kept in student folders.

Elements of component 4b are:

- **Student completion of assignments**
  
  Most teachers, particularly at the secondary level, need to keep track of student completion of assignments, including not only whether the assignments were actually completed, but students’ success in completing them.

- **Student progress in learning**
  
  In order to plan instruction, teachers need to know where each student “is” in his or her learning. This information may be collected formally or informally, but must be updated frequently.

- **Non-instructional records**
  
  Non-instructional records encompass all the details of school life for which records must be maintained, particularly if they involve money. Examples are such things as knowing which students have returned their permissions slips for a field trip, or which students have paid for their school pictures.

Indicators include:

- Routines and systems that track student completion of assignments
- Systems of information regarding student progress against instructional outcomes
- Processes of maintaining accurate non-instructional records
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4b</th>
<th>Maintaining Accurate Records</th>
<th>Ineffective</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Highly Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Teacher’s system for maintaining information on student completion of assignments and student progress in learning is nonexistent or in disarray. Teacher’s records for non-instructional activities are in disarray, resulting in errors and confusion. | Teacher’s system for maintaining information on student completion of assignments and student progress in learning is rudimentary and only partially effective. Teacher’s records for non-instructional activities are adequate, but require frequent monitoring to avoid errors. | Teacher’s system for maintaining information on student completion of assignments, student progress in learning, and non-instructional records, is fully effective. Teachers contribute information and participate in maintaining the records. | In addition to the characteristics of “Effective”:  
- Students contribute to and maintain records indicating completed and outstanding work assignments.  
- Students contribute to and maintain data files indicating their own progress in learning.  
- Students contribute to maintaining non-instructional records for the class. |

### Critical Attributes

- Absence of a system for either instructional or non-instructional records.  
- Record-keeping systems that are in disarray so as to provide incorrect or confusing information.  
- The teacher has a process for recording student work completion. However, it may be out-of-date or does not permit students to access the information.  
- The teacher’s process for tracking student progress is cumbersome to use.  
- The teacher has a process for tracking some non-instructional information, but not all, or it may contain some errors.  
- The teacher’s process for recording student work completion is efficient and effective; students have access to information about completed and/or missing assignments.  
- The teacher has an efficient and effective process for recording student attainment of learning goals; students are able to see how they’re progressing.  
- The teacher’s process for recording non-instructional information is both efficient and effective.  

### Possible Examples

- A student says, “I’m sure I turned in that assignment, but the teacher lost it!”  
- The teacher says, “I misplaced the writing samples for my class but it doesn’t matter – I know what the students would have scored.”  
- On the morning of the field trip, the teacher discovers that five students never turned in their permission slips.  
- On the morning of the field trip, the teacher creates a link on the class website which students can access to check on any missing assignments.  
- A student from each team maintains the database of current and missing assignments for the team.  
- When asked about their progress in a class, a student proudly shows her data file and can explain how the documents indicate her progress toward learning goals.  
- When they bring in their permission slips for a field trip, students add their own information to the database.  
- The teacher-creates a spreadsheet for tracking which students have paid for their school pictures.  
- The teacher creates a spreadsheet for tracking which students have paid for their school pictures.  

- A student says, “I wasn’t in school today, and my teacher’s website is out of date, so I don’t know what the assignment are!”  
- The teacher says: “I’ve got all these notes about how the kids are doing; I should put them into the system but I just don’t have time.”  
- On the morning of the field trip, the teacher frantically searches all the drawers in the desk looking for the permission slips and finds them just before the bell rings.  
- When they bring in their permission slips for a field trip, students add their own information to the database.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4c: Communicating with Families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NYS Teaching Standard 1 Element 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>NYS Teaching Standard 5 Element 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>NYS Teaching Standard 6 Element 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the ability of families to participate in their child’s learning varies widely due to other family or job obligations, it is the responsibility of teachers to provide opportunities for them to both understand the instructional program and their child’s progress. Teachers establish relationships with families by communicating to them about the instructional program, about individual students and they invite them to be part of the educational process itself. The level of family participation and involvement tends to be greater at the elementary level, when young children are just beginning school. However, the importance of regular communication with families of adolescents cannot be overstated. A teacher’s effort to communicate with families conveys an essential caring on the part of the teacher, valued by families of students of all ages.

Elements of component 4c are:
- Information about the instructional program
  *Frequent information in provided to families, as appropriate, about the instructional program*
- Information about individual students
  *Frequent information in provided to families, as appropriate, about students’ individual progress*
- Engagement of families in the instructional program
  *Successful and frequent engagement opportunities are offered to families so they can participate in the learning activities*

Indicators include:
- Frequent and culturally appropriate information sent home regarding the instructional program, and student progress
- Two-way communication between the teacher and families
- Frequent opportunities for families to engage in the learning process
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<tr>
<th>Ineffective</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Highly Effective</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher communication with families, about the instructional program, or about individual students, is sporadic or culturally inappropriate. Teacher makes no attempt to engage families in the instructional program.</td>
<td>Teacher makes sporadic attempts to communicate with families about the instructional program and about the progress of individual students but does not attempt to engage families in the instructional program. But communications are one-way and not always appropriate to the cultural norms of those families.</td>
<td>Teacher communicates frequently with families about the instructional program and conveys information about individual student progress. Teacher makes some attempts to engage families in the instructional program; as appropriate Information to families is conveyed in a culturally appropriate manner.</td>
<td>Teacher’s communication with families is frequent and sensitive to cultural traditions, with students contributing to the communication. Response to family concerns is handled with professional and cultural sensitivity. Teacher’s efforts to engage families in the instructional program are frequent and successful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Critical Attributes</strong></td>
<td>School or district-created materials about the instructional program are sent home.</td>
<td>Information about the instructional program is available on a regular basis.</td>
<td>In addition to the characteristics of “Effective”:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Little or no information regarding instructional program available to parents.</td>
<td>Infrequent or incomplete information sent home by teachers about the instructional program.</td>
<td>The teacher sends information about student progress home on a regular basis.</td>
<td>– On a regular basis, students develop materials to inform their families about the instructional program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Families are unaware of their children’s progress.</td>
<td>Teacher maintains school-required grade book but does little else to inform families about student progress.</td>
<td>Teacher develops activities designed to successfully engage families in their children’s learning, as appropriate.</td>
<td>– Students maintain accurate records about their individual learning progress and frequently share this information with families.</td>
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<tr>
<td>– Lack of family engagement activities.</td>
<td>Teacher communications are sometimes inappropriate to families’ cultural norms.</td>
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<td>– Students contribute to regular and ongoing projects designed to engage families in the learning process.</td>
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<tr>
<td>– Culturally inappropriate communication.</td>
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<td><strong>Possible Examples</strong></td>
<td>A parent says, “I’d like to know what my kid is working on at school!”</td>
<td>The teacher-sends weekly newsletter home to families, including information that precedes homework, current class activities, community and/or school projects, field trips, etc.</td>
<td>Students-create materials for “Back to School” night that outline the approach for learning science.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– A parent says, “I wish I knew something about my child’s progress before the report card comes out.”</td>
<td>A parent says, “I received the district pamphlet on the reading program, but I wonder how it’s being taught in my child’s class.”</td>
<td>The teacher-created monthly progress report sent home for each student.</td>
<td>Student daily reflection log describes learning and go home each week for a response from a parent or guardian.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– A parent says, “I wonder why we never see any school work come home.”</td>
<td>A parent says, “I emailed the teacher about my child’s struggles with math, but all I got back was a note saying that he’s doing fine.”</td>
<td>The teacher sends home a project that asks students to interview a family member about growing up during the 1950’s.</td>
<td>Students-design a project on charting family use of plastics.</td>
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<td>Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>4d:</strong> Participating in a Professional Community</td>
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<tr>
<th>NYS Teaching Standard 6 Elements 2, 4, 5</th>
<th>NYS Teaching Standard 7 Elements 1-4</th>
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</table>

Schools are, first of all, environments to promote the learning of students. But in promoting student learning, teachers must work with their colleagues to share strategies, plan joint efforts, and plan for the success of individual students. Schools are, in other words, professional organizations for teachers, with their full potential realized only when teachers regard themselves as members of a professional community. This community is characterized by mutual support and respect, and recognition of the responsibility of all teachers to be constantly seeking ways to improve their practice and to contribute to the life of the school. Inevitably, teachers’ duties extend beyond the doors of their classrooms and include activities related to the entire school and/or larger district. These activities include such things as school and district curriculum committees, or engagement with the parent teacher organization. With experience, teachers assume leadership roles in these activities.

Elements of component 4d are:

- Relationships with colleagues
  *Teachers maintain a professional collegial relationship that encourages sharing, planning and working together toward improved instructional skill and student success*

- Involvement in a culture of professional inquiry
  *Teachers contribute to and participate in a learning community that supports and respects its members’ efforts to improve practice*

- Service to the school
  *Teachers’ efforts move beyond classroom duties by to contributing to school initiatives and projects*

- Participation in school and district projects
  *Teachers contribute to and support larger school and district projects designed to improve the professional community*

Indicators include:

- Regular teacher participation with colleagues to share and plan for student success
- Regular teacher participation in professional courses or communities that emphasize improving practice
- Regular teacher participation in school initiatives
- Regular teacher participation and support of community initiatives
### 4d: Participating in a Professional Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ineffective</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Highly Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher’s relationships with colleagues are negative or self-serving. Teacher avoids participation in a professional culture of inquiry, resisting opportunities to become involved. Teacher avoids becoming involved in school events or school and district projects.</td>
<td>Teacher maintains cordial relationships with colleagues to fulfill duties that the school or district requires. Teacher becomes involved in the school’s culture of professional inquiry when invited to do so. Teacher participates in school events and school and district projects when specifically asked.</td>
<td>Relationships with colleagues are characterized by mutual support and cooperation; teacher actively participates in a culture of professional inquiry. Teacher volunteers to participate in school events and in school and district projects, making a substantial contribution.</td>
<td>Relationships with colleagues are characterized by mutual support and cooperation, with the teacher taking initiative in assuming leadership among the faculty. Teacher takes a leadership role in promoting a culture of professional inquiry. Teacher volunteers to participate in school events and district projects, making a substantial contribution, and assuming a leadership role in at least one aspect of school or district life.</td>
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</table>

### Critical Attributes

- The teacher’s relationship with colleagues is characterized by negativity or combativeness.
- The teacher purposefully avoids contributing to activities promoting professional inquiry.
- The teacher avoids involvement in school activities and school district and community projects.
- The teacher has pleasant relationship with colleagues.
- When invited, the teacher participates in activities related to professional inquiry.
- When asked, the teacher participates in school activities, and school district and community projects.
- The teacher has supportive and collaborative relationships with colleagues.
- The teacher regularly participates in activities related to professional inquiry.
- The teacher frequently volunteers to participate in school events and school district and community projects.
- In addition to the characteristics of “Effective”:
  - The teacher takes a leadership role in promoting activities related to professional inquiry.
  - The teacher regularly contributes to and leads events that positively impact school life.
  - The teacher regularly contributes to and leads significant school district and community projects.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible Examples</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>♦️The teacher doesn’t share test-taking strategies with his colleagues. He figures that if his students do well, it will make him look good.</td>
<td>♦️The teacher is polite, but never shares any instructional materials with his grade partners.</td>
<td>♦️The principal remarks that the teacher’s students have been noticeably successful since her teacher team has been focusing on instructional strategies during their team meetings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦️The teacher does not attend PLC meetings.</td>
<td>♦️The teacher only attends PLC meetings when reminded by her supervisor.</td>
<td>♦️The teacher has decided to take some of the free MIT courses online and to share his learning with colleagues.</td>
</tr>
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<td>♦️The teacher does not attend any school function after the dismissal bell.</td>
<td>♦️The principal says, “I wish I didn’t have to ask the teacher to ‘volunteer’ every time we need someone to chaperone the dance.”</td>
<td>♦️The basketball coach is usually willing to chaperone the 9th grade dance because she knows all of her players will be there.</td>
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<tr>
<td>♦️The teacher says, “I work from 8:30 to 3:30 and not a minute more – I won’t serve on any district committee unless they get me a substitute to cover my class.”</td>
<td>♦️The teacher only contributes to the district Literacy committee when requested by the principal.</td>
<td>♦️The teacher enthusiastically represents the school during the district Social Studies review and brings her substantial knowledge of U.S. history to the course writing team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦️The principali remarks that the teacher’s students have been noticeably successful since her teacher team has been focusing on instructional strategies during their team meetings.</td>
<td>♦️The teacher leads the “mentor” teacher group at school, devoted to supporting new teachers during their first years of teaching.</td>
<td>♦️The teacher leads the school’s annual “Olympics” day, involving all students and faculty in athletic events.</td>
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<tr>
<td>♦️The teacher only attends PLC meetings when reminded by her supervisor.</td>
<td>♦️The teacher hosts a book study group that meets monthly; he guides the book choices so that the group can focus on topics that will enhance their skills.</td>
<td>♦️The teacher leads the school district wellness committee, involving healthcare and nutrition specialists from the community.</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>4e: Growing and Developing Professionally</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td><strong>NYS Teaching Standard 6 Element 2</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NYS Teaching Standard 7 Element 1-4</strong></td>
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</table>

As in other professions, the complexity of teaching requires continued growth and development, in order to remain current. Continuing to stay informed and increasing their skills allows teachers to become ever more effective and to exercise leadership among their colleagues. The academic disciplines themselves evolve, and educators constantly refine their understanding of how to engage students in learning; thus growth in content, pedagogy, and information technology are essential to good teaching. Networking with colleagues through such activities as joint planning, study groups, and lesson study provide opportunities for teachers to learn from one another. These activities allow for job embedded professional development. In addition, professional educators increase their effectiveness in the classroom by belonging to professional organizations, reading professional journals, attending educational conferences, and taking university classes. As they gain experience and expertise, educators find ways to contribute to their colleagues and to the profession.

Elements of component 4e are:

- Enhancement of content knowledge and pedagogical skill
  *Teachers remain current by taking courses, reading professional literature, and remaining current on the evolution of thinking regarding instruction*
- Receptivity to feedback from colleagues
  *Teachers actively pursue networks that provide collegial support and feedback*
- Service to the profession
  *Teachers are active in professional organizations serving to enhance their personal practice and so they can provide leadership and support to colleagues*

Indicators include:

- Frequent teacher attendance in courses and workshops; regular academic reading
- Participation in learning networks with colleagues; feedback freely shared
- Participation in professional organizations supporting academic inquiry
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical Attributes</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Highly Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The teacher is not involved in any activity that might enhance knowledge or skill.</td>
<td>The teacher participates in professional activities to a limited extent when they are convenient. The teacher accepts, with some reluctance, feedback on teaching performance from both supervisors and professional colleagues. Teacher finds limited ways to contribute to the profession.</td>
<td>The teacher seeks regular opportunities for professional development to enhance content knowledge and pedagogical skill. Teacher welcomes feedback from colleagues when made by supervisors or when opportunities arise through professional collaboration. Teacher participates actively in assisting other educators.</td>
<td>In addition to the characteristics of “Effective”: The teacher seeks regular opportunities for professional development, including initiating action research. Teacher seeks out feedback on teaching from both supervisors and colleagues. Teacher initiates important activities to contribute to the profession.</td>
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### Possible Examples

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Highly Effective</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The teacher never takes continuing education courses, even though the credits would increase his salary.</td>
<td>The teacher politely attends district workshops and professional development days, but doesn’t make much use of the materials received.</td>
<td>The teacher’s principal rarely spends time observing in her classroom. Therefore, she has initiated an action research project in order to improve her own instruction.</td>
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<td>The teacher endures the principal’s annual observations in her classroom, knowing that if she waits long enough, the principal will eventually leave and she can simply discard the feedback form.</td>
<td>The teacher listens to his principal’s feedback after a lesson, but isn’t sure that the recommendations really apply in his situation.</td>
<td>The teacher is working on a particular instructional strategy and asks his colleagues to observe in his classroom in order to provide objective feedback on his progress.</td>
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<td>Despite teaching high school honors mathematics, the teacher declines to join NCTM because it costs too much and makes too many demands on members’ time.</td>
<td>The teacher joins the local chapter of the American Library Association because she might benefit from the free books – but otherwise doesn’t feel it’s worth too much of her time.</td>
<td>The teacher founded a local organization devoted to Literacy Education; her leadership has inspired teachers in the community to work on several curriculum and instruction projects.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>4f: Showing Professionalism</td>
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<tr>
<td>NYS Teaching Standard 6</td>
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<td>Elements 1-5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>NYS Teaching Standard 7</td>
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<td>Element 2</td>
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Expert teachers demonstrate professionalism in both service to students as well as to the profession. Teaching at the highest levels of performance in this component is student focused, putting students first, regardless of how this might challenge long-held assumptions, past practice or simply what is easier or more convenient for teachers. Accomplished teachers have a strong moral compass and are guided by what is in the best interest of students. Professionalism is displayed in a number of ways. For example, interactions with colleagues are conducted with honesty and integrity. Student needs are known and teachers access resources to step in and provide help that may extend beyond the classroom. Teachers advocate for their students in ways that might challenge traditional views and the educational establishment, seeking greater flexibility in the ways school rules and policies are applied. Professionalism is also displayed in the ways teachers approach problem solving and decision making, with student needs in mind. Finally, teachers consistently adhere to school and district policies and procedures, but are willing to work to improve those that may be outdated or ineffective.

Elements of component 4f are:
- Integrity and ethical conduct
  - Teachers act with integrity and honesty
- Service to students
  - Teachers put students first in all considerations of their practice
- Advocacy
  - Teachers support their students’ best interests, even in the face of traditional practice or beliefs
- Decision-making
  - Teachers solve problems with students’ needs as a priority
- Compliance with school and district regulations
  - Teachers adhere to policies and procedures

Indicators include:
- Teacher has a reputation as someone who can be trusted and is often sought as a sounding board
- During committee or planning work, teacher frequently reminds participants that the students are the utmost priority
- Teacher will support students, even in the face of difficult situations or conflicting policies
- Teachers challenge existing practice in order to put students first
- Teacher consistently fulfills school district mandates regarding policies and procedures
<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>4f: Showing Professionalism</strong></th>
<th><strong>Ineffective</strong></th>
<th><strong>Developing</strong></th>
<th><strong>Effective</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher displays dishonesty in interactions with colleagues, students, and the public. Teacher is not alert to students’ needs and contributes to school practices that result in some students being ill served by the school. Teacher makes decisions and recommendations based on self-serving interests. Teacher does not comply with school and district regulations.</td>
<td>Teacher is honest in interactions with colleagues, students, and the public. Teacher’s attempts to serve students are inconsistent, and do not knowingly contribute to some students being ill served by the school. Teacher’s decisions and recommendations are based on limited though genuinely professional considerations. Teacher complies minimally with school and district regulations, doing just enough to get by.</td>
<td>Teacher displays high standards of honesty, integrity, and confidentiality in interactions with colleagues, students, and the public. Teacher is active in serving students, working to ensure that all students receive a fair opportunity to succeed. Teacher maintains an open mind in team or departmental decision-making. Teacher complies fully with school and district regulations.</td>
<td>Teacher can be counted on to hold the highest standards of honesty, integrity, and confidentiality and takes a leadership role with colleagues. Teacher is highly proactive in serving students, seeking out resources when needed. Teacher makes a concerted effort to challenge negative attitudes or practices to ensure that all students, particularly those traditionally underserved, are honored in the school. Teacher takes a leadership role in team or departmental decision-making and helps ensure that such decisions are based on the highest professional standards. Teacher complies fully with school and district regulations, taking a leadership role with colleagues.</td>
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**Critical Attributes**

- Teacher is dishonest.
- Teacher does not notice the needs of students.
- The teacher engages in practices that are self-serving.
- The teacher willfully rejects school district regulations.
- Teacher is honest.
- Teacher notices the needs of students, but is inconsistent in addressing them.
- Teacher does not notice that some school practices result in poor conditions for students.
- Teacher makes decision professionally, but on a limited basis.
- Teacher complies with school district regulations.
- Teacher is honest and known for having high standards of integrity.
- Teacher actively addresses student needs.
- Teacher actively works to provide opportunities for student success.
- Teacher willingly participates in team and departmental decision-making.
- Teacher complies completely with school district regulations.
- Teacher is considered a leader in terms of honesty, integrity, and confidentiality.
- Teacher is highly proactive in serving students.
- Teacher makes a concerted effort to ensure opportunities are available for all students to be successful.
- Teacher takes a leadership role in team and departmental decision-making.
- Teacher takes a leadership role regarding school district regulations.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Possible Examples</th>
<th>Ineffective</th>
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<th>Highly Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The teacher makes some errors when marking the last common assessment but doesn’t tell his colleagues.</td>
<td>• The teacher says, “I have always known my grade partner to be truthful. If she called in sick, then I believe her.”</td>
<td>• The teacher is trusted by his grade partners; they share information with him, confident it will not be repeated inappropriately.</td>
<td>• When a young teacher has trouble understanding directions from the principal, she immediately goes to the teacher whom she knows can be relied on for expert advice and complete discretion.</td>
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<td>• The teacher does not realize that three of her neediest students arrived at school an hour early every morning because their mother can’t afford daycare.</td>
<td>• The teacher considers staying late to help some of her students in afterschool daycare, but realizes it conflicts with her gym class so she decides against it.</td>
<td>• Despite her lack of knowledge about dance the teacher forms a dance club at her high school to meet the high interest level of her minority students who cannot afford lessons.</td>
<td>• After the school’s intramural basketball program is discontinued, the teacher finds some former student athletes to come in and work with his students who have come to love the after-school sessions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The teacher fails to notice that one of her Kindergartners is often ill, looks malnourished, and frequently has bruises on her arms and legs.</td>
<td>• The teacher notices a student struggling in his class and sends a quick e-mail to the counselor. When he doesn’t get a response, he assumes it has been taken care of.</td>
<td>• The teacher notices some speech delays in a few of her young students; she calls in the speech therapist to do a few sessions in her classroom and provide feedback on further steps.</td>
<td>• The teacher enlists the help of her principal when she realizes that a colleague was making disparaging comments about some disadvantaged students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• When one his colleagues goes home suddenly due to illness, the teacher pretends to have a meeting so that he won’t have to share in the coverage responsibilities.</td>
<td>• When her grade partner goes out on maternity leave, the teacher said, “Hello” and “Welcome” to her substitute, but does not offer any further assistance.</td>
<td>• The English department chair says, “I appreciate when .... attends our after school meetings; he always contributes something meaningful to the discussion.”</td>
<td>• The math department looks forward to their weekly meetings; their leader, the teacher is always seeking new instructional strategies and resources for them to discuss.</td>
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<td>• The teacher does not file her students’ writing samples in their district cum folders; it is time consuming and she wants to leave early for summer break.</td>
<td>• The teacher keeps his district-required grade book up to date, but enters exactly the minimum number of assignments specified by his department chair.</td>
<td>• The teacher learns the district’s new online curriculum mapping system and writes in all of her courses.</td>
<td>• When the district adopts a new web-based grading program, the teacher learned it inside and out so that she could assist her colleagues with implementation.</td>
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Appendix B

Initial Email to Participants

June ___, 2015

Dear Teachers,

My name is Melanie Pombrio. I am a doctoral candidate in the College of Professional Studies at Northeastern University. As part of my dissertation research, I am conducting a study on teacher perceptions of the new evaluation system. More specifically, the classroom observation component of the Annual Professional Performance Review.

In order to obtain data about this relevant topic, I am asking you to be a participant in my research. I have asked you to participate in this interview process because you participated in the classroom observation component associated with the APPR evaluation system in your district. Due to your previous experience you have a unique perspective with regards to the process and your responses will help me gain insight into teachers’ perceptions of the new evaluation system.

The interview process will take place in two stages and take approximately 60 minutes to complete. During the initial interview, I will ask some biographical information and proceed to asking questions that pertain to your experiences with the classroom observation process in your district. The second interview will be for verification and confirmation of the information recorded during the initial interview and to provide an opportunity for follow up questions to be asked by both the participant and researcher. Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. There is no punitive action if you decide not to participate.

The interviews are completely confidential. If you have any questions, please contact Melanie Pombrio at pombrino.m@husky.neu.edu. Thank you for your consideration.

Fondly,

Melanie Pombrio
Doctoral Candidate, College of Professional Studies
Northeastern University, Boston
Appendix C

Northeastern University College of Professional Studies

Name of Student Researcher: Melanie Pombrio

Title of Project: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis Study Exploring the Teacher Evaluation Process in New York State

I am inviting you to take part in a research study. This form will tell you about the study, but the researcher will explain it to you first. You may ask the researcher any questions you have. When you are ready to make a decision, you may tell the researcher if you want to participate or not. You are not required to participate if you do not want to. If you decide to participate, the researcher will ask you to sign this statement and will give you a copy for your records.

You have been asked to participate in this study because you are a practicing educator working who has experienced and received feedback that was a result of the implementation of the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) process. As a participant in this process your perceptions are valuable to research being performed in the field of educational research.

The purpose of this research is to examine the perceptions of teachers involved in the APPR process. If you decide to take part in this study, the researcher will ask you to answer a brief set of questions related to the classroom evaluation component of the APPR process.

The interviews will take place at your convenience. It is anticipated that the initial interview and follow up interview will take approximately 30 to 60 minutes each; therefore the total amount of time spent should be approximately 180 minutes.

There are no foreseeable risks involved if you decide to participate in this study. The researcher will keep participant names and all responses confidential. Additionally, all participants will agree to keep all information regarding their participants and responses confidential.

There will be no direct benefit to you if you decide to participate in the study and you will receive no compensation for your participation. You will also not incur an expenses as a result of your participation either. However, the information obtained from this study could impact the future implementation of educator evaluation in the New York state and beyond.

Only the study researcher will see your personal information. No reports or publications will use information that can identify you in any way. All audio recordings will be erased after analysis.
You are in no way required to participate in this study. Discontinuing your participation will not affect you in any professional manner. At any time during the study, you may refuse to answer questions or discontinue your participation. If you choose not to participate, do not sign and ignore this form.

If you have any questions about the research being conducted, you may contact

Melanie Pombrio                                Kelly Conn, Ph.D.
Student Investigator                           Academic Advisor
Cell #: (518) 332-5717                         Northeastern University, Boston
Email: pombrio.m@husky.neu.edu                 Campus #: (617) 337-2400
                                      Email: k.conn@neu.edu

If you have any questions about your rights in this research, you may contact

Nan C. Regina, Director, Human Subject Research Protection
960 Renaissance Park, Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115
Tel: 617.373.4588
Email: n.regina@neu.edu

You may call anonymously if you wish.

I agree to take part in this research.

____________________________________________  ________________________
Signature of participant      Date

____________________________________________
Printed name of participant

____________________________________________  ________________________
Signature of researcher      Date

____________________________________________
Printed name of researcher
Certificate of Completion
The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that Melanie Pombrio successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course “Protecting Human Research Participants”.

Date of completion: 10/12/2013
Certification Number: 1301569

Certificate of Completion
The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that Melanie Pombrio successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course “Protecting Human Research Participants”.

Date of completion: 04/12/2014
Certification Number: 1448561
Appendix E

Interview Protocol

Preliminary Interview

In the initial conversation, the researcher will introduce herself, establish rapport, describe the study, and answer any questions that the participant may have. After this segment of the interview, the researcher will ask the participant to sign the Informed Consent Form (Appendix C). Once the Informed Consent Form is signed by the participant, the researcher will thank the participant for agreeing to be a part of the study, and ask the participant to:

- Choose a pseudonym to use for the study
- Agree to logistical details, including date, time, and location, for the formal interview

Researcher Script:

Good ______________ my name is Melanie Pombrio. I am a doctoral candidate in the Doctor of Education program at Northeastern University. In addition to my studies, I am a full time teacher at the middle and high school level in a school district located in New York State.

Thank you for agreeing to be a participant in this study and subsequent dissertation research. The purpose of my research is to understand how teachers in New York perceive the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) process. This interview will focus on your experiences as a teacher who has experienced the APPR process during the 2014-2015 academic year. I am hoping the study will provide me greater insight as to teacher perceptions of the APPR process.

All information is and will continue to be kept anonymous and confidential, with no personally identifying information noted in the interviews. Throughout the interviews, I will refer to you by your chosen pseudonym and of course, your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw from this study at any time.

With your permission, I will record this session. Once this interview is transcribed, I will provide you with a copy of the transcript for your review. May I proceed?

After obtaining the participant’s agreement to continue, the researcher will begin the interview process and at this point I will address the participant by his or her pseudonym. The formal interview process will begin as follows:
Background Questions:

We will not start the actual interview just yet; however, I would like to start by asking you for some background information that will help me understand your experiences. This part should take no more than 5-8 minutes, so please provide brief answers.

- How long have you been a classroom teacher?
- What is the current curriculum that you teach?
- What is the current grade level that you teach?

After asking the background questions, the researcher will begin the formal interview, stating the participant’s pseudonym when describing with who is participating in the interview. In an introductory statement, the researcher will:

- Explain that the interview is part of a study on teacher perceptions of the APPR process.
- Thank the participant for being a part of the study, and explain that the researcher will:
  - make a recording of the conversation in order to accurately capture participant’s accounts
  - take hand written notes to capture any information not able to be ascertained in the transcription of the interview

After securing the participant’s agreement, the researcher will reiterate that all responses are confidential, and will ask if the participant has any remaining questions before starting with formal interview questions.
### Semi-structured Interview – Round Two

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<th>#</th>
<th>Question</th>
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| 1  | To help me understand your classroom experiences since implementing the new APPR regulations, can you tell me about times when you might have had to make adjustments in what you were doing and how you went about doing that?  
Prompt:  
  a. Can you describe changes you have made in instructional strategies as a result of APPR?  
  b. Can you describe changes you have made in classroom management as a result of APPR?  
  c. Can you describe changes you have made in the learning environment as a result of APPR?  
  d. Can you describe changes you have made in your professional relationships as a result of APPR?  
  e. How did you make decisions about what changes to incorporate since the APPR process began? |
| 2  | In reflecting upon your overall APPR experiences, can you tell me how you think about your own learning and development as a teacher?                                                                       |
| 3  | As you reflect on the new APPR process, how do you feel about the process as a whole and why?                                                                                                           |
| 4  | What are your opinions of the Danielson Framework; the standards and indicators of effective teaching practice?                                                                                          |
| 5  | Were there any changes in your teaching practice that you attribute to the new system? Can you give an example?                                                                                         |
If I were to ask you to provide me one word to describe your APPR experience what would that word be and why would that be your chosen word?

Do you have any final thoughts or reflections you would like to share with me?

Thank you for participating. I will send you copy of the transcript from this interview and will contact you afterward to obtain additional information needed. In addition, I will verify that my interpretations of the interview data accurately depict your sentiments.

Melanie R. Pombrio