2014

Determining Effective/Ineffective: The Barriers Facing Minnesota Teacher Remediation

Matthew John Hillmann
Minnesota State University - Mankato

Determining Effective/Ineffective: The Barriers Facing Minnesota Teacher Remediation

By

Matthew J. Hillmann, Ed.S.

This Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Educational

Doctorate Degree in Educational Leadership

Minnesota State University, Mankato

Mankato, Minnesota

November 2014

This dissertation has been examined and approved.

Examining Committee:

_____

Dr. Candace Raskin, Chair

_____

Dr. Scott Page, Professor

_____

Dr. Jerry Robicheau, Professor Emeritus

Abstract

This dissertation investigated the attributes of effective and ineffective teachers, the conditions that would prompt Minnesota principals to recommend an ineffective teacher for remediation, and barriers that prevent Minnesota principals from remediating ineffective teaching. The mixed methods study used the iterative Delphi technique to gain consensus of an expert panel of 16 Minnesota principals on these topics. Three surveys were administered with participants able to review raw survey data prior to the second and third round surveys. The study aligned with previous research about the barriers principals face when attempting to remediate an ineffective teacher, which has stated that time and documentation are the major issues. In addition, new themes emerged that may assist principals in understanding the barriers they face in remediating ineffective teachers in their schools.

Keywords: principal, leadership, effective teaching, ineffective teaching, remediation

Acknowledgements

This endeavor caps a 17-year graduate school career and a third advanced degree, all at Minnesota State University, Mankato. I started my first graduate class a few months before Mary and I were married in 1997. She is ever supportive of my somewhat crazy, pollyanish endeavors and this simply would not have been possible without her. She is the heart of our family and I love her with all of my soul. Our children do not know a time when I didn't go to class. Mary conditioned Jackson, Grace, and Peter to 'love' the nights Dad was at class – they used to cheer because "we get to have cereal for dinner!" During this final dissertation push, they have been incredibly encouraging. I am fortunate to have such a fantastic, supportive family.

Thank you to the wonderful mentors in my education career: Vince Schaefer, Lowell Hoffman, Kelly Smith, Mary Grace Hanson, Gary Lewis, and Chris Richardson. Without them, I wouldn't have taken the path that has led me to this point. I would like to extend special thanks to Dr. Lewis for serving as one of my editors during this dissertation process. Dr. Richardson has been extremely supportive and a wonderful mentor in my doctoral journey.

I am thankful for my fellow doctoral students. Dr. Paul Peterson and Dr. Anthony VonBank have been consistent sources of inspiration. Most of all, thanks to Sheri Allen. Our mutual encouragement to complete our dissertations has been a lifesaver many times!

I want to extend sincere thanks to my MSU mentors. Jean Haar, Jerry Robicheau, Scott Page, and Candace Raskin. These brilliant people saw ability in me and felt compelled to nurture my academic career. I'd like to extend special thanks to Dr. Raskin for her high expectations of my work and continuing to push me to new levels of scholarly competence. It will not be forgotten.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1

Introduction

Background of the Problem

In the United States, the 'American Dream' is often used as a metaphor for the notion a person, through hard work and perseverance, can achieve prosperity and success. One necessary component in realizing the American Dream is an effective system of public education; and the key to a quality education is an effective teacher.

Stronge, Ward, and Grant (2011) stated, "One conclusion regarding effective teachers is abundantly clear: The common denominator in school improvement and student success is the teacher" (p. 351). Former Secretary of Education Richard Riley (1998) echoes this conclusion:

Providing quality education means that we should invest in higher standards for all children, improved curricula, tests to measure student achievement, safe schools, and increased use of technology—but the most critical investment we can make is in well qualified, caring, and committed teachers. Without good teachers to implement them, no educational reforms will succeed at helping all students learn to their full potential (p. 18).

In an effort to ensure each child has access to an effective teacher, there has been an increased focus on measuring that effectiveness. Focus on effective teaching has prompted 32 states to modify their teacher evaluation requirements since 2008 (National Council on Teacher Quality, 2011a). Sanders and Rivers (1996) found that students who had three consecutive effective teachers during their formative years in grades 3, 4, and 5 had significantly higher scores on achievement tests than those who had three consecutive ineffective teachers during the same period.

The impact of an effective teacher may even influence other students. Children who have had effective teachers in the past carry that experience forward with them. While the impact may fade over time, their improved skills can impact the academic achievement of other students (Kane & Staiger, 2008). Data indicates that teacher effectiveness makes a significant difference in student achievement (Kane & Staiger, 2008; Sanders & Rivers, 1996; Stronge et al., 2011), and teachers whose students perform well on standardized tests tend to exhibit similar qualities (Stronge et al., 2011).

Understanding what teacher qualities impact student achievement should influence the manner in which professional development is planned and conducted. Once the characteristics essential to effective teaching and those areas that characterize ineffective teaching are identified, it becomes possible to help teachers develop their strengths and minimize their weaknesses.

Ineffective teaching is a serious problem. Ineffective teachers adversely impact children's education (Causey, 2010; Kane & Staiger, 2008). Estimates demonstrate that between five and 15 percent of teachers are either considered ineffective or incompetent (Henderson-Sparks, Ehrgott, & Sparks, 1995; Tucker, 2001). Students who learn under the direction of ineffective teachers are at a significant disadvantage in comparison to their peers who have access to effective teachers.

In the past, researchers have come to the conclusion that teachers have a significant impact on students (Hattie, 2009; Kane & Staiger, 2008; McEwan, 2002; Pritchett, Starks, & Taylor-Johnson, 2011; Sanders & Rivers, 1996; Stronge et al., 2011). As a result, it is important to ask why school principals do not address the issue of ineffective teaching. Several issues can play a role in administrators not addressing ineffective teaching. For example, the amount of

time that it takes to work with an ineffective teacher to improve their practice can be daunting.

Principals often have competing responsibilities and unanticipated events arise each day that

demand the principal's attention. In the end, time may be the single biggest barrier to principals

taking on the challenge (Causey, 2010; Tucker, 1997).

Paperwork and the documentation needed to provide a foundation for "proving"

ineffective teaching also plays a role. Each district has procedures to follow and documents that

must be completed when an ineffective teacher enters a formal remediation process. The amount

of paperwork can be a barrier to the principal making a conscious decision to take on the

challenge of addressing ineffective teaching (Causey, 2010). And one misstep can derail the

entire process.

It is critical that principals document inefficiencies, inability to manage the classroom,

inadequate instructional practices, and other incidents that are indicative of ineffective or

incompetent teaching. The documentation process can be cumbersome and principals need to

know what to record and how to record it. The rigors of the documentation process can be a

significant barrier in addressing ineffective teaching (Causey, 2010).

School climate can also be influenced when ineffective teaching is addressed (Causey,

2010; Tucker, 1997). Schools are social places and teachers talk amongst themselves. When a

principal works with a teacher to address ineffective or incompetent teaching, colleagues in the

school can become involved in an indirect way by rallying to (support and) console the teacher.

This can cause issues in the school's culture (Causey 2010; Tucker, 1997). In the reverse, a

principal who does not address ineffective or incompetent teaching can inadvertently also impact

climate (Causey, 2010).

Ineffective teaching has an adverse impact on children and their learning. Each child

only gets one chance for a quality public education. School principals hold the enormous responsibility of ensuring the children in their school have effective teachers. It is also their responsibility to help remediate or dismiss ineffective teachers who harm children's opportunities to realize the American Dream. Understanding what prevents principals from confronting ineffective teaching is a necessary first step in the problem.

Problem Statement

Estimates indicate that between five and 15 percent of teachers are ineffective or incompetent (Henderson-Sparks et al., 1995; Tucker, 2001). Ineffective teachers hamper children's opportunity to reach their full potential. School principals have the responsibility to supervise, evaluate, and remediate ineffective teachers. Principals are not addressing ineffective teaching in an acceptable manner.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the study is to investigate what barriers prevent Minnesota principals from addressing ineffective teaching. Determining the issues principals face when deciding if it is appropriate to address ineffective teaching–both instructionally and politically–is critical in supporting principals by developing a mechanism that assists them in addressing ineffective teachers.

Research Question

This study will examine the barriers Minnesota principals face when addressing ineffective teaching.

The research question for this study is: What barriers prevent principals from enacting formal remediation plans with teachers they consider ineffective?

Significance of the Research

A limited body of research exists identifying the barriers that prevent principals from addressing ineffective teaching in their schools. What are these barriers? This question is critical to setting a foundation for addressing ineffective teaching.

A wealth of research has identified advantages for students who learn from an effective teacher (Hanushek, 2009; Heck, 2009; Nye, Konstantopoulos, & Larry, 2004; Sanders & Rivers, 1996; Stronge et al., 2011). Parents, students, and communities expect and deserve effective teachers. As with any field, there are differences in the levels of competency among teachers. Every community knows this fact and privileged parents do what they can to ensure their child has access to the effective teachers at their school. Discussions within communities about ineffective teachers are common and a societal frustration builds when a teacher they deem ineffective or incompetent is allowed to continue working with students.

Many community members have a 'boss' that monitors their effectiveness and can fire employees who are not meeting expectations. Some look to the school principal, the 'management' with the responsibility to develop, evaluate, congratulate, remediate, and terminate teachers on their staff. A perception is that ineffective teachers cannot get better and cannot be terminated. They may even blame the principal for the ineffective teaching occurring during his or her watch.

This study aims to identify the barriers principals face in addressing ineffective teaching. Once the barriers are named, further discussion can take place about them and the reasons for their existence. Additional research based on these barriers might help develop strategies to minimize these barriers and increase teacher effectiveness.

Definition of Key Terms

  Barrier. A barrier refers to an obstacle or something that prevents someone from accomplishing a goal or completing a task.

  Effective teaching. Effective teaching refers to the sum impact of relationship building, knowledge of student skills, and the intentional instructional strategies designed to improve student areas of growth. This is often measured by students attaining a passing score on a standardized test.

  Expert. An expert has a special skill or knowledge about a certain area because of what he or she has been taught or experienced (Merriam-Webster).

  Ineffective teaching. Ineffective teaching can be defined by the strategies, approaches, and dispositions that result in the stagnation or regression of student skills. This is often measured by lack of attainment on standardized tests.

  Perception. Perception is the way you think about or understand someone or something (Merriam-Webster).

  Principal. A principal is the person responsible for leading and managing a school.

  Remediate. Remediate is the act of improving an individual or process that had been performing below standard.

  School culture. School culture generally refers to the beliefs, perceptions, relationships, attitudes, and written and unwritten rules that shape and influence every aspect of how a school functions, but the term also encompasses more concrete issues such as the physical and emotional safety of students, the orderliness of classrooms and public spaces, or the degree to which a school embraces and celebrates racial, ethnic, linguistic, or cultural diversity (The Glossary of Education Reform).

School climate. School climate is the quality and character of school life. It may be based on patterns of student, parent, and school personnel experiences within the school and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures (National School Climate Center).

Standardized tests. A test that employs content based on an approved list of standards and is administered in a similar manner to a pre-determined group of students. A standardized test is any form of test that requires all test takers to answer the same questions, or a selection of questions from common bank of questions, in the same way, and that is scored in a "standard" or consistent manner, which makes it possible to compare the relative performance of individual students or groups of students (Glossary of Education Reform).

Tenure. Tenure is a property right for a teacher to employment (after a probationary period) in the district until the employee retires, resigns, dies, is terminated, or agrees to a change in contract status (Baratz-Snowden, 2009).

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

This chapter contains a review of the literature on the characteristics and impact of effective teachers, the role and history of tenure in public education, the status of teacher evaluation systems, and the barriers that prevent principals from addressing ineffective teaching and remediating ineffective teachers. It chronicles the characteristics, traits, conditions, and strategies that distinguish effective from ineffective teachers. It includes the impact that effective teaching has on student achievement and society. It documents the setbacks students suffer from ineffective teaching. It reviews the history of tenure in public education in the United States and provides background for why many in the public perceive tenure as an obstacle in addressing ineffective teaching. The review of the literature also focuses on issues associated with teacher evaluation and reform movements touted to improve evaluation techniques for educators. Finally, the review calls out the specific items that are most often perceived as a barrier for school principals when remediating ineffective teachers.

Characteristics of Effective Teachers

Teachers of students who achieve in the top quartile demonstrate important distinctions on standardized tests when compared to teachers of students who achieve in the bottom quartile of standardized tests (Stronge et al., 2011). The following skills illustrate what literature tells us about the common characteristics that effective teachers demonstrate.

Higher verbal ability. Effective teachers have higher levels of verbal ability as measured by their performance on the ACT examination (Goe, 2007; Pritchett et al., 2011). Effective teachers are able to explain concepts so that students are able to make authentic connections with complex material (Stronge et al., 2011).

High expectations. Effective teachers hold high expectations for their students (Goe 2007; Goe, Bell, & Little, 2008; McEwan, 2002; Stronge et al., 2011). Effective teachers are able to communicate these high expectations to students (Stronge et al., 2011) and apply them for all students.

Positive relationships. Effective teachers develop strong, interpersonal relationships with their students (McEwan, 2002; Pritchett et al., 2011; Stronge et al., 2011). Students need a sense of connection and comfort in the classroom in order to have a foundation for academic success. These relationships are built upon fairness, mutual respect, and are rooted in the teacher demonstrating consistency in enforcing classroom rules. Effective teachers connect with students in a manner that holds all students accountable for negative behavior while also recognizing positive behavior, and demonstrating compassion when working with students (Pritchett et al., 2011; Stronge, Ward, Tucker, & Hindman, 2007). Simple behaviors such as calling students by their name and talking with them in a normal manner foster these connections (Stronge et al., 2007).

Classroom management. Classroom management is a core strength for effective teachers (McEwan, 2002; Pritchett et al., 2011; Stronge et al., 2011). Research shows established routines (Pritchett et al., 2011; Stronge et al., 2011) are a critical foundation for quality classroom management, which contributes to teacher effectiveness. Effective teachers have students practice the procedures that lead to these established routines (Pritchett et al., 2011). They also set high expectations and collaborate with students to establish a few, critical classroom rules. Effective teachers provide feedback not only to students who are not following established rules and routines, but also to students who are following them (Pritchett et al., 2011). Stronge et al. (2011) also note these factors lead to the key difference for effective

teachers in the area of classroom management–an average of only one disruption per hour of classroom instruction as compared to ineffective teachers who experience a disruption once every 20 minutes.

       Instructional skills and effectiveness. Effective teachers are highly skilled in all phases of instruction (Goe et al., 2007; Pritchett et al., 2011; Stronge et al., 2007). This begins with quality planning (Pritchett et al., 2011) that makes learning objectives clear (McEwan, 2002; Pritchett et al., 2011; Stronge et al., 2007). An effective teacher uses a variety of teaching strategies that are tailored to best deliver the content to students based on their learning needs and characteristics (Pritchett et al., 2011; McEwan, 2002; Stronge et al., 2007). This leads to student engagement and involvement in the coursework (McEwan, 2002; Pritchett et al., 2011; Stronge et al., 2007). The effective teacher understands how to use a wide range of assessments, both formal and informal, to gauge their students academic progress (Goe et al., 2007; Pritchett et al., 2007; Stronge et al., 2007; Stronge et al., 2011).

Effective Teaching and Student Achievement

       Parents, students, and communities have believed for ages that effective teachers make a difference in the classroom. Sanders and Rivers' (1996) groundbreaking research confirmed this perception of effective teachers influence on student achievement. Student achievement, as identified by standardized test scores, increases under the direction of an effective teacher (Hanushek, 2009; Heck, 2009; Nye et al., 2004; Sanders & Rivers, 1996; Stronge et al., 2011). Hanushek (2009) reports students learning under the guidance of an effective teacher can achieve as much as a year and a half worth of academic growth in a single year. Students saw a 50 percentile increase when having an effective teacher for three consecutive years (Sanders & Rivers, 1996).

Impact lasts several years. Research clearly indicates the impact of an effective teacher can last for several years (Kane & Staiger, 2008; Sanders & Rivers, 1996). This same research indicates this impact can eclipse over time. It also shows effective teachers have an indirect positive influence on other students. Students who had access to effective teachers can relay that impact on their peers in a way that manifests itself through increases in their fellow students' test scores (Kane & Staiger, 2008).

Effective teaching overcomes barriers. Effective teachers assist in removing barriers thought to impede student achievement. Sanders and Rivers (1996) found the impact of teachers could be detached from other components often considered hurdles to improving student achievement such as socio-economic status, ethnicity, and parental influences. In addition, effective teaching parlayed into more than a 50-percentile point difference in student achievement over three years in Sanders and Rivers' 1996 Tennessee Value-Added Assessment Systems research.

Societal benefit of effective teaching. Effective teaching does have a societal benefit. A study conducted by Chetty, Friedman, and Rockoff (2011) clearly shows students who perform better on standardized assessments have significant advantages in comparison to their peers who do not. These advantages include economic benefits that impact both the individual and society as a whole.

Students who had effective teachers earn more money over their career (nearly $25,000 more), were less likely to become a teenage parent, and more likely to begin planning for retirement at an earlier age (Chetty et al., 2011). These researchers also report having access to effective teachers makes a significant difference in increasing a person's standard of living as evidenced by the neighborhood they live in as adults.

The impact of ineffective teaching. Research clearly demonstrates that ineffective teaching has an adverse impact on student achievement as measured by standardized test scores. Hanushek (2009) found students who have teachers rated in the first through fifth percentiles make only a half-year's worth of gains during a school year. In addition, there are long-term economic impacts of poor teaching. Chetty et al. (2011) found the achievement of students who have a teacher ranked in the lowest percentile of effectiveness suffer a long-term earning deficit as adults similar to students absent for 40% of the school year. Students who have average or lower rated teachers stand to earn less over their lifetime than those who have higher rated teacher, according to value added assessment comparisons. This can have an impact of $25,000 in lost lifetime earnings over the course of their careers (Chetty et al., 2011).

There are societal impacts of ineffective teaching as well. Students who perform one standard deviation higher on standardized assessments are four percent less likely to become a teenage parent (Chetty et al., 2011). In addition, links have been identified between teachers whose students achieve, on average, one standard deviation higher on standardized assessments and having opened a retirement account by age 25 (Chetty et al., 2011).

Washington (2011) summarizes teacher impact on students in this manner: "… research makes it clear: the quality of the teacher in the classroom is of utmost importance to the success of our nation's students. … education, certification, and experience are all relatively important to teacher quality…" (p. 41).

Reform Movements in Evaluation and Evaluation Policy

As noted previously, the critical role that effective and ineffective teachers play in student achievement is well documented in the research (Heck, 2009; Sanders & Rivers, 1996; Stronge et al., 2011). National reform efforts encouraging strategies to ensure each child has access to an

effective teacher have emerged. These reform efforts seek methods to efficiently exit ineffective

teachers from schools while still providing reasonable due process protections. Teacher and

principal evaluation models as well as methods for removing ineffective teachers have become a

major focus and are key components of the Federal government's Race to the Top (RttT)

educational policy approach. This impetus for reform has tremendous impact on state policies in

many areas, specifically in the approach to teacher evaluation (Rich, 2012).

      Call for change. This national reform movement has called for changes in the way that

states require local school districts to evaluate teachers in order to support students and parents

(National Council for Teacher Quality [NCTQ], 2011a; Weisberg, Sexton, Mulhern, & Keeling,

2009). Reformers also insist upon changing the way parents can access information about the

quality of the teachers their children may access at their local school. Weisberg et al. (2009)

found that parents who understand research about the significant role an effective teacher plays

in their child's education are stymied when they attempt to apply that knowledge. Parents are

not able to determine the effective and ineffective teachers at their local school on their own and

must rely on the perceptions of other parents. Weisberg et al. (2009) point out data is not

available for parents to be informed consumers and even if they were able to evaluate data, it

would not be helpful since most teachers are highly rated, even in schools where aggregate data

suggests otherwise. Weisberg et al. (2009) suggest school districts request parents' trust that they

provide their children with an effective education, yet cannot tell parents that they can provide an

effective teacher for their children.

      Focus on improved teacher effectiveness and transparency. Considering the wealth

of research covering the impact of effective teaching (Heck, 2009; Sanders & Rivers, 1996;

Stronge et al., 2011) and the challenges associated with current evaluation models, many are

seeking reform. Weisberg et al. (2009) point out that current educational reform movements focus on several areas believed to improve teacher effectiveness, student achievement, and transparency. Components included by those espousing reform include:

- Modifications to evaluation systems that include differentiated ratings and student achievement data via standardized test scores as core components of the evaluation system (NCTQ, 2011a; National Council for Teacher Quality [NCTQ], 2011b; Weisberg et al., 2009).

- Ensuring proper training of administrative staff to conduct comprehensive, objective evaluations (Weisberg et al., 2009) and consider using trained, external evaluators to provide additional support in the process (NCTQ, 2011a).

- Modifications to dismissal processes that provide school districts with greater authority to terminate teachers who receive multiple poor evaluations while still maintaining due process (NCTQ, 2011a; NCTQ, 2011b; Weisberg et al., 2009).

Differentiating ratings. Those concerned about the state of current teacher evaluation practices point to data showing the vast majority of teachers are rated as satisfactory or better (Weisberg et al., 2009). In addition, education reform groups point out that there is limited opportunity in many districts to differentiate among teachers skill level (NCTQ, 2011b; Weisberg et al., 2009). The ability to differentiate between high quality, mediocre, or ineffective teachers is an important concept for education reform groups. Weisberg et al. (2009) noted that it is important to develop "multiple, district rating options that allow administrators to precisely describe and compare differences in instructional performance" (p. 27). By not allowing for differentiation among teachers, Weisberg et al. (2009) argued that schools do not recognize outstanding instruction nor are schools able to identify the lowest performers. Those who are

average but could be better with specific professional development are left to flounder in their

mediocrity. In 2011, only 17 states required districts to have an evaluation instrument containing

more than a binary system, most often using simply "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory" ratings

(NCTQ, 2011b). The NCTQ (2011b) does not advocate for a specific rating system, or

performance levels other than evaluations should contain more than two options for evaluators.

Proponents believe that being able to distinguish more easily between different levels of

instructional performance allows for better decision making in terms of hiring, personnel

decisions, granting of tenure, retention, targeting professional development needs, and

compensation (Weisberg et al., 2009). A point of controversy in this process is the inclusion of

student achievement data in the evaluation process as a way to differentiate teachers'

effectiveness.

   Student achievement data and evaluation. Race to the Top brought the inclusion of

student data in the teacher evaluation process to the forefront in 2009. In the November 2009

United States Department of Education Executive Summary, Race to the Top outlines an

eligibility requirement that:

> At the time the State submits its application, there must not be any legal,
> statutory, or regulatory barriers at the State level to linking data on student
> achievement (as defined in this notice) or student growth (as defined in this
> notice) to teachers and principals for the purpose of teacher and principal
> evaluation (p. 4).

  The NCTQ (2011b) has outlined one of the key components of education reform to

include "instructional effectiveness as the preponderant criterion of any teacher evaluation" (p.

67). Therefore, standardized tests, value added measurements, and other student assessment data

are appropriate components for that section of a teacher's evaluation. Since 2009, this has become a significant area of change in State policy and law, with 23 states requiring a student achievement component as part of their evaluation system (NCTQ, 2011a).

Expanded training for administrators. The reform movement advocates administrators need better preparation in order to implement new evaluation strategies. Weisberg et al. (2009) and Grossman (2011) advocate for increased training of administrative staff to effectively provide feedback for teachers. It is critical that administrators have the necessary training to transition teacher evaluation from a system where nearly everyone is considered satisfactory to one allowing more finite and descriptive comparisons between teacher performance (Grossman, 2011; Weisberg et al., 2009). Jacob and Lefgren (2005), state that principals are able to identify teachers in their schools who are highly effective or highly ineffective. However, they have more difficulty differentiating the effectiveness of the middle 60 percent of teachers who are average.

In order for administrators to make these distinctions, there needs to be clear performance standards in place with accompanying training (Weisberg et al., 2009). This training needs to be ongoing, beginning with extensive training and followed by regularly scheduled refresher sessions to keep evaluators' skills sharp (Weisberg et al., 2009). Some states have gone as far as requiring a certification process for administrators involved in the teacher evaluation system (Grossman, 2011).

 Administrators need to be able to provide actionable feedback based on objective performance standards. In addition, effective training can assist administrators in clearly identifying highly effective teachers in their schools.

External evaluators can provide support. Implementing evaluation system reforms are time intensive. School administrators, particularly principals, face immense pressure resulting from time constraints in completing the tasks of their jobs on a daily basis (Billot, 2003; Rooney, 2011; Shellinger, 2005). Necessary and unnecessary meetings, general interruptions (Samuels, 2008), and student discipline issues (Rooney, 2011) all place demands on administrators' time that could be used for evaluation activities. The NCTQ (2011a) suggests that school districts use trained, external evaluators. Weisberg et al. (2009) notes external evaluators can provide assistance in ensuring quality and actionable feedback while also potentially offering teachers with evaluative feedback that may be less threatening than from their principal (NCTQ, 2011a). These external evaluators are also able to provide principals and other administrators with a different view of their school's evaluation system and impartial feedback about teachers in their school (NCTQ, 2011a).

Modifying dismissal processes. When ineffective teachers do not make necessary improvement, exiting them from the profession should be an option. Many states have been working to modify laws to allow for actions such as termination after a teacher receives an unsatisfactory evaluation. As of 2011, 27 states require teachers who received unsatisfactory evaluations to participate in a performance improvement plan while 17 states allow for dismissal based on multiple unsatisfactory evaluations (NCTQ, 2011b). Legislation in Illinois allows for a 90-day remediation period and a teacher may be dismissed if he or she does not improve their performance beyond a rating of unsatisfactory (NCTQ, 2011b).

Dismissing teachers is difficult in many states. In fact, only three states actually have legislation that clearly articulates teachers can be dismissed for ineffective performance without multiple opportunities for appeal (NCTQ, 2011b). Many states use vague or undefined terms in

laws governing when a teacher can be dismissed for ineffective performance.   For example, words like "inefficiency" and "incompetency" are often used in state statutes; however, these words do not provide specific guidance in their intended definition, creating a concern that it becomes difficult to interpret their meanings (NCTQ, 2011b). This may lead to the perception that it is difficult to terminate a teacher who is ineffective, thus keeping ineffective teachers working with students and furthering the public assumption that it is too difficult to fire tenured teachers (Baratz-Snowden, 2009).

Not complete agreement. While many researchers agree on these kinds of reforms, not all agree. Some researchers have been critical of the NCTQ reports on various subjects and have criticized their methodology for obtaining data included in them (Darling-Hammond, 2013; Dillon & Silva, 2011).

Tenure in the United States

The understanding of the impact of effective teaching has led to wide-spread frustration with ineffective teachers and their continued employment status. These questions lead to discussions about the impact of teacher tenure. Some educational reform groups have identified teacher tenure as a significant barrier to improving instruction in American classrooms (Baratz-Snowden, 2009). Tenure is also not often fully understood by the American public. Baratz-Snowden (2009) states "The simple truth is that tenure only means that a teacher gains permanent employment status after successful completion of a probationary period—usually three years of teaching—and may not be fired or disciplined without just cause and due process " (p. 5). Stader (2013) posits that tenure essentially provides a continuing contract for a teacher that creates a property right. This property right is maintained until the teacher separates

employment with the district through retirement, resignation, death, termination, or mutual

agreement.

Rufus Historie (1553) coined the infamous saying "history repeats itself. " The debate

about teacher tenure is not a new topic. Understanding a history of how tenure developed in the

United States will be helpful to those looking to reform teacher evaluation and address

ineffective teaching today.

Public school tenure laws were designed to resemble the civil service laws of the 1880s

(Lakey, 1976). It was very common for Federal civil service jobs to be awarded using a system

of "spoils" in which those loyal to an elected official were selected for Federal jobs rather than

based on qualifications (Huvaere, 1997). Ohio Senator George Pendleton founded the National

Civil Service Reform League in the early 1880s that led to the development and passage of the

Pendleton Act in 1883. The Pendleton Act required a more ethical manner of hiring and

terminating federal employees than had been the practice in the "spoils" system that had become

the norm (Huvaere, 1997).

Shortly thereafter, in 1885, the National Education Association (NEA) began to advocate

for similar rights for teachers. During this time, the NEA's James Swain was the organization's

chief spokesman espousing the same protection for America's teachers. Swain felt it was time to

professionalize teaching (Huvaere, 1997). In 1887, the NEA created a committee focused on

tenure and pension reform and formalized their national efforts to give teachers the same

protection as federal workers (Huvaere, 1997).

 Massachusetts introduced the first teacher tenure law in 1886. Prior to this time, in

addition to the "spoils" system, it was common for female teachers to be fired for offenses such

as getting married, becoming pregnant, wearing pants, or being out too late in the evenings (Van

Horn & Schaffner, 2003). Employment decisions regarding teachers were often arbitrary and

often resulting from a teacher's political allegiances rather than the actual quality of education

provided (Baratz-Snowden, 2009; Huvaere, 1997; Lakey, 1976).

However, teacher tenure did not immediately spread to other states after Massachusetts'

law was enacted (Lakey, 1976). New Jersey passed what is often referred to as the nation's first

comprehensive teacher tenure law in 1909 (Baratz-Snowden, 2009; Huvaere, 1997; Kersten,

2006; Lakey, 1976). Huvaere (1997) identified a number of reasons that New Jersey

implemented the law:

- Attract more qualified and effective teachers

- Increase the efficient operation of school districts

- Make teaching more attractive by providing teachers with increased political and
  economic security

- Eliminate political favoritism in hiring and dismissal

Between 1910 and 1915, several urban centers demonstrated a practice of arbitrary

employment decisions. In 1915, more than 200 teachers and school administrators who had

satisfactory or better evaluations were fired by a Denver school (Huvaere, 1997). The San Diego

school district terminated 21 teachers who had been considered "satisfactory" or better. Similar

situations played out in both Chicago and Portland, Oregon during the same time period

(Huvaere, 1997).

During the 19th and early 20th centuries, school boards and administrative personnel were

also known to make decisions about the employment of teachers based on their cost (Lakey,

1976). These decisions were sometimes based on ridding a school of a more experienced, and

thus costlier, teacher. It was commonplace that school boards remove teachers with several

years experience for less expensive first or second year teachers (Lakey, 1976). The

development of tenure laws throughout the country were also focused on creating a more

professional work force that became integrated into their communities (Huvaere, 1997).

Teachers, prior to tenure, were often only granted a year's contract at a time, resulting in as high

as 50% turnover of teachers in schools. Many supporters of tenure took a student-based

approach, noting that this turnover was not in the best interests of students and their learning

(Huvaere, 1997; Lakey, 1976).

By 1959, 37 states had passed tenure laws with all 50 states passing some sort of tenure

law by 1976 (Lakey, 1976). However, tenure laws had their opponents. Opponents' arguments

remained strikingly similar from the beginning of the national discussion in the late 1800s

through the first round of statewide laws in the early 1900s and into today (Kersten, 2006).

Opponents voiced concerns about the challenges tenure protections would pose in terminating

poor teachers (Huvaere, 1997) as well as providing what was, and still is, perceived as permanent

employment (Baratz-Snowden, 2009; Kersten, 2006).

Tenure in Minnesota

While tenure is debated in national discussions about education reform, states have the

authority to determine tenure legislation. Since it is useful to understand how tenure evolved in

the United States, it is even more critical to understand how it has evolved in Minnesota.

Minnesota's debate about tenure laws began in the 1920s. In Minnesota, proponents of tenure

use the same arguments as the national debate (Ver Ploeg, 2004). Concern about high teacher

turnover was an impetus for the law, focusing on the reasons for the high turnover: arbitrary

firings for such things as living outside the school district, connections in local politics,

disagreeing with school board policy, nepotism, and aiming to keep payroll low by terminating

veteran teachers in favor of those younger teachers who were less expensive (Ver Ploeg, 2004).

Minnesota's first tenure law was passed in 1927 and only applied to Duluth, Minneapolis, and St. Paul – the state's "Cities of the First Class. " The remainder of the state's teachers wouldn't receive any protection until a decade later when the legislature passed a continuing contract law (Ver Ploeg, 2004). However, this legislation didn't provide the same employment protections that the law governing Duluth, Minneapolis, and St. Paul provided for teachers. Teachers in the Cities of the First Class could only be terminated for cause under their statute (after basic due process) while teachers in other school districts could be terminated as long as it was completed by the deadline provided by law (Ver Ploeg, 2004). In 1967, Minnesota's legislature rectified this inconsistency. Since that time, the two continuing contract laws that protect Minnesota teachers have been very similar (Ver Ploeg, 2004).

Tenure as an Obstacle to Education Reform

The debate over teacher tenure continues today with nearly the same rationale as in the 1880s. Tenure has been targeted as an obstacle to education reform, specifically when it comes to removing ineffective teachers who research demonstrates can have significant impact on student achievement as measured by standardized test scores (Heck, 2009; Sanders & Rivers, 1996; Stronge et al., 2011).

Due process. Tenure provides due process for the termination of teachers who have achieved the status. Essentially, a teacher needs to be informed about the deficiencies in their work, provided with an opportunity for an impartial hearing, and have the opportunity to appeal the results of the hearing, should the outcome be detrimental to their employment status (Baratz-Snowden, 2009).

Concern about current tenure practices. There are voices suggesting tenure as it exists in the United States should be changed significantly. Some observers point out that the due

process guaranteed by tenure may also be guaranteed under provisions associated with the Civil Rights Act, duplicating tenure protections. Concerns about tenure continue to focus on due process, which some argue consumes valuable financial and human resources when addressing ineffective teaching (Baratz-Snowden, 2009).

Aside from the concerns about dismissing ineffective tenured teachers, the manner in which teachers are granted tenure is undergoing significant scrutiny. Baratz-Snowden (2009) illustrates concerns about the number of years it takes for a teacher to achieve tenure; the quality of the evaluation system used, if any, in order to award the due process protections afforded by tenure; and the absence of requirements demonstrating classroom skill in order to achieve tenure. The NCTQ 2011a report shows that 32 states grant tenure after the first three years of employment with six additional states granting it after the first or second year. The same report identifies 39 states that provide tenure with near automaticity, though they do point out that many states indicate tenure is a local decision that state government does not have direct control over.

Rationale for tenure remains the same. Arguments surrounding tenure are virtually the same today as they were when the first laws were enacted in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Kersten, 2006). Proponents argue that due process is critical to attracting and retaining well-qualified teachers and preventing arbitrary dismissal based on political circumstances or financial considerations (Huvaere, 1997). Opponents argue that due process protections afforded by tenure are already in place as a result of the Civil Rights Act (Baratz-Snowden, 2009). There are concerns that too much time and money are being spent in dismissing an ineffective teacher (Baratz-Snowden, 2009).

Tenure and exiting ineffective teachers. The intersection of tenure protection and the data linking effective teaching with academic success as measured by standardized tests (Heck 2009; Sanders & Rivers, 1996; Stronge et al., 2011) creates an important discussion surrounding what should be done to help exit ineffective teachers. Shanker (1996) argued that ineffective teachers who are still in the classroom are a result of school administrators not performing their jobs appropriately. The argument focuses on a lack of accurate and effective evaluations by administrators that allow substandard teachers to continue to instruct students.

Barriers Preventing Principals from Addressing Ineffective Teaching

There are several barriers that prevent principals and other administrators from addressing marginal and ineffective teaching. These include time, rigorous paperwork required in the improvement processes, the significant amount of documentation needed, and the damage to school climate (Causey, 2010; Tucker, 1997).

Time constraints. Studies clearly indicate that as the role of the principal evolves, time constraints have become a significant issue in addressing ineffective teaching (Billot, 2003; Kennedy, 2000; Shellinger, 2005; Rooney, 2011). Principals' schedules are pulled in many directions; these include, but are not limited to, meetings, general interruptions (Samuels, 2008), and student discipline issues (Rooney, 2011). New initiatives or demands from hierarchies outside the school can also divert principals' time. District central offices and reforms at higher levels of government have created additional responsibilities that principals have to address (Billot, 2003; Rooney, 2011).

Added responsibilities. The barrier of time constraints has been fueled by added responsibilities and expectations to the role of a principal. Principals have more required responsibilities than in the past and this can have an impact on their work-life balance (Daniels & French, 2006) and their ability to address larger instructional issues such as marginal or

ineffective teaching (Causey, 2010). Changes in special education law now demand more

involvement of the principal in a number of areas (Lynch, 2012). Instructional leadership, a core

component of remediating marginal or ineffective teachers, is a key casualty in the daily life of a

principal (Samuels, 2008; Shellinger, 2005). Principals, on average, can spend between 60% and

70% of any day on management-style tasks (Holland, 2012; Samuels, 2008; Shellinger, 2005).

Documentation of ineffective teacher practice. In addition to the barrier of time, the

high burden of documentation that is required when addressing marginal or ineffective teaching

can become overwhelming to principals (Causey, 2010). In order to document, a principal must

spend additional time supervising the marginal or ineffective teacher. The additional time it

takes for this more frequent observation can also become a hurdle in the process (Tucker, 1997).

Concerns about adequate coaching from central offices as to what kind of documentation

to collect or record provides principals with doubts about their ability to address ineffective

teaching (Causey, 2010) and the ability to convince ineffective teachers that there is an issue that

needs to be addressed. In many cases, ineffective teachers do not believe that there are

deficiencies in their work and strong documentation is one way to help them get past this denial

(Causey, 2010).

Staff morale. Further, principals identify that addressing marginal or ineffective

teaching can also create issues of morale in their schools. This can have an impact in a number

of ways. When the school principal chooses to address ineffective teaching, other teachers may

rally around the individual in order to support their colleague during a challenging time (Tucker,

1997). Conversely, principals who choose not to address ineffective teaching can also adversely

impact their school's culture. Other teachers know when there is an ineffective teacher in the

school. This can also cause stress when there are discussions among parents or staff members about a colleague's underperformance (Causey, 2010).

Summary

The impact of effective and ineffective teaching on student achievement is not at question. Reform movements in the areas of teacher evaluation and evaluation policy are gaining attention and momentum. The continued increase of demands on principals' time crowds out the day-to-day effort needed to appropriately address ineffective teaching.

The effect teachers have on the student experience and the life-long impact of education has motivated the United States Department of Education to address teacher quality through a number of reforms. These reforms, beginning with the No Child Left Behind Act and continuing with the RttT initiative desire to more deeply evaluate teacher effectiveness and attempt to help ineffective teachers improve or exit the profession.

The perceptions and realities surrounding tenure for teachers in the United States are often misunderstood and used as an excuse to not address ineffective teaching in schools. Further, the realities of the demands on principals - the primary educational administrator responsible for supervising and evaluating teachers in most schools - are such that time needed to appropriately address ineffective teaching are usurped.

The four topics highlighted in this chapter (the impact of effective teachers, the role and history of tenure in public education, the status of teacher evaluation systems, and the barriers that prevent principals from addressing ineffective teaching and remediating ineffective teachers) are different. However, they are interconnected in the most recent efforts to address ineffective teaching and the direct, life-long impact it can have on children and their lives.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The rationale behind this study was to recognize barriers that prevent Minnesota principals from remediating ineffective teachers. A mixed methods research approach, using the multi-round Delphi survey technique, was utilized to gather data directly from experienced principals. The Delphi survey technique provides a vehicle to effectively narrow opinions from a group of experts and its requirement for participant anonymity provides the conditions to develop group consensus about a topic (Akins, Tolson, & Cole, 2005; Dalkey & Helmer, 1963; Skulmoski, Hartman, & Krahn, 2007; West, 2011). The methodology allows for participants to review survey data after each round in order to assist in clarifying their thinking about the subject (Skulmoski et al., 2007). The survey technique can facilitate creating a consensus of what constitutes the barriers preventing Minnesota principals from remediating ineffective teachers.

The Delphi survey technique was selected for this study because it can distill and summarize the opinions of a panel of experts about the barriers that prevent Minnesota principals from addressing ineffective teaching. The principals had an opportunity to read the responses of others on the panel prior to engaging in the next survey round, allowing for clarification in their thinking about the topic. As previously cited, the Delphi survey technique requires participants to be anonymous. This allowed for authentic interaction without one dominant individual steering other principals' thinking based on his or her reputation (Dalkey & Helmer, 1963; Skulmoski et al., 2007). The Delphi survey technique provided the best opportunity to derive expert consensus about the barriers preventing Minnesota principals from remediating ineffective teachers. The figure below represents the Delphi technique.

Round One Survey		Participants Review First Round Data		Round Two Survey		Participants Review Second Round Data		Round Three Survey
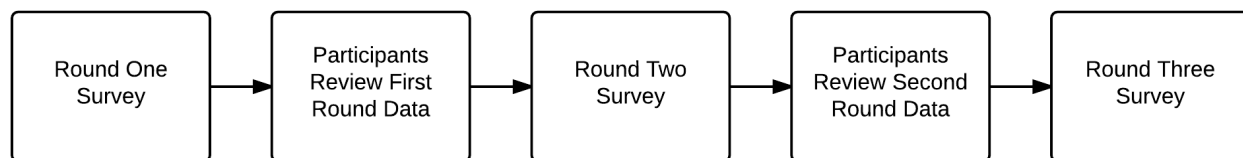
Figure 1: Delphi technique

Participants

A purposive sample of Minnesota principals was gathered. The sample included a comparable number of elementary and secondary principals. Creswell (2009) has written that purposive sampling is used when the researcher believes intentional selection of participants will be important in accurately describing the issues associated with the research question. This is especially important while using the Delphi survey technique, since the goal is the consensus of "experts" (Akins et al., 2005; Dalkey & Helner, 1963; Skulmoski et al., 2007). A purposive sample is a strategy to ensure high level of expertise is recruited for the study. The study was limited to Minnesota principals in order to eliminate differences that state statutes may create in the remediation process across the nation.

Principals were identified for participation in this study through recommendations by divisional presidents of the Minnesota principals' professional organizations. The researcher contacted the divisional presidents of the Minnesota Elementary School Principals Association (MESPA) and the Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP). Each division president was asked to recommend at least two principals in their division with five years of experience who have demonstrated an interest in improving teacher effectiveness and a reputation for outstanding work in the area of evaluation and remediating ineffective teachers among their divisional colleagues. Five years of experience was selected as the threshold for participation to ensure principals had experience engaging in the teacher evaluation process. By

using the professional organization's division structure for recruitment, the goal was to ensure

geographic representation from urban, suburban, and rural areas.

While there is not definitive guidance on sample size for a Delphi survey, Akins et al.

(2005) point out many published studies include panels ranging from 10 to 100 participants.

Thirty nominees were contacted to participate in the study. Sixteen principals were secured to

participate in the study. All participated in the first round of the study. Fourteen participated in

the second and third rounds of the study. Due to the anonymity of the participants, a core value

of the Delphi technique, it cannot be reported whether the same fourteen principals participated

in both the second and third rounds of the survey since all 16 principals were invited to

participate in each of the three rounds.

A pilot study was conducted, engaging four principals. The purpose of the pilot study

was to test the iterative process of the Delphi survey and to resolve any challenges in the data

collection process prior to conducting the research study. Pilot studies are shown to increase

reliability and validity in the research study (Hasson, Keeney, & McKenna, 2000).

To ensure informed consent for participation in the survey, participants were asked to

complete a paper-based consent form and also to electronically verify their agreement to

participate during each round of the questions using the online survey software.

Inquiries

The following four open-ended survey inquiries were asked of principals in the first round of the

Delphi survey in an effort to answer the research question: What barriers prevent principals from

enacting formal remediation plans with teachers they consider ineffective?

- Please describe what you consider to be the attributes of an effective teacher.

- Please describe what you consider to be the attributes of an ineffective teacher.

- Please share your beliefs on what conditions are required to recommend an ineffective teacher for remediation.

- Please describe the barriers that prevent you from remediating an ineffective teacher.

Data Collection

This study used the Delphi methodology for data collection and was conducted in three rounds. Principal identities were not made known to each other during the survey process in order to prevent one respected peer influencing the entire group's responses in the second and subsequent rounds (Fischer, 1978). The process was designed to collect the principals' opinions and to anonymously share it with them in preparation for the next round of the survey. The Delphi technique allows participants to reshape their opinion on a topic by having access to others feedback to the same inquiries they have answered.

Delphi round 1. Data were collected using web-based survey software. The first round inquiries were open-ended and principals were encouraged to offer as many responses to each inquiry as they desired. The survey link was sent to the principals by electronic mail and the survey was available online for five days.

Delphi round 2. The raw survey data from the first round was consolidated using the online survey system's reporting capabilities and shared with principals. Second round inquiries were developed with the survey data from the first round responses. Principals, using the web-based survey software, were asked to select the top ten items they believe were important for each inquiry. The survey was open for five days. This data was charted and analyzed to determine the top 36% of preferred items. Raw data were consolidated into a report and shared with principals. The principals were asked to review the second round report in preparation for the third round survey.

Delphi round 3. The third round survey asked principals to rank order the items for each question in order of importance to them. The survey was delivered through the same web-based survey software as the first two rounds. The survey was open for four days.

Data Analysis and Organization

The results from the first round survey were analyzed and consolidated using thematic analysis. One additional researcher reviewed the coding in order to attain intercoder reliability (Creswell, 2009).

Second round survey data was reviewed using quantitative analysis. The data sorted in descending order by the percentage of participants identifying each item as one of the top ten attributes, conditions, or barriers as appropriate for each inquiry's theme.

Results from the third round were analyzed using quantitative analysis in order to refine and focus the panelists' opinions regarding the barriers that prevent Minnesota principals from addressing ineffective teaching.

Reliability and Validity

In order to ensure a more reliable final product, a pilot study utilizing four individuals not involved in the study was conducted. Hasson et al. (2000) state that utilizing a pilot sample is a critical component in bolstering the reliability of the study.

Raines (2010) advocates that a comparison of data in the pilot study versus the data in the general study is a test that can help ensure reliability. Since clear tenets for Delphi survey sample size have not been established, comparison to the pilot data at the end of the study was important in being able to generalize the findings within Minnesota.

The validity of this study depended upon recruitment and selection of the participants. Given the moniker of "experts," their consensus and opinion formed the basis of conclusions that identified barriers Minnesota principals face when attempting to remediate ineffective teachers.

Validity can also be affected by the researcher's efforts in coding and categorizing the data. The ability of the researcher to properly code and categorize the first round of qualitative, open-ended questions was important in ensuring that techniques were identified for the panelists to build consensus in the second and third rounds through the quantitative surveys.

Summary

A three-part Delphi survey was used to secure consensus regarding barriers Minnesota principals face when remediating ineffective teachers. The first round included a set of open-ended, qualitative inquiries. Subsequent rounds used quantitative inquiry techniques, including ranking strategies in order to develop consensus of the participants.

Data from the first round were coded and categorized in order to develop the inquiries for the second round, attempting to determine preference based on selecting ten items of the most importance to the principal for each question. Data from the second round were used to develop a final list of items for the third round that principals were asked to rank in order of importance.

A panel of experienced Minnesota principals was identified to participate in the study by their professional organization's divisional presidents for possessing a high level of skill in evaluation and teacher development. Using representatives from the professional organizations' division structure was an attempt to secure geographic balance. A pilot study was conducted with four principals in order to check reliability of the data and to refine the survey process.

Chapter 4

Findings

This chapter will present the analysis of data collected and findings to answer the

inquiries surrounding what barriers prevent Minnesota principals from remediating ineffective

teachers. The research examined the perspective of a group of Minnesota principals considered

to be experts in the area of teacher evaluation and supervision. The intent of this chapter is to

identify the themes that surfaced when the principals were asked to describe teaching in the

following four areas, (a) attributes of an effective teacher, (b) attributes of an ineffective teacher,

(c) conditions required to recommend an ineffective teacher for remediation, and (d) barriers that

prevent the principal from remediating an ineffective teacher. These inquiries were designed to

provide data to address the research question: "What barriers prevent principals from enacting

formal remediation plans with teachers they consider ineffective?"

Data Collection

Data were collected through a series of three surveys using the Delphi technique. The

Delphi technique is considered a flexible research method that can be adjusted to meet the needs

of individual studies (Skulmoski et al., 2007). The Delphi technique is based on surveying a

group of individuals considered experts in their field multiple times to gain consensus.

Principals' identities remained anonymous throughout the research process. Principals were

provided with raw data from each survey round prior to the commencement of the next survey

round. The Qualtrics online survey system was utilized for data collection.

A group of 30 experts were identified by the divisional presidents of the Minnesota

Elementary School Principals Association and the Minnesota Association of Secondary School

Principals. Each division president was asked to recommend at least two principals in their

division who had five years of experience as a principal, had demonstrated an interest in

improving teacher effectiveness, and had demonstrated outstanding work in the area of

evaluation and remediating ineffective teachers. A total of 16 principals from this set of

nominees agreed to participate in the three surveys. While there is no definitive guide for a

Delphi survey sample size, Akins et al. (2005) point out many published studies include panels

ranging from 10 to 100 participants.

The study engaged principals through three survey rounds. Survey rounds were open to

principals for an average of 4.6 days. All 16 nominees participated in the first round of the

survey process. Fourteen principals participated in the second round of the survey process.

Fourteen principals participated in the third round of the survey process.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted with four principals not included in the study. The purpose

of the pilot study was to test the iterative process of the Delphi survey and to resolve any

challenges in the data collection process prior to conducting the research study. Pilot studies are

shown to increase reliability and validity in the research study (Hasson et al., 2000.)

The pilot study contained three rounds and revealed the critical nature of a survey

window. The first pilot survey link did not include a closing date for the survey, which created a

longer window of responses and slowed the research process. The second pilot survey revealed

that an original plan to have participants use a Likert scale to rate the open-ended responses from

the first survey round was unmanageable given the total number of responses that would be

collected during the second round of the research study. The third pilot survey confirmed the

utilization of the ranking process to bring closure to the study and determine consensus of the

group.

The pilot study yielded two important changes to the study. First, the time frame of the response windows were pre-defined and communicated to principals as part of the invitation to participate in each round. Second, principals were asked to select 10 attributes, conditions, or barriers in the second round of the study rather than evaluating each first round theme using a Likert scale. The pilot study also determined the need for a pre-determined percentage of principal votes to narrow the choices for the third round survey.

The Study

     Round One Survey. In round one of the study, 16 nominees participated in the survey. The 16 principals participating in the first round of the survey averaged 9.75 years of experience. Thirteen of the 16 principals identified themselves as a principal in a rural school and three principals identified themselves as a principal in a suburban school. The first survey asked principals to identify (1) attributes of an effective teacher, (2) attributes of an ineffective teacher, (3) conditions required to recommend an ineffective teacher for remediation, and (4) barriers that prevent the principal from remediating an ineffective teacher. In order to strengthen the analysis, a second reviewer analyzed the responses to all four questions and concurred that the identified themes for each question aligned with the analysis of the raw data.

     Fifty themes were identified in the first round survey's first question. Principals most often identified creating strong/positive relationships and engaging students as attributes of effective teachers. Principals also indicated that effective teachers are strong communicators and are strong in their content area. According to the principals, effective teachers are organized, differentiate, and have strong classroom management skills. The entire first round survey results can be found in Appendix A.

Thirty-five themes were identified in the analysis of responses to the first round survey's second inquiry that asked principals to describe the attributes of an ineffective teacher.

Principals most often stated that ineffective teachers are self-centered and have poor relationships with students. They also indicated that ineffective teachers are unorganized and have poor classroom management skills. The entire list of principals' identified attributes of ineffective teachers can be found in Appendix B.

Thirty-seven themes were identified for the first round survey's third inquiry that asked principals to identify conditions required to recommend an ineffective teacher for remediation.

Principals shared that they would recommend an ineffective teacher for remediation when they directly observed poor teaching strategies. They also indicated remediation would be in order for ineffective teachers whose students are not successful or have requests for students to move to a different teacher. Ineffective teachers who are unethical, have below average evaluations or observations, and are unwilling to address concerns about their performance would also be recommended for remediation. The entire list of conditions that principals feel would prompt them to recommend an ineffective teacher for remediation is listed in Appendix C.

Seventeen themes were identified in the first round survey's fourth inquiry requesting that principals identify the barriers that prevent the them from remediating an ineffective teacher.

Union support and time in classrooms were most often identified as the barriers that prevented principals from addressing ineffective teaching in their school. Teachers who lack awareness of their own weaknesses or do not take their remediation seriously, a lack of support from other administrators, and the documentation required were barriers cited by more than one principal. The entire list of barriers that principals felt prevent them from remediating an ineffective teacher can be found in Appendix D.

Round One Survey Summary. The first round survey asked principals to share their thoughts on attributes of effective and ineffective teachers, conditions that would result in recommending an ineffective teacher for remediation, and barriers that prevent them from remediating ineffective teachers. Principals identified 50 attributes of effective teachers, 35 attributes of ineffective teachers, 37 conditions that would result in the recommendation of an ineffective teacher for remediation, and 17 barriers that prevent them from addressing ineffective teaching.

Round one of the survey illustrated that when given few parameters about the content of their responses in an open-ended format, many principals state that effective teachers develop strong relationships, communicate well, and are strong in their content areas. They believe the ineffective teachers have poor relationships with students, are unorganized, have poor classroom management skills, and are self-centered. Principals believe that those teachers who are unethical, have below average observations/evaluations, and/or are unwilling to address performance concerns should be recommended for remediation. Finally, principals stated that union support and time and classrooms were the largest barriers preventing them from remediating ineffective teachers in their schools.

Round Two Survey. In the second round of the study, 16 principals were invited and 14 responded. Twelve of the 14 principals identified themselves as a principal in a rural school and two principals identified themselves as a principal in a suburban school. The Delphi technique provides the opportunity for principals to review the raw data from the previous round of the survey prior to engagement in the next round survey to refine their thinking (Skulmoski et al., 2007). The second and third round surveys of a Delphi study become more focused on specifics (Skulmoski et al., 2007) and often involve selection, rating, or ranking (Rowe & Wright, 1999).

The second round survey consisted of four inquiries with choices shared by the principals themselves during the first round survey associated with the study.

The first inquiry of the second round survey asked principals to select 10 attributes they believe are most often found in an effective teacher. The choices were directly taken from the themes identified by the principals in the first round of the study.

Nine principals identified that an effective teacher believes all students can learn and that they engage students. Eight principals stated that effective teachers are self-reflective and have strong classroom management skills. Six principals identified strong/positive relationships with students as one of the 10 attributes most often found in an effective teacher. Attributes that were identified by at least 36% of principals are illustrated in Figure 1. The entire data set is available in Appendix E.

Panelist selections of the 10 attributes most often found in effective teachers.
Entire list available in Appendix E

Attribute	Value
believes all students will learn	9
engages students	9
self reflective	8
strong classroom management skills	8
strong/positive relationships with students	6
passionate	5
strong communicator	5
clear instructional purposes	5
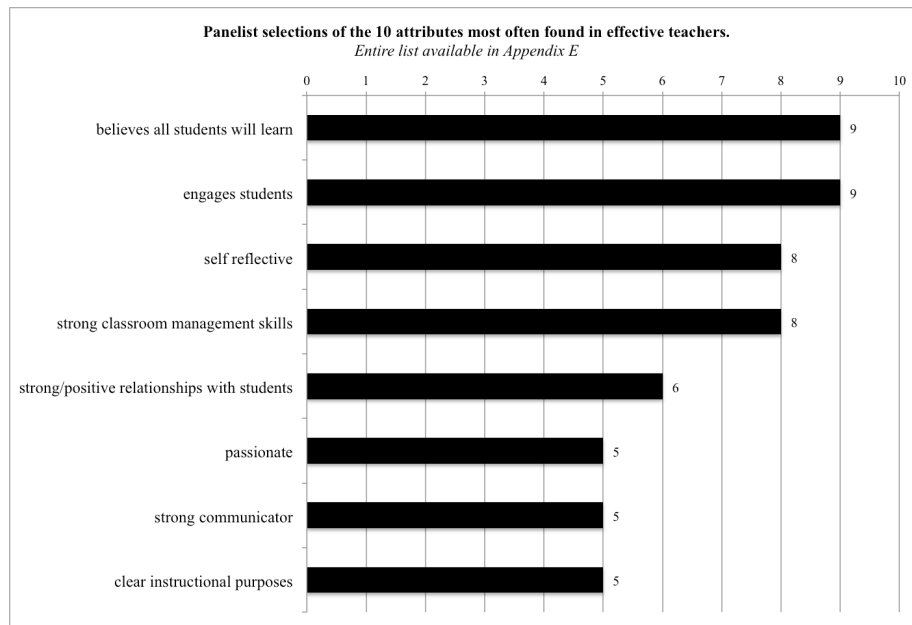
Figure 2. Please select the 10 attributes that you believe are found most often in an effective teacher. (N = 14)

The second inquiry of second round survey asked principals to select 10 attributes they believe are most often found in an ineffective teacher. The choices were taken directly from the themes identified by the principals in the first round of the study. Ten principals selected 'not reflective' as an attribute most often found in an ineffective teacher. Nine principals identified poor relationships with students and poor classroom management as two of the 10 attributes they most often find in ineffective teachers. Eight principals indicated that ineffective teachers are unorganized. Attributes that were identified by at least 36% of principals are illustrated in Figure 2. The entire data set is available in Appendix F.
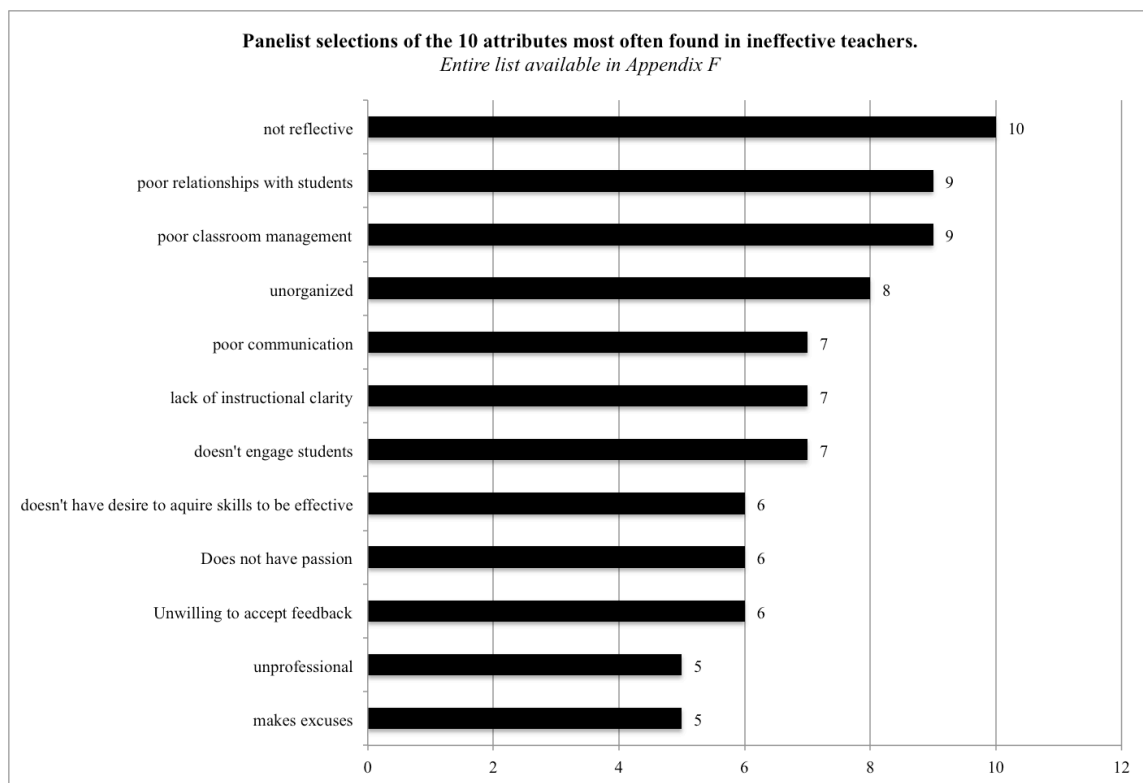
Figure 3. Please select the 10 attributes that you believe are found most often in an ineffective teacher. (N = 14)

The third inquiry of the second round survey asked principals to select 10 conditions that would cause them to recommend a teacher for remediation. The choices were directly taken from the themes identified by the principals in the first round of the study.

Twelve principals stated they would recommend an unethical teacher for remediation. Ten indicated they would recommend a teacher for remediation who was blatantly disrespectful to students. Nine principals stated that teachers with poor classroom management and eight principals stated those who demonstrate the qualities associated with an ineffective teacher would also be recommended for remediation. Attributes that were identified by at least 36% of principals are illustrated in Figure 3. The entire data set is available in Appendix G.
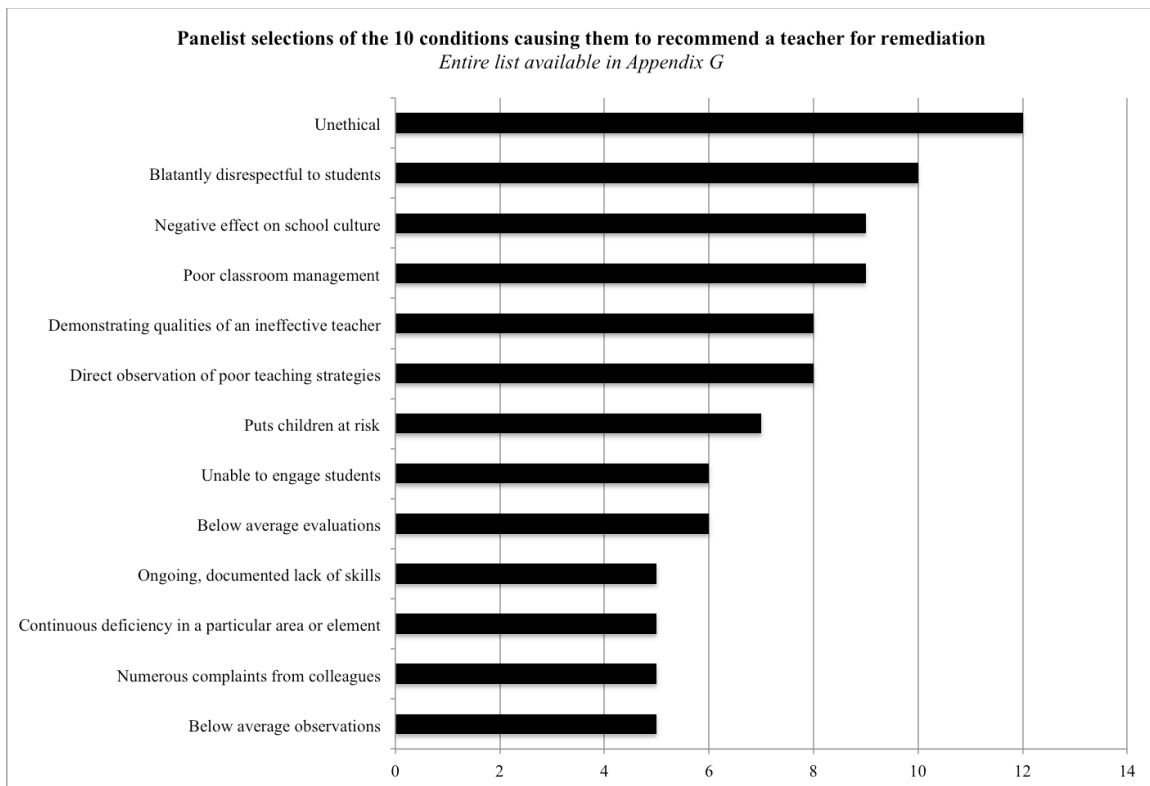
Figure 4. Please select the 10 conditions you believe would cause you to recommend a teacher for remediation. (N = 14)

The fourth inquiry of the second round survey asked principals to select 10 issues that provided the greatest barriers when remediating an ineffective teacher. The choices were taken directly from the themes identified by the principals in the first round of the study. Fourteen principals stated that a barrier exists when a teacher is unaware of their own weakness. Twelve principals identified the required documentation as a barrier when remediating an ineffective teacher. Eleven principals indicated teachers who do not respond to communication is a barrier when remediating an ineffective teacher. Ten principals stated union support, time in classrooms, tenure time, and when an event or a series of events does not cause harm to students as barriers to remediating ineffective teachers. Attributes that were identified by at least 36% of principals are illustrated in Figure 4. The entire data set is available in Appendix H.

Panelist selections of the 10 most significant barriers to remediating ineffective teachers
Entire list available in Appendix H
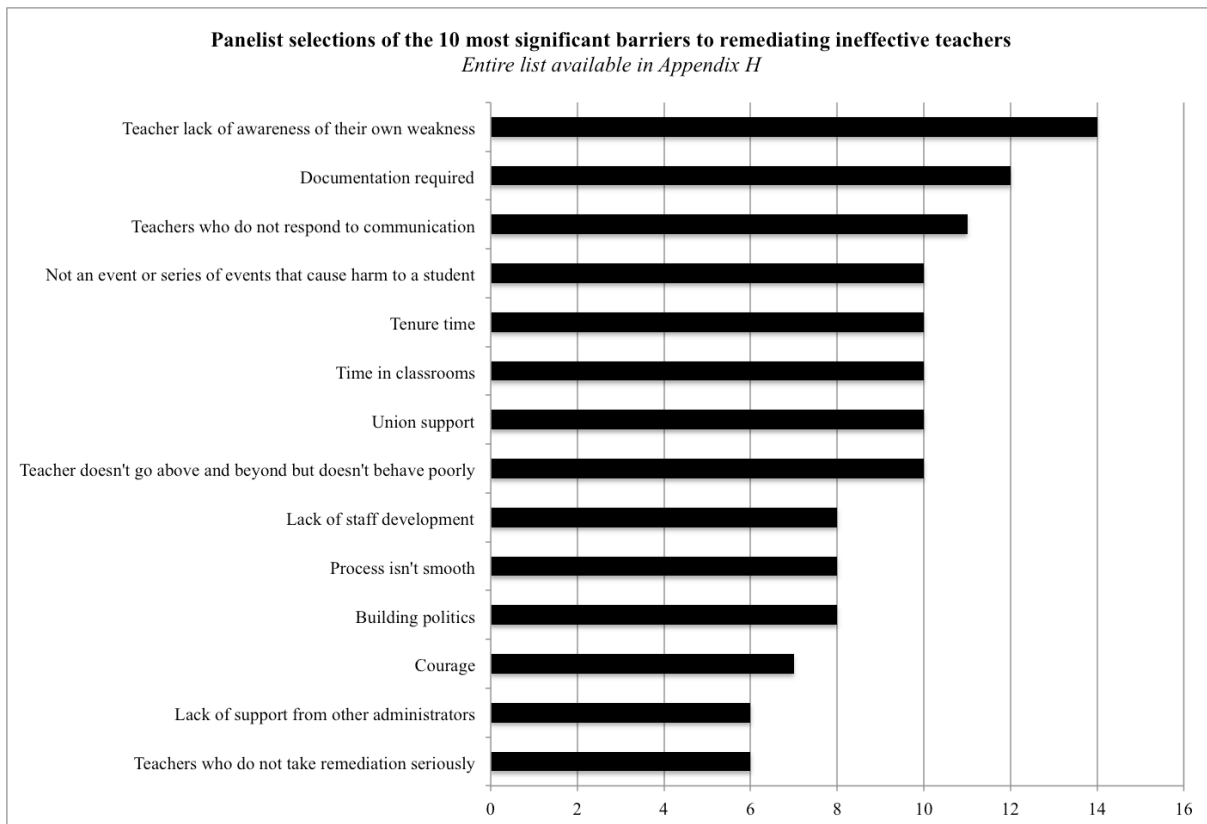
Figure 5. Please select the 10 issues you provide the greatest barriers when attempting to remediate an ineffective teacher. (N = 14)

Round Two Survey Summary. Principals were presented with four second round survey inquiries, very similar to those presented in the first round, with the intent of narrowing the group's opinions toward consensus. The inquiries asked them to choose 10 items from lists created taken from their survey feedback during the first round of the study.

The round two survey provided a vehicle to narrow the themes in each inquiry so as to transition from the open-ended nature of the round one survey to the consensus sought with the third round survey.

Principals again identified strong relationships, the ability to engage students, and strong communication and classroom management skills as attributes of effective teachers. While stating in the first round that effective teachers are strong in their content areas, this was less important to principals in the second round of the survey.

Principals identified nearly the opposite when identifying attributes of ineffective teachers, confirming several of their first round responses. This included their assertions that ineffective teachers have poor relationships with students, are unorganized, and have poor classroom management skills. Principals also indicated that ineffective teachers are not reflective.

Unethical teachers, those with poor classroom management or who are blatantly disrespectful to students, and who have a negative impact on school culture are most likely to be recommended for remediation by principals. Teachers who are not aware of their own weaknesses, the documentation required, and time in classrooms are examples of the barriers these principals most often face when it comes to remediating ineffective teachers.

Round Three Survey. Sixteen principals were invited to participate in the third round survey. Fourteen principals responded. The 14 principals participating in the third round of the

survey averaged 8.75 years as a principal. Twelve of the 14 principals identified themselves as a principal in a rural school and two principals identified themselves as a principal in a suburban school.

The Delphi technique provides the opportunity for principals to review the raw data from the previous round of the survey prior to engagement in the next round survey so they can refine their thinking (Skulmoski et al., 2007). The Delphi technique is intended to gain consensus on a topic. Consensus can be identified when the participants select items at a certain, pre-determined percentage rate (Hsu & Sandford, 2007; Nworie, 2011). The researcher pre-determined second round survey items selected by at least one-third of the participants would be included in the third round survey. The researcher determined the one-third threshold in order to provide a robust pool of choices for participants in the third round of the survey. The third round survey consisted of four inquiries with choices identified in the top 10 selections by at least 36% of the principals during the second round survey.

The first inquiry asked participants to rank order eight attributes of an effective teacher identified by 36% or more of the principals during the second round survey. Principals identified strong/positive relationships with students as the most important attribute of an effective teacher (*Mean [M] = 2.79*). An effective teacher believes all students will learn, according to principals, who gave this attribute the second highest mean ranking of 3.00. Principals also identified that the third most important attribute of an effective teacher is engaging students ($M = 3.71$) and the fourth most important attribute of an effective teacher being clear instructional purposes with a mean ranking of 4.36. The entire rankings are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Please rank the following attributes of an effective teacher in order of your opinion of their importance (with 1 being the most important.) (N = 14)

	Highest Ranking	Lowest Ranking	Mean	Standard Deviation
Strong/positive relationship with students	1	8	2.79	2.22
Believes all students will learn	1	8	3.00	2.39
Engages students	1	6	3.71	1.77
Clear instructional purposes	1	8	4.36	2.17
Passionate	2	8	4.86	2.48
Strong classroom management skills	1	8	5.29	1.90
Self reflective	3	8	5.79	1.53
Strong communicator	3	8	6.21	1.63

The second inquiry asked participants to rank order 12 attributes of an ineffective teacher identified by 36% or more of the principals during the second round survey.

Principals indicated that an ineffective teacher most often doesn't engage students, assigning a mean ranking of 3.43. Principals also identified that ineffective teachers most often have poor relationships with students with a mean ranking of 4.43. Lack of instructional clarity

(M = 5.14) and poor classroom management (M = 5.71) were identified as the third and fourth

attributes most often found in an ineffective teacher. These results are demonstrated in Table 2.

Table 2

Please rank the following attributes based on how often you believe each is found in an
ineffective teacher (with 1 being found the most often). (N = 14)

	Highest Ranking	Lowest Ranking	Mean	Standard Deviation
Doesn't engage students	1	9	3.43	2.74
Poor relationships with students	1	11	4.43	4.05
Lack of instructional clarity	1	12	5.14	3.21
Poor classroom management	1	11	5.71	3.00
Unwilling to accept feedback	2	11	5.71	2.43
Poor communication	2	12	5.93	3.32
Does not have passion	1	12	7.43	4.07
Doesn't have desire to acquire skills to be effective	3	12	7.79	2.89
Unprofessional	2	12	7.86	3.53
Makes excuses	4	12	7.93	2.5
Unorganized	3	12	8.07	3.00
Not reflective	1	11	8.57	2.95

The third inquiry of the third round survey asked participants to rank order 13 conditions that would cause them to recommend a teacher for remediation that were identified by 36% or more of the principals during the second round survey.

Principals identified that a teacher who was unethical would be recommended for remediation with a mean ranking of 2.21. Principals ranked blatant disrespect to students as the second most likely condition that would prompt them to recommend a teacher for remediation with a mean ranking of 5.50. Poor classroom management was identified as the third condition that most likely would cause principals to recommend a teacher for remediation with a mean ranking of 7.86. This ranking is illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3

Please rank the following conditions in order of what believe would cause you to recommend a teacher for remediation (with 1 being the condition where you'd be most likely to recommend remediation.) (N = 14)

	Highest Ranking	Lowest Ranking	Mean	Standard Deviation
Unethical	1	5	2.21	1.19
Puts children at risk	1	11	3.21	3.47
Blatantly disrespectful to students	2	12	5.5	3.44
Direct observation of poor teaching strategies	1	12	6	3.44
Continuous deficiency in a particular area or element	2	11	6.79	2.86
Ongoing, documented lack of skills	1	13	7.79	2.94
Poor classroom management	3	12	7.86	3.28
Demonstrating qualities of an ineffective teacher	3	13	8	3.55
Unable to engage students	4	12	8.21	2.67
Negative effect on school culture	2	12	8.29	3.29
Below average observations	1	13	8.29	3.63
Below average evaluations	3	13	8.43	3.01

Numerous complaints from colleagues	3	13	10.43	3.52

The final inquiry of the third round survey asked participants to rank order 14 barriers that they believe prevent them from remediating ineffective teachers that identified by 36% or more of the principals during the second round of the final research study. The results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Please rank the issues in the that you believe provide the greatest barriers when attempting to remediate an ineffective teacher (with 1 being the greatest barrier.) (N = 14)

	Highest Ranking	Lowest Ranking	Mean	Standard Deviation
Not an event or series of events that cause harm to a student	1	13	5.21	3.72
Union support	1	11	5.86	3.46
Documentation required	3	12	6.21	2.69
Tenure time	1	13	6.79	3.60
Teacher lack of awareness of their own weakness	1	12	6.86	3.66
Teachers who do not respond to communication	1	13	6.93	3.79
Time in classrooms	1	13	6.93	4.84
Teacher doesn't go above and beyond but doesn't behave poorly	1	13	7.36	4.34
Courage	2	14	7.93	4.55
Lack of support from other administrators	2	14	8.07	4.18
Teachers who do not take remediation seriously	1	13	8.36	3.86
Process isn't smooth	3	14	9.21	3.89
Lack of staff development	2	14	9.57	4.11
Building politics	1	14	9.71	4.18

Round Three Survey Summary. Principals were asked to rank order a list of attributes of effective and ineffective teachers, a list of conditions that result in recommending an ineffective teacher for remediation, and a list of barriers that prevent them from remediating ineffective teachers. The lists for the third round surveys included fewer choices than the second round surveys with options based on at least 36% of principals identifying them during the second round survey.

The round three survey revealed clear consensus among principals in their assessment of effective teacher attributes. Principals believe that effective teachers develop strong relationships, that they believe all students can learn, and that they engage students. Principals believe that ineffective teachers do not engage students, lack instructional clarity, have poor relationships with students, and are poor classroom managers. Principals believe teachers who are unethical and put children at risk should be recommended for remediation as well as teachers who are blatantly disrespectful to students or those teachers they directly observe ineffective teaching practices. Finally, principals identify the greatest barrier in remediating ineffective teachers to be situations where the ineffective teacher's actions do not cause harm to a student. They also identify union support and the amount of documentation required as top barriers to remediating ineffective teachers. Barriers may be more localized as nine different choices were ranked as the top barrier by at least one principal, while that same barrier was ranked 11th, 12th, 13th, or 14th by other principals in the third round survey.

Summary

A three-round mixed methods study using the iterative Delphi technique was conducted. A pilot study using four Minnesota principals from one school district preceded the final research

study in an effort to test the survey techniques and questions. The pilot study revealed the importance of a defined survey window and the deficiencies of using a Likert scale to narrow principal responses in the second round survey.

Participants in the study included experienced Minnesota school principals nominated by the divisional presidents of their professional organizations (Minnesota Association of Elementary School Principals and Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals) and identified as experts in the area of teacher supervision and evaluation based on a set criteria provided to the organizational presidents. Division presidents nominated 30 principals for the study. Sixteen principals agreed to participate. Fourteen completed all three surveys, an 87 percent survival rate.

In alignment with the Delphi survey technique, principals were provided the results of the prior round before completing the next survey to assist them in refining their thinking on the topic (Skulmoski et al., 2007). Second and third round survey inquiries were based on principal answers from the previous survey round (Skulmoski et al., 2007) and became more specific, and asked them to select and rank items in an effort to facilitate consensus (Hsu & Sandford, 2007; Nworie, 2011).

Principals developed consensus around attributes of effective and ineffective teachers in mirror image fashion. They identified that effective teachers develop strong relationships with students while ineffective teachers do not. They identified that effective teachers have strong classroom management skills, while ineffective teachers do not. Principals clearly indicated that unethical teachers should be recommended for remediation. They stated their biggest barriers to remediating ineffective teachers are those whose actions are ineffective but do not harm students, union support, and the amount of documentation required. The study revealed these barriers may

be localized since many of the options in the third and final survey received rankings at the top

and bottom of principals survey responses.

Chapter 5

Discussion

The purpose of the study was to identify the barriers that prevent Minnesota principals from remediating ineffective teachers. Determining the obstacles principals face, both instructionally and politically, when deciding if it is appropriate to address ineffective teaching is critical in supporting their efforts to improve student outcomes. In order to provide a foundation based on insight, the study asked principals to describe the attributes of effective and ineffective teachers as well as the conditions that would prompt them to recommend an ineffective teacher for remediation.

The mixed methods study used the Delphi technique to gather data from Minnesota principals identified as experts in the area of supervision and evaluation of teachers. The iterative Delphi process included three surveys for this study. Principals in the study were asked to provide insight into four areas in an effort to answer the research question "What barriers prevent principals from enacting formal remediation plans with what they consider to be ineffective teachers?" These areas included describing (a) attributes of an effective teacher, (b) attributes of an ineffective teacher, (c) conditions to recommend an ineffective teacher for remediation, and (d) barriers that prevent principals from remediating ineffective teachers.

Principals, who participated in the surveys anonymously, had an opportunity to review the first round survey data prior to completing the second round survey, and to review the second round survey data prior to completing the third round survey in order to clarify their thinking about the inquiries. The goal of the Delphi technique is to develop consensus among a group of experts about a topic of importance in their field.

Quantitative Findings

  Attributes of an effective teacher. This study explored teacher effectiveness in an effort

to identify the standard principals believe should exist in their teaching staff. Effective teachers

have significant impact on student achievement (Kane & Staiger, 2008; Sanders & Rivers, 1996;

Stronge, Ward, & Grant, 2011). That impact can last several years (Kane & Staiger, 2008;

Sanders & Rivers, 1996) and can help students overcome obstacles that are typically identified as

hampering student achievement (Sanders & Rivers, 1996).

  The attributes that Minnesota principals identified of effective teachers align with

previous research on the topic. Strong/positive relationships with students, which earned the

highest mean ranking in this study, was identified as an attribute of effective teachers, which

coincides with previous literature (Hattie, 2009; McEwan, 2002; Pritchett et al., 2011; Stronge et

al., 2011). Strong classroom management earned the sixth highest mean ranking in this study

and had been identified as an attribute of effective teachers by McEwan (2002), Pritchett et al.

(2011), and Stronge et al. (2011). Minnesota principals also identified clear instructional

purposes as the fourth highest ranked attribute of effective teachers in this study. This aligns

with research conducted by McEwan (2002), Pritchett et al. (2011), and Stronge et al. (2007).

  These results may have implications for principals as they are interviewing teachers to

work in their schools since candidates who display strong potential in these areas will most likely

be effective teachers. It may be helpful for Minnesota principals to use the consensus developed

during this study to identify the most effective teachers in their schools. They may consider

having new teachers observe the effective teachers in their schools, participating in professional

learning communities with them, or have the effective teachers in their school provide feedback

to new teachers through peer coaching. Effective teachers make a difference (Kane & Staiger,

2008; Sanders & Rivers, 1996; Stronge, Ward, & Grant 2011) and principals need to leverage their skill in every way and ensure that more of them work in our classrooms.

　　Attributes of ineffective teachers. In order to fully understand the context of the barriers that they face when addressing ineffective teaching, principals were asked to describe what makes a teacher ineffective. Ineffective teaching has a significant impact on students. Hanushek (2009) has identified the significant negative impact on student academic growth caused by ineffective teachers. Students who suffer from the long-term effects of ineffective teaching will earn less over the course of their lifetime (Chetty et al., 2011). Society also lives with the impact of ineffective teaching. A higher rate of teenage pregnancy exists for students who perform at lower rates on standardized assessments (Chetty et al., 2011). In addition, those who perform at a lower rate on standardized assessments are less likely to have opened a retirement account by age 25 (Chetty et al., 2011). Addressing ineffective teaching in our schools has both immediate and long-term benefits.

　　Minnesota principals established consensus around a number of attributes of ineffective teachers. The study revealed poor relationships with students, not engaging students, poor classroom management, and a lack of instructional clarity as the top attributes of ineffective teachers. Minnesota principals should keep these attributes in mind when observing teachers at their schools. Principals can initiate protocols that intentionally look for signs that a teacher may be struggling in one of these areas. Such protocols may provide an early warning system that allows principals to provide timely feedback or intervene to prevent a teacher from sliding into ineffectiveness. These interventions may include specific professional development on the teacher's area of weakness, observations of effective teachers in the school, or more frequent observation and feedback by the building principal. Pre-remedial interventions should be a more

effective use of the principal's time than the amount of time required once the teacher has been identified as needing remediation.

Recommendation for remediation. Principals were asked to identify the circumstances that would cause them to recommend a teacher for remediation in order to provide background for the barriers they identified as preventing them from remediating and addressing ineffective teachers. These conditions also gained consensus and provided a body of knowledge for principals to use as they observe teachers in their schools in the future.

The study revealed that such conditions as unethical behavior, blatant disrespect to students, and putting children at risk would prompt principals to recommend a teacher for remediation. Acting in an ethical manner, showing respect for children, and taking care to keep students safe are basic expectations for teachers. Principals who have concerns about these basic attributes of teachers should gather objective data to support their assessment of ineffectiveness and take action to remediate or terminate individuals who cannot meet the most basic of expectations.

The barriers for principals. Superintendents, school boards, and legislators should be interested in the barriers Minnesota principals identified to remediating ineffective teachers. Documentation was ranked as the second greatest barrier to addressing ineffective teaching by Minnesota principals, which aligns with research by Causey (2010) and Tucker (1997). Time in classrooms was identified as one of the top six barriers by Minnesota principals, which aligns with research conducted by Billot (2003), Shellinger (2005), and Rooney (2011).

A connection of interest may be the apparent dichotomy of principals' concern regarding time spent in classrooms as a barrier while also citing that their direct observation of ineffective teaching in the classroom would prompt them to recommend such a teacher for remediation.

Principals are a reliable source of identifying ineffective teaching (Jacob & Lefgren, 2008). This study demonstrated Minnesota principals understand when they need to recommend ineffective teachers for remediation but they lack the time to be in classrooms to make those observations. This issue may already be starting to be addressed in Minnesota. In 2012, the Minnesota legislature modified the state's teacher tenure law (§122A.40) to mandate that all Minnesota teachers be evaluated on a three-year cycle. The law requires annual feedback for teachers and formal evaluation by a trained evaluator once every three years. The law articulates that the local union and district must agree on an evaluation plan that complies with the law or they must use the model developed by the Minnesota Department of Education. This should increase conversations around principal practice in evaluation and the time principals spend in classrooms.

Initially, these increased requirements were implemented without any additional funding. While one-time funding was provided for the 2014-15 school year to support activities associated with the new teacher evaluation law at the school level, the legislature should consider providing ongoing categorical funding for building level administration in order for Minnesota schools to facilitate more principal presence in classrooms. Minnesota school districts should also review their staffing models to investigate strategies that could provide principals more time in classrooms.

Districts should review the data collection methods available to principals for documenting performance concerns. Identified as a barrier to addressing ineffective teaching by principals who participated in this study, concerns about documentation procedures may be addressed through the use of web-based evaluation services that can take advantage of modern technologies such as smart phones and tablet computers. Having easier access to digital tools to

capture direct observations of ineffective teaching techniques may be able to ease the

documentation burden identified by principals in this study and as outlined by Causey (2010) and

Tucker (1997).

The data also reveal concerns about teachers who are mediocre in nature but are not

necessarily ineffective enough to prompt remediation. Principals participating in the study

identified the most significant barrier in remediating ineffective teachers as situations where the

teacher's actions were not an event or a series of events that caused students harm. They also

identified teachers who do not go above and beyond, but do not behave poorly as a barrier when

addressing ineffective teaching. Once again, facilitating more frequent principal visits to

classrooms might provide additional insight into what is taking place in the classrooms where

these concerns exist. Platt, Tripp, Ogden and Fraser (2000) indicate that while mediocre teachers

are not often ineffective enough to be strongly considered for termination, mediocre teaching has

an adverse impact on student learning. More frequent principal presence in rooms of teachers

they consider mediocre may provide evidence that these teachers are actually ineffective and

require formal remediation. More frequent principal visits to a mediocre teacher's classroom

may also create a sense of urgency in that teacher to improve their practice without remediation.

Minnesota principals may also be experiencing barriers that are more localized at the

building level. This is exemplified by nine different items being ranked as the greatest barrier

when remediating ineffective teachers by at least one principal in the third round of the survey.

In addition, these nine barriers–identified as the greatest barriers by at least one principal–were

also ranked as low as 11th, 12th, 13th, or 14th by at least one other principal. Barriers differ in

each school and principals should be cognizant of the impediments in their own school culture.

Principals should intentionally identify the specific barriers in their building, be vigilant about

the barriers identified in this study, and other barriers revealed in the research referred to in

Chapter 2. They should develop strategies to mitigate their impact on their instructional

leadership.

When considering a number of the barriers to remediating ineffective teachers identified

by Minnesota principals, it becomes evident that school districts need to exercise great caution

when choosing to provide teachers with the due process protections afforded by tenure in

Minnesota. Minnesota law (§122A.40) provides school boards great discretion to terminate

probationary teacher contracts during the first three years of consecutive employment in one

school district. Principals should be diligent in ensuring that new teachers exhibit the attributes

associated with effective teachers identified in this study. They should also be diligent in

observing new teachers for attributes associated with ineffective teachers in this study.

Minnesota principals should utilize caution when considering tenure protections afforded by

offering a probationary teacher a continuing contract, especially when they exhibit attributes

associated with ineffective teachers. Principals should commit to terminating probationary

teachers who demonstrate behavior that aligns with conditions that would cause them to

recommend a tenured teacher for remediation. Terminating probationary teachers who exhibit

these traits or attributes of an ineffective teacher can provide compounding returns by averting

continued ineffective teaching before they benefit from tenure protection.

Union support was identified by principals in this study as a barrier to addressing

ineffective teaching. This barrier may be a matter of perception. Union leaders have also

blamed principals and district administration for allowing ineffective teachers to continue

working with students (Shanker, 1996).

Baratz-Snowden (2009) states that tenure means that a teacher needs to be informed about the deficiencies in their work, provided with an opportunity for an impartial hearing, and have the opportunity to appeal the results of the hearing, should the outcome be detrimental to their employment status. This creates an apparent conflict of understanding where the union believes that principals are responsible for the continued employment of ineffective teachers and the principals surveyed as part of this study believe that union support is a barrier to remediating ineffective teachers. It points to an opportunity for dialogue between Minnesota principals and the unions supporting teachers in their schools about what constitutes due process and how principals can fairly address ineffective teaching. Representatives from the Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals, the Minnesota Elementary School Principals Association, and Education Minnesota could meet to discuss the tenets of due process and create a shared understanding of the rights and responsibilities of principals and ineffective teachers. Collaboratively designed training programs could provide principals and local union representatives with the tools necessary to understand each other's rights and responsibilities in the process when an ineffective teacher is identified and recommended for remediation.

Limitations of the Study

This research is limited to the sample group identified in a single state. The results of the study may not be generalizable to the rest of the United States or internationally. Though it is the hope of the researcher to provide insight that can be transferred to other locations, this study only considered a sample group from Minnesota.

The study was conducted using a mixed methods approach with a Delphi survey process. This approach included recruiting individuals considered to be 'experts' in their field and asking them to participate in a multi-step survey process. The recruitment of these individuals was

based on perception of their expertise in working with teacher evaluation. This selection of

'experts' is subjective based on the perception of those who nominated them to participate in the

survey. Nomination instructions were provided to the Divisional presidents of the Minnesota

Elementary School Principals Association and the Minnesota Association of Secondary School

Principals, including a minimum number of five years as a principal as well as those considered

to have expertise in teacher evaluation and remediation. However, these nominations still had the

strong possibility of being based subjectively on perception of expertise.

   Each individual involved in the survey process may have had a different perspective of

what constitutes effective teaching and what constitutes ineffective teaching. The researcher

made every effort to share and clarify established common definitions.

Recommendations

Based on (the results of) this dissertation, the researcher makes the following six

recommendations to lessen some of the barriers when principals attempt to remediate ineffective

teachers:

- Continue developing a robust teacher evaluation system in Minnesota. The system

  should continue to support teacher development while at the same time provide a

  predictable, clear path for principals to identify ineffective teachers, provide remedial

  opportunities, and ultimately dismiss those who are not able to be effective in our

  classrooms.

- School districts should ensure their principals have the time available to spend in

  classrooms, observing instruction, and providing feedback to teachers. This may mean

  additional positions created to support the effective and orderly management of the

  school and a reduction of positions in the school system that are obsolete.

- School districts should invest in systems that provide principals digital templates to keep
  records and document activities in classrooms. This documentation can be used for
  reinforcing and highlighting positive teaching strategies as well as collecting data about
  ineffective teachers in order to develop a strong remedial plan. Digital templates would
  provide a mechanism to have the necessary documentation should a recommendation for
  termination become necessary.

- The Minnesota Elementary School Principals Association and the Minnesota Association
  of Secondary School Principals should consider collaborating with Education Minnesota
  in order to identify a working definition due process for teachers. This could lead to joint
  professional development including principals and local union representatives in order to
  have a clear and mutual understanding of due process.

- The Minnesota Department of Education should consider hosting a database of teacher
  remediation plan templates created by local districts as part of the new teacher evaluation
  law. This would provide an opportunity for districts to collaborate and determine what
  strategies are the most effective in assisting ineffective teachers on the path back to
  effectiveness.

- Minnesota's legislature should consider extending the probationary period for new
  teachers from three years to five years. Hanushek (2009) states that teachers with five
  years of experience yield student achievement results similar to teachers with 25 years of
  experience. Extending the probationary period to five years would allow teachers to
  more fully develop prior to principals needing to make a decision about tenure status. A
  five-year probationary period would provide an opportunity to confirm a teacher
  possesses the attributes of an effective teacher.

Future Research

The researcher recommends nine areas for potential future study on this topic. Future researchers could conduct a large-scale quantitative research study of all Minnesota principals using the options presented in the third round survey of the survey. A larger scale study could further validate the most significant attributes and barriers identified in this study.

Researchers could replicate this study with principals from Minnesota's urban districts. While principals in these districts were identified and contacted to participate in this study, none responded. Future research could also replicate this study with principals from suburban districts in Minnesota. Only three of the original 16 panelists self-identified as principals in suburban districts. This future research would provide additional data to confirm this study's results among suburban principals.

A study could convene focus groups of Minnesota principals at their state conventions to gauge their reactions to the study's results. These face-to-face interactions may provide insight, especially into the plethora of items identified as the greatest barriers to addressing ineffective teaching.

Union support was identified as the second greatest barrier when remediating ineffective teachers by Minnesota principals. A follow up study could be conducted to identify those aspects of union support that principals perceive create this barrier. Future research could include a study to identify Minnesota principals understanding of due process protections offered by the state's tenure law. This would provide data that could be used to develop professional development materials for principals.

This study focused on what *principals* perceive as the barriers to addressing and remediating ineffective teachers. Another research study might ask *teachers* what they perceive as the

barriers to addressing and remediating ineffective teaching. This could provide great insight into a number of building-level actions that could be taken to remediate ineffective teachers.

A strong/positive relationship with students was an attribute consistently associated with effective teachers in this study. This finding was consistent with previous research about effective teachers. Identifying the components that comprise an effective teacher's strong/positive relationship with students would be a logical topic for future study. This could help identify potential effective teachers during the recruitment process as well as provide information that could lead to professional development programming in schools.

Finally, future research might study the documentation requirements considered part of the due process afforded to tenured teachers in Minnesota. This research could specifically clarify what is burdensome about the current documentation requirements and how they derail principals from remediating ineffective teachers.

References

Akins, R. B., Tolson, H., & Cole, B. R. (2005). Stability of response characteristics of a Delphi

panel: application of bootstrap data expansion. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*,

5(1), 37.

Baratz-Snowden, J. (2009). *Fixing tenure. A proposal for assuring teacher effectiveness and due

process.* Retrieved from http://www. americanprogress.

org/issues/2009/06/pdf/teacher_tenure. pdf

Billot, J. (2003). The real and the ideal: The role and workload of secondary principals in new

zealand. *International Studies In Educational Administration*, *31*(1), 33-49.

Causey, K. (2012). Principals' perspectives of the issues and barriers of working with marginal

teachers. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.

mnsu.edu/

Chetty, R., Friedman, J. N., & Rockoff, J. E. (2011). *The long-term impacts of teachers: Teacher

value-added and student outcomes in adulthood.* Retrieved from

http://ezproxy.mnsu.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.

com/docview/964176203?accountid=12259.

Dalkey, N., & Helmer, O. (1963). An experimental application of the Delphi method to the use

of experts. *Management science*, *9*(3), 458-467.

Daniels, G. & French, S. (2006). *The NAHT work life balance survey 2006.* Retrieved from

http://www.naht.org.uk/EasysiteWeb/getresource.axd?AssetID=3205&

Darling-Hammond, L. (2013). Why the NCTQ teacher prep ratings are nonsense. *The

Washington Post*.

Dillon, E., & Silva, E. (2011). Grading the teachers' teachers: Higher education comes under scrutiny. *Phi Delta Kappan*, *93*(1), 54-58.

Fischer, R. G. (1978). The delphi method: A description, review, and criticism. *Journal Of Academic Librarianship*, *4*(2), 64-70.

Goe, L. (2007). *The link between teacher quality and student outcomes: A research synthesis*. Washington, DC: National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality.

Goe, L., Bell, C., & Little, O. (2008). *Approaches to evaluating teacher effectiveness: A research synthesis*. Washington, DC: National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality.

Grossman, T. (2011). *Preparing principals to evaluate teachers*. Retrieved from http://www. nga.org/cms/home/nga-center-for-best-practices/center-publications/page-edu-publications/col2-content/main-content-list/preparing-principals-to-evaluate.html

Hanushek, E. A. (2009). Teacher deselection in creating a new teaching profession, ed. Dan Goldhaber and Jane Hannaway, 165ñ80. Washington, DC: Urban Institute Press.

Hasson, F., Keeney, S., & McKenna, H. (2000). Research guidelines for the Delphi survey technique. *Journal of advanced nursing*, *32*(4), 1008-1015.

Hattie, J. C. (2009). Visible Learning: A Synthesis of over 800 Meta--Analyses Relating to Achievement.

Heck, R. H. (2009). Teacher effectiveness and student achievement. Investigating a multi-level cross-classified model. *Journal of Educational Administration. 47(2),* 227-249.

Henderson-Sparks, J. C., Ehrgott, R. H., & Sparks, R. K. (1995). Managing your marginal teachers: A California survey reveals successful strategies for identifying and improving subpar teachers. *Principal, 74(4),* 32-35.

Holland, H. (2012). *Out of the office and into the classroom.* Retrieved from http://www. wallacefoundation. org/knowledge-center/school-leadership/effective-principal- leadership/Pages/Out-of-the-Office-and-Into-the-Classroom. aspx

Huvaere, D. J. (1997). *Tenure for Illinois teachers: An analysis of the philosophical arguments surrounding the adoption of the 1941 tenure law for public school teachers in the state of Illinois.* (Doctoral dissertation, Loyola University of Chicago). Retrieved from http://ezproxy. mnsu. edu/login?url=http://search. proquest. com/docview/304356058?accountid=12259. (304356058).

Hsu, C. C., & Sandford, B. A. (2007). The Delphi technique: making sense of consensus. Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation, 12(10), 1-8.

Jacob, B. A. (2011). Do principals fire the worst teachers? *Educational Evaluation And Policy Analysis*, *33*(4), 403-434.

Jacob, B. A. (2011). Principled principals: New evidence from Chicago shows they fire the least effective teachers, *Education Next*, *11*(4), 70-76.

Jacob, B. A., & Lefgren, L. (2005). *Principals as agents: Subjective performance measurement in education* (No. w11463). National Bureau of Economic Research.

Jacob, B. A., & Lefgren, L. (2008). Can principals identify effective teachers? Evidence on subjective performance evaluation in education. *Journal of Labor Economics*, *26*(1), 101- 136.

Kane, T. J., & Staiger, D. O. (2008). *Estimating teacher impacts on student achievement: An experimental evaluation.* Retrieved from http://www.nber.org/papers/w14607

Kennedy, N. J. (2000). Teacher remediation: An exploratory study of principals' perceptions of the process of teacher remediation. Ph.D. dissertation, Loyola University of Chicago,

United States -- Illinois. Retrieved July 18, 2010, from Dissertations & Theses: Full Text.

(Publication No. AAT 9955393).

Kersten, T. A. (2006). Teacher tenure: Illinois school board presidents' perspectives and

suggestions for improvement. *Planning and Changing, 37(3&4), 234-257.*

Lakey, E. R. (1976). Legal Aspects Of Teacher Tenure Laws, Teacher Incompetency, And Due

Process. (Doctoral Dissertation). ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.

Lynch, J. M. (2012). Responsibilities of today's principal: Implications for principal preparation

programs and principal certification policies. *Rural Special Education Quarterly*, *31*(2),

40-47.

McEwan, E. (2002). *10 Traits of Highly Effective Teachers.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

National Council on Teacher, Q. (2011). *State of the states: Trends and early lessons on teacher

evaluation and effectiveness policies.* Retrieved from

http://www. nctq.

org/dmsView/State_of_the_States_Teacher_Evaluation_and_Effectiveness_Policies_NC

TQ_Report

National Council on Teacher, Q. (2011). 2011 State Teacher Policy Yearbook. Minnesota.

National Council On Teacher Quality.

National Governors Association, C. (2011). Preparing Principals to Evaluate Teachers. Issue

Brief. *NGA Center For Best Practices*.

Nworie, J. (2011). Using the Delphi technique in educational technology research. TechTrends,

55(5), 24-30.

Nye, B., Konstantopoulos, S., & Larry, V. H. (2004). How large are teacher effects? *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 26*(3), 237-257. Retrieved from http://ezproxy.mnsu. edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/197228043?accountid=12259.

Pfeifer, R. S. (1987). *Variations on a theme: An analysis of peer involvement in teacher evaluation.* Retrieved from http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED285882

Platt, A., Tripp, C. E., Ogden, W. R., & Fraser, R. G. (2000). *The skillful leader: Confronting mediocre teaching.* Acton, MA: Ready About Press.

Pritchett, J., Sparks, T. & Taylor-Johnson, T. (2010). *An analysis of teacher quality, evaluation, professional development, and tenure as it relates to student achievement.* Retrieved from http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED523753

Raines, K. L. (2010). Teacher Resistance to the Response to Intervention Process: A Delphi Study. *ProQuest LLC.*

Rich, M. (2012, October 15). Seeking aid, school districts change teacher evaluations. *New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www. nytimes.com/2012/10/16/education/seeking-aid-more-districts-change-teacher-evaluations.html?_r=0

Riley, R. W. (1998). Our teachers should be excellent, and they should look like America. *Education and Urban Society, 31,* 18-29.

Rooney, J. (2011). Taming the to-do list. *Educational Leadership*, *68*(5), 86-87.

Rowe, G., & Wright, G. (1999). The Delphi technique as a forecasting tool: issues and analysis. International journal of forecasting, 15(4), 353-375.

Samuels, C. A. (2008). Managers help principals balance time. *Education Week*, *27*(23), 1-19.

Sanders, W. L., & Rivers, J. C. (1996). *Cumulative and residual effects of teachers on future*

    students academic achievement. Retrieved from http://heartland.org/policy-

    documents/cumulative-and-residual-effects-teachers-future-student-academic-

    achievement.

Shellinger, M. (2005). *Alternative school administration study* Retrieved from http://ezproxy.

    mnsu.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/62083349?accountid=12259.

Skulmoski, G., Hartman, F., & Krahn, J. (2007). The Delphi method for graduate research.

    Journal of Information Technology Education: Research, 6(1), 1-21.

Stader, D. (2013). *Law and ethics in educational leadership* (2nd ed.). Boston: Pearson.

Stronge, J. H., Ward, T. J., Tucker, P. D., & Hindman, J. L. (2007). What is the relationship

    between teacher quality and student achievement? An exploratory study. *Journal of*

    Personnel Evaluation in Education, 20(3-4) 165-184.

Stronge, J. H., Ward, T. J., & Grant, L. W. (2011). What makes good teachers good? A cross-

    case analysis of the connection between teacher effectiveness and student achivement.

Tucker, P. (2001). Helping struggling teachers. *Educational Leadership, 58(5),* 52-55.

Tucker, P. D. (1997). Lake Wobegon: Where all teachers are competent (Or, have we come to

    terms with the problem of incompetent teachers?). *Journal of Personnel Evaluation in*

    Education 11, 103-126.

U. S. Department of Education. (2009) *Race to the top executive summary and key policy details.*

    Retrieved from http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/executive-summary.pdf

Van Horn, C., & Schaffner, H. (2003). *Work in america: An encyclopedia of history, policy, and*

    society. Santa Barbara, California. ABC-CLIO, Inc.

Ver Ploeg, C. (2004). Terminating public school teachers for cause. *William Mitchell Law*

   Review, *31*, 303. Retrieved from http://open. wmitchell. edu/cgi/viewcontent.

   cgi?article=1008&context=wmlr

Washington, Andrea. (2011). *Formal evaluation of teachers: An examination of the relationship*

   between teacher performance and student achievement. Retrieved from http://udini.

   proquest.com/view/formal-evaluation-of-teachers-an-pqid:2370209031/

Weisberg, D., Sexton, S., Mulhern, J., & Keeling, D. (2009). The widget effect: Our national

   failure to acknowledge and act on differences in teacher effectiveness. *Education Digest:*

   Essential Readings Condensed for Quick Review, 75(2), 31-35.

Appendix A

Table A1

First Round Survey, Inquiry One: Please describe what you consider to be the attributes of an effective teacher. (N= 16)

Theme	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Totals
strong/positive relationships with students	•	•		•			•					•		•			6
engages students				•				•		•	•	•	•				6
strong communicator			•	•	•					•		•					5
strong in content area						•	•	•		•				•			5
strong classroom management skills				•			•					•	•				4
differentitates				•				•	•						•		4
organized							•	•				•		•			4
caring	•			•											•		3
passionate				•			•								•		3
holds students to a high standard			•	•			•										3
strong relationships with families	•			•													2
focused on student success	•			•													2
goes 'above and beyond'	•			•													2
develops lessons that students can relate to		•			•												2
believes all students will learn				•								•					2
understand best practices				•									•				2
self reflective				•				•									2
works with peers to improve				•				•									2
makes connections with students				•					•								2
planful/well prepared									•	•							2
professionalism									•						•		2
strong relationships with colleagues	•																1
constantly learning and growing				•													1
students work hard to please them				•													1
innovative				•													1
risk taker				•													1

thinks beyond classroom lesson	•	1
teaches life lessons	•	1
understands how to challenge students	•	1
proactive	•	1
structured	•	1
listener	•	1
high energy level	•	1
thoughtful	•	1
work ethic	•	1
empathetic	•	1
treats child as individual	•	1
involved in community	•	1
good personality	•	1
integrity	•	1
positive	•	1
loves kids	•	1
leadership skills	•	1
clear instructional purposes	•	1
respectful towards students	•	1
respectful towards staff	•	1
uses proven instructional methods	•	1
uses data to inform instruction	•	1
collaborative	•	1

Appendix B

Table A2

First Round Survey, Inquiry Two: Please describe what you consider to be the attributes of an ineffective teacher. (N = 16)

Theme	Panelists																Total
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	
self centered	•			•					•					•			4
poor relationships with students			•				•			•					•		4
poor classroom management				•	•								•				3
Unorganized					•									•	•		3
doesn't refresh their teaching							•					•			•		3
does not have passion				•		•											2
not reflective				•									•				2
does not value data				•											•	•	3
does not see 'big picture'					•								•				2
Umotivated					•									•			2
Unprofessional					•								•				2
poor communication					•								•				2
doesn't have desire to acquire skills to be effective											•		•				2
lack of instructional clarity													•		•		2
not flexible					•											•	2
lectures most of the time							•									•	2
does not go 'above and beyond'	•																1
Defensive	•																1
Teaches to the middle of the class			•														1
poor pacing				•													1
provides 'fluff' activities				•													1
makes excuses				•													1
Reactive					•												1
does not set boundaries					•												1
does not follow through					•												1
doesn't connect with colleagues								•									1
stuck in routine								•									1

unwilling to accept feedback	•		1
content insecurity		•	1
doesn't vary instructional methods		•	1
doesn't engage students			•	1
disregard for student backgrounds			•	1
disregard for student abilities			•	1
doesn't progress monitor				•	1

Appendix C

Table A3

First Round Survey, Inquiry 3: Please share your beliefs on what conditions are required to recommend an ineffective teacher for remediation. (N = 16)

Theme	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Total
direct observation of poor teaching strategies						•	•		•								3
students are not successful	•											•					2
requests to move to a different teacher	•								•								2
Unethical	•											•					2
below average evaluations			•				•										2
below average observations			•				•										2
below par student performance			•	•													2
demonstrating qualities of an ineffective teacher					•										•		2
unwillingness to address concerns						•							•				2
failure to adhere to shifts in focus put forth by district							•								•		2
ongoing, documented lack of skills											•				•		2
student concerns/complaints	•																1
parent concerns/complaints	•																1
students do not feel welcomed	•																1
blatantly disrespectful to students			•														1
poor classroom management			•														1
does not connect with students					•												1
does not connect with parents					•												1
does not connect with colleagues					•												1
unwillingness to reflect						•											1
unwillingness to plan						•											1
subpar in reflection						•											1
subpar in planning						•											1
subpar in addressing concerns						•											1
students do not want to attend								•									1
unable to engage students								•									1

communication breakdown with students	•			1
when set goals continue to be unmet		•		1
numerous complaints from parents		•		1
numerous complaints from students		•		1
numerous complaints from colleagues		•		1
continuous deficiency in a paricular area or element	•			1
trusting relationship between principal and teacher			•	•	2
principal efficacy in remediation			•		1
negative effect on school culture				•	1
puts children at risk				•	1

Appendix D

Table A4

First Round Survey, Inquiry Four: Please describe the barriers that prevent you from remediating an ineffective teacher. (N = 16)

Theme	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Total
Union support	•	•	•		•								•		•		6
Time in classrooms						•		•			•	•	•	•			6
Teacher lack of awareness of their own weakness							•		•	•							3
Lack of support from other administrators							•							•			2
Documentation required												•	•				2
Teachers who do not take remediation seriously							•								•		2
Teacher doesn't go above and beyond but doesn't behave poorly	•																1
Not an event or series of events that cause harm to a student	•																1
Courage			•														1
Costliness of the process to dismiss a teacher				•													1
Costliness of the remediation process				•													1
New teacher training				•													1
Tenure time					•												1
Teachers who do not respond to communication							•										1
Lack of staff development								•									1
Process isn't smooth														•			1
Building politics														•			1

Appendix E

Figure A1: Please select the 10 attributes that you believe are found most often in an effective teacher. (N = 14)

Please select the 10 attributes that you believe are found most often in an effective teacher.

Number of Panelists Identifying Attribute as one of top 10 attributes of an effective teacher

Attribute	Value
believes all students will learn	9 / 9
self reflective	8 / 8
strong/positive relationships with students	6
strong communicator	5 / 5 / 5
integrity	4
caring	4
planful/well prepared	4
uses data to inform instruction	4 / 4
high energy level	3
work ethic	3 / 3
focused on student success	3 / 3
holds students to a high standard	3 / 3
understand best practices	2
listener	2 / 2
uses proven instructional methods	2 / 2
thinks beyond classroom lesson	2 / 2
organized	2 / 2
respectful towards staff	1
teaches life lessons	1 / 1
innovative	1 / 1
understands how to challenge students	1
thoughtful	1 / 1
strong relationships with families	0
works with peers to improve	0 / 0
structured	0 / 0

Attributes Identified in the first round survey

Appendix F

Figure A2. Please select the 10 attributes that you believe are found most often in an
ineffective teacher. (N = 14)

Please select the 10 attributes you believe are found most often in ineffective teachers.

Attribute	Count
not reflective	10
poor relationships with students	9
poor classroom management	9
unorganized	8
poor communication	7
lack of instructional clarity	7
doesn't engage students	7
doesn't have desire to aquire skills to be effective	6
Does not have passion	6
Unwilling to accept feedback	6
unprofessional	5
makes excuses	5
not flexible	4
Reactive	4
Does not value data	4
defensive	4
doesn't connect with colleagues	4
self centered	4
does not follow through	3
umotivated	3
does not go 'above and beyond'	3
Does not see 'big picture'	3
does not set boundaries	2
Lectures most of the time	2
provides 'fluff' activities	2
Disregard for student abilities	2
hidden agendas	2
Content insecurity	2
Teaches to the middle of the class	1
doesn't vary instructional methods	1
poor pacing	1
Stuck in routine	1
Doesn't refresh their teaching	1
Doesn't progress monitor	1
Disregard for student backgrounds	1

Attributes identified in first round survey

Number of panelists identifying attribute as one found most often in ineffective teachers

Appendix G

Figure A3. Please select the 10 conditions you believe would cause you to recommend a
teacher for remediation. (N = 14)

Please select 10 conditions you believe would cause you to recommend a teacher for remediation.

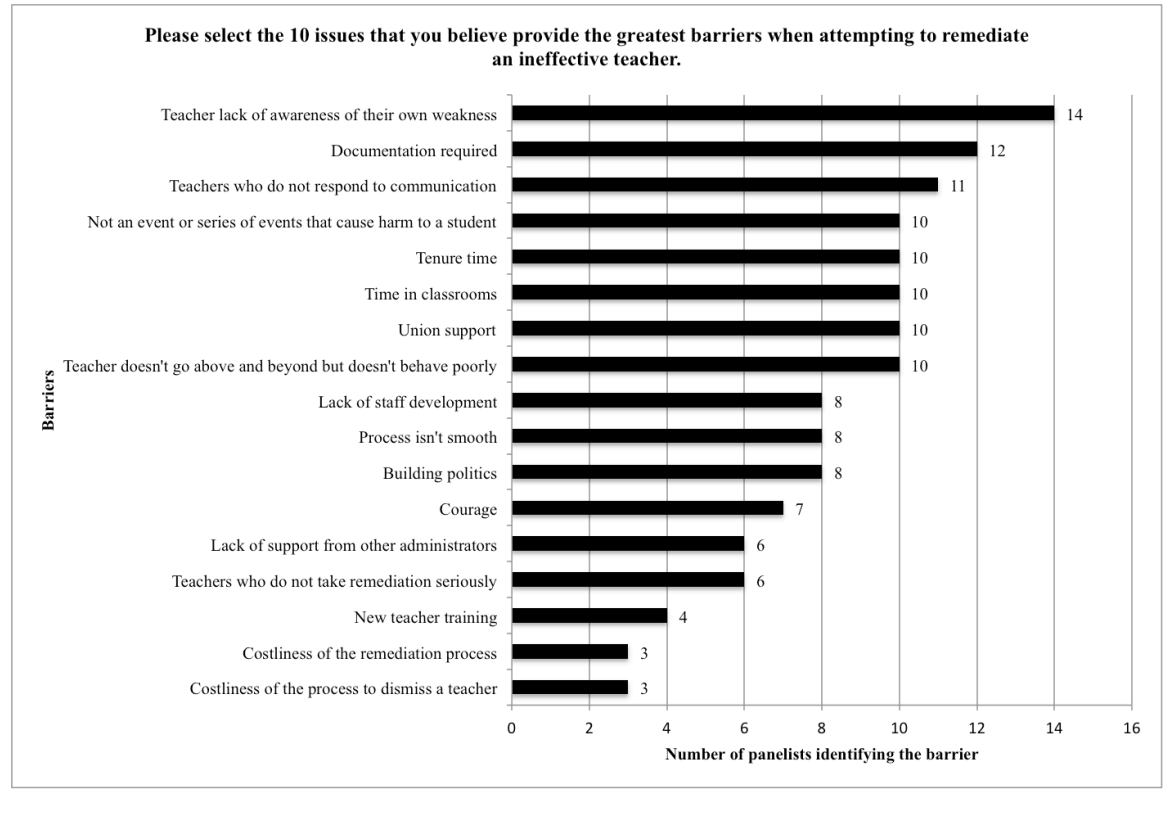| Conditions	Number
Unethical	12
Blatantly disrespectful to students	10
Negative effect on school culture	9
Poor classroom management	9
Demonstrating qualities of an ineffective teacher	8
Direct observation of poor teaching strategies	8
Puts children at risk	7
Unable to engage students	6
Below average evaluations	6
Ongoing, documented lack of skills	5
Continuous deficiency in a particular area or element	5
Numerous complaints from colleagues	5
Below average observations	5
Student concerns/complaints	4
Students are not successful	4
Does not connect with parents	3
Students do not feel welcomed	3
Below par student performance	3
Collegial concerns/complaints	3
Does not connect with students	3
Unwillingness to address concerns	3
Numerous complaints from students	2
Unwillingness to reflect	2
Failure to adhere to shifts in focus put forth by district	2
Students do not want to attend	2
Parent concerns/complaints	2
Numerous complaints from parents	2
When set goals continue to be unmet	2
Subpar in planning	1
Subpar in reflection	1
Requests to move to a different teacher	1
Does not connect with colleagues	1
Unwillingness to plan	1
communication breakdown with students	0
Subpar in addressing concerns	0

Number of panelists identifying conditions that would cause them to recommend a teacher for remediation

Appendix H

Figure A4. Please select the 10 issues you provide the greatest barriers when attempting to remediate an ineffective teacher. (N = 14)

Please select the 10 issues that you believe provide the greatest barriers when attempting to remediate an ineffective teacher.

Barrier	Number of panelists identifying the barrier
Teacher lack of awareness of their own weakness	14
Documentation required	12
Teachers who do not respond to communication	11
Not an event or series of events that cause harm to a student	10
Tenure time	10
Time in classrooms	10
Union support	10
Teacher doesn't go above and beyond but doesn't behave poorly	10
Lack of staff development	8
Process isn't smooth	8
Building politics	8
Courage	7
Lack of support from other administrators	6
Teachers who do not take remediation seriously	6
New teacher training	4
Costliness of the remediation process	3
Costliness of the process to dismiss a teacher	3

Appendix I

ONLINE/ANONYMOUS SURVEY CONSENT

You are requested to participate in research supervised by Candace Raskin on barriers that prevent Minnesota school principals from addressing ineffective teachers. Each round of this three-part survey should take no more than 15 minutes to complete. The goal of this survey is to identify barriers that prevent Minnesota school principals from addressing ineffective teachers. If you have any questions about the research, please contact Mr. Hillmann at matthew.hillmann@mnsu.edu.

Participation is voluntary. You have the option not to respond to any of the questions. You may stop taking the survey at any time by closing your web browser. Participation or nonparticipation will not impact your relationship with Minnesota State University, Mankato. If you have questions about the treatment of human participants and Minnesota State University, Mankato, contact the IRB Administrator, Dr. Barry Ries, at 507-389-2321 or barry.ries@mnsu.edu.

Responses will be anonymous. However, whenever one works with online technology there is always the risk of compromising privacy, confidentiality, and/or anonymity. If you would like more information about the specific privacy and anonymity risks posed by online surveys, please contact the Minnesota State University, Mankato Information and Technology Services Help Desk (507-389-6654) and ask to speak to the Information Security Manager.

The risks of participating are no more than are experienced in daily life. There are no direct benefits for participating. Society might benefit by the identifying the barriers that prevent Minnesota school principals from addressing ineffective teachers.

Submitting the completed survey will indicate your informed consent to participate and indicate your assurance that you are at least 18 years of age.

Please print a copy of this page for your future reference.

MSU IRBNet ID# 596059-1   **Date of MSU IRB approval: 06.06.2014**

Participant's Printed Name: **Date:**

Participant's Signature:

Appendix J

Gmail by Google

Matt Hillmann <mahillmann@gmail.com>

MESPA Division President's Input

Matt Hillmann <mahillmann@gmail.com>   Wed, Aug 27, 2014 at 6:50 AM
Draft

Dear <<First>>,

I hope you have had an energizing start to the 2014-15 school year. I am contacting you as the MESPA <<Division>> Division President, asking for input on my dissertation project at Minnesota State University, Mankato.

Research clearly articulates that effective teaching has a direct and positive impact on student achievement (Hanushek, 2010; Heck, 2009; Nye, Konstantopoulos, and Larry, 2004; Sanders and Rivers, 1996; Stronge et al., 2011) and that ineffective teaching has a direct and adverse impact on student achievement (Chetty, Friedman, and Rockoff, 2009; Hanushek, 2009). Research also suggests that there are numerous barriers that prevent school principals from being <u>able</u> to address teacher ineffectiveness (Causey, 2010; Rooney, 2011; Tucker, 1997).

This study uses purposive sampling. The strategy intentionally selects participants based on a pre-determined set of characteristics. I am asking that you nominate up to four (4) principals from your division who you believe meet the following criteria:

- five years of experience as a principal
- A demonstrated interest in improving teacher effectiveness
- A reputation for outstanding work in the area of evaluation and remediating ineffective teachers

I will be reaching out to these individuals asking them to participate in three surveys, approximately 10 minutes each, from September 19-October 3rd. As a Division president, I would welcome your participation in the study if you feel you meet the criteria above. Use this Google Form to share the names of your nominees:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1v4At_wf73D9udU-sSj2OWRyUoX6T8MZI0RpeBoYnYcM/viewform?usp=send_form

I know this is a busy time of year and I sincerely appreciate your time and input as I enter the final stage of my doctoral work. My hope is that I can craft a story to share with key decision makers illustrating the challenges school principals face when addressing ineffective teaching. If we are successful in this endeavor, there should be one clear winner: students!

I am hoping to reach out to those nominated during the week of September 2nd, so I would be most appreciative if you are able to take a few minutes to suggest participants for the survey this week.

Feel free to contact me at (952) 715-8737 with any questions you might have about this survey. My cell phone is (952) 715-8737. Thank you in advance for your contributions to this project.

Sincerely,

Matt Hillmann
Doctoral Candidate | Minnesota State University, Mankato

My Day Job: Director of Administrative Services | Northfield Public Schools

Appendix K

Gmail by Google

Matt Hillmann <mahillmann@gmail.com>

MESPA/MASSP Input: Dissertation Study

Matt Hillmann <mahillmann@gmail.com>   Thu, Sep 4, 2014 at 6:15 AM
Draft

Dear <<First>>,

I am reaching out to you as part of my dissertation research at Minnesota State University, Mankato. You have been identified by your <<MESPA/MASSP>> divisional leadership as a principal who is regarded as highly skilled in teacher evaluation and/or remediation.

Research clearly articulates that effective teaching has a direct and positive impact on student achievement (Hanushek, 2010; Heck, 2009; Nye, Konstantopoulos, and Larry, 2004; Sanders and Rivers, 1996; Stronge et al., 2011) and that ineffective teaching has a direct and adverse impact on student achievement (Chetty, Friedman, and Rockoff, 2009; Hanushek, 2009). Research also suggests that there are numerous barriers that prevent school principals from being able to address teacher ineffectiveness (Causey, 2010; Rooney, 2011; Tucker, 1997).

Because of your expertise, I am asking you to participate in my dissertation study. This mixed methods study uses a Delphi technique and will involve one online survey per week (less than 15 minutes long) over a three week period, beginning on September 12th and finishing on September 26th. I believe the study has an opportunity to identify the real day-to-day issues that principals face when trying to address ineffective teaching. My hope is that our professional organizations can use the data we collect as part of their lobbying efforts on behalf of principals.

Please confirm, one way or the other, if you are willing to participate in the study by using this simple Google Form:

http://goo.gl/1j4IJ7

I will provide additional information about the process, including a Institutional Review Board consent form, when you agree to participate in the study.

Thank you, <<First>>, in advance for your consideration and please feel free to contact me if you have questions about the study.

Sincerely,

Matt Hillmann
Doctoral Candidate | Minnesota State University, Mankato
(952) 715-8737 | mahillmann@gmail.com

My Day Job: Director of Administrative Services | Northfield Public Schools

Appendix L

Gmail by Google

Matt Hillmann <mahillmann@gmail.com>

Hillmann Dissertation Survey | Round #1

Matt Hillmann <mahillmann@gmail.com>   Wed, Sep 10, 2014 at 10:32 PM
To: mahillmann@gmail.com

Dear Stephanie,

Thank you for your willingness to participate in my dissertation research study. I am conducting a mixed methods study using a Delphi technique. The Delphi technique uses a multi-round survey process of a group experts in their field (yes, you are considered an expert!) Results from the anonymous surveys are shared after the first and second rounds in an effort to share the group's collective wisdom prior to completion of the next brief survey.

This first survey contains four open ended questions. Please describe or list what comes to mind for each question in the box provided.

This first round should take no more than 15 minutes to complete. Please complete the survey by Monday, September 15th at 8 pm. I will be compiling the information and sending you the responses for your brief review prior to completing the second round of the survey on September 18th.

The third and final round of the survey will be emailed on September 25th.

You can complete the first round of the survey at:

https://mnsu.co1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_eRukNLJ52OHBz1z

I have also mailed the required paper copy of the Institutional Review Board consent form to your school with a self addressed stamped envelope for return.

Thank you, Stephanie, in advance for your input over the next three weeks. I am very, very appreciative. Please feel free to contact me if you have questions or concerns about the surveys.

Sincerely,

Matt Hillmann
Doctoral Candidate | Minnesota State University, Mankato
(952) 715-8737 | mahillmann@gmail.com

My Day Job: Director of Administrative Services | Northfield Public Schools

Appendix M

Gmail by Google   Matt Hillmann <mahillmann@gmail.com>

Hillmann Dissertation Round 2

Matt Hillmann <mahillmann@gmail.com>   Fri, Sep 19, 2014 at 1:51 PM
Draft

Hello <<FIRST>>,

Thanks for taking the time to participate in the first round of my dissertation survey last week. This week's survey is the second of three rounds and should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. This week's survey is comprised of four questions in which you select the 10 items you believe are the most important when thinking about the question. All of the choices in each question were developed using your feedback from the survey's first round.

One of the key components of the Delphi survey technique is sharing the results of the previous round's survey prior to participating in the subsequent round. For that purpose, a PDF is attached for you to briefly review prior to engaging in this week's survey.

Once you have reviewed the PDF, please complete this survey:

https://mnsu.co1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_0rkp8K9IrvptlyJ

Please complete the survey by Wednesday, September 24th at 8 pm. I will be compiling the information and sending you the responses for your brief review when I make contact to ask for your participation in the final round of the survey on September 26th.

Again, I am honored you are taking the time to help me with this process. Thank you very much, <<FIRST>>! Please feel free to contact me if you have questions or concerns about the surveys.

Sincerely,

Matt Hillmann
Doctoral Candidate | Minnesota State University, Mankato
(952) 715-8737 | mahillmann@gmail.com

My Day Job: Director of Administrative Services | Northfield Public Schools

---

📄 **hillmann.dissertationreport.round1.pdf**
121K

Appendix N

Gmail by Google™

Matt Hillmann <mahillmann@gmail.com>

Hillmann Dissertation | Third & Final Round!

Matt Hillmann <mahillmann@gmail.com>   Wed, Sep 24, 2014 at 9:48 PM
Draft

Dear <<FIRST>>,

Thank you for your assistance in my dissertation research project. This email represents the final contact I will have with you regarding the surveys.

Attached are the results of the second round survey for your review prior to engaging in the final round of the survey.

The third and final survey asks you to engage in a forced choice analysis by rank ordering the items for each question in order of their importance to you. You will be able to 'drag and drop' the responses into the rank order you desire. This should take less than 15 minutes to complete. If you need technical assistance in the rank ordering 'drag and drop' process, please let me know.

The survey link is below:

https://mnsu.co1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_doo0gkPNfg1lH81

Please complete the survey by Monday, September 29th at 8 pm.

Thanks again, <<FIRST>>, for your assistance in this process. If I can be of any assistance to you in the future, do not hesitate to contact me. As always, please feel free to contact me if you have questions or concerns about the surveys.

Sincerely,

Matt Hillmann
Doctoral Candidate | Minnesota State University, Mankato
(952) 715-8737 | mahillmann@gmail.com

My Day Job: Director of Administrative Services | Northfield Public Schools

---

 2 attachments

matt_signature.jpg
28K

Round 2 Report.pdf
39K

Appendix O

Survey Inquiries: Round One

1. Please describe what you consider to be the attributes of an effective teacher.

2. Please describe what you consider to be the attributes of an ineffective teacher.

3. Please share your beliefs on what conditions are required to recommend an ineffective teacher

for remediation.

4. Please describe the barriers that prevent you from remediating an ineffective teacher.

5. How many years have you completed as a principal?

6. Please check the appropriate option for the school where you serve as principal:

- Rural

- Suburban

- Urban

7. Please select the grade levels present at your building:

- K

- 1

- 2

- 3

- 4

- 5

- 6

- 7

- 8

- 9

- 10

- 11

- 12

Appendix P

Survey Inquiries: Round Two

1. Please select the 10 attributes that you believe are found most often in an effective teacher.

- Caring

- Strong/positive relationships with students

- Strong relationships with families

- Strong relationships with colleagues

- Focused on student success

- goes 'above and beyond'

- Understand student likes/interests

- Develops lessons that students can relate to

- Passionate

- Believes all students will learn

- Understand best practices

- Constantly learning and growing

- Self reflective

- Works with peers to improve

- Strong classroom management skills

- Holds students to a high standard

- Engages students

- Makes connections with students

- students work hard to please them

- Differentiates

- Strong communicator

- Innovative

- Risk taker

- Thinks beyond classroom lesson

- Teaches life lessons

- Understands how to challenge students

- Proactive

- organized

- Structured

- Listener

- High energy level

- Thoughtful

- Strong in content area

- Work ethic

- Empathetic

- Treats child as individual

- planful/well prepared

- Involved in community

- good personality

- Professionalism

- Integrity

- Positive

- loves kids

- Leadership skills

- Clear instructional purposes

- Respectful towards students

- Respectful towards staff

- Uses proven instructional methods

- Uses data to inform instruction

2. Please select the 10 attributes you believe are found most often in ineffective teachers.

- Self centered

- Does not go 'above and beyond'

- Defensive

- Poor relationships with students

- Teaches to the middle of the class

- Does not have passion

- Not reflective

- Poor classroom management

- Poor pacing

- Provides 'fluff' activities

- Does not value data

- Makes excuses

- Does not see 'big picture'

- Reactive

- Not flexible

- Unorganized

- Unmotivated

- Unprofessional

- Does not set boundaries

- Does not follow through

- Poor communication

- Doesn't connect with colleagues

- Stuck in routine

- Doesn't refresh their teaching

- Lectures most of the time

- unwilling to accept feedback

- Content insecurity

- Doesn't vary instructional methods

- Hidden agendas

- Doesn't have desire to acquire skills to be effective

- Lack of instructional clarity

- Doesn't engage students

- Disregard for student backgrounds

- Disregard for student abilities

- Doesn't progress monitor

3. Please select (from the list below) 10 conditions you believe would cause you to recommend a

teacher for remediation.

- Student concerns/complaints

- Collegial concerns/complaints

- Parent concerns/complaints

- Students are not successful

- Students do not feel welcomed

- Requests to move to a different teacher

- Unethical

- Below average evaluations

- Below average observations

- Below par student performance

- Blatantly disrespectful to students

- Poor classroom management

- Demonstrating qualities of an ineffective teacher

- Does not connect with students

- Does not connect with parents

- Does not connect with colleagues

- Unwillingness to reflect

- Unwillingness to plan

- Unwillingness to address concerns

- Subpar in reflection

- Subpar in planning

- Subpar in addressing concerns

- Direct observation of poor teaching strategies

- Students do not want to attend

- Unable to engage students

- Communication breakdown with students

- When set goals continue to be unmet

- Numerous complaints from parents

- Numerous complaints from students

- Numerous complaints from colleagues

- Failure to adhere to shifts in focus put forth by district

- Continuous deficiency in a particular area or element

- Ongoing, documented lack of skills

- Negative effect on school culture

- Puts children at risk

4. Please select (from the list below) the 10 issues that you believe provide the greatest barriers

when attempting to remediate an ineffective teacher.

- Teacher doesn't go above and beyond but doesn't behave poorly

- Not an event or series of events that cause harm to a student

- Union support

- Courage

- Costliness of the process to dismiss a teacher

- Costliness of the remediation process

- New teacher training

- Tenure time

- Teachers who do not respond to communication

- Teachers who do not take remediation seriously

- Teacher lack of awareness of their own weakness

- Lack of support from other administrators

- Time in classrooms

- Lack of staff development

- Process isn't smooth

- Documentation required

- Building politics

5. How many years have you completed as a principal?

6. Please check the appropriate option for the school where you serve as principal:

- Rural

- Suburban

- Urban

7. Please select the grade levels present at your building:

- K

- 1

- 2

- 3

- 4

- 5

- 6

- 7

- 8

- 9

- 10

- 11

- 12

Appendix Q

Survey Inquiries: Round Three

1. Please rank the following attributes of an effective teacher in order of your opinion of their

importance (with 1 being the most important.) You can 'drag and drop' your responses into

your preferred order.

1. Believes all students will learn

2. Engages students

3. Self reflective

4. Strong classroom management skills

5. Strong/positive relationships with students

6. Passionate

7. Strong communicator

8. Clear instructional purposes

2. Please rank the following attributes based on how often you believe each is found in an

ineffective teacher (with 1 being found the most often.) You can 'drag and drop' your

responses into your preferred order.

1. Not reflective

2. Poor classroom management

3. Poor relationships with students

4. Unorganized

5. Doesn't engage students

6. Lack of instructional clarity

7. Poor communication

8. Unwilling to accept feedback

9. Does not have passion

10. Doesn't have desire to acquire skills to be effective

11. Unprofessional

12. Makes excuses

3. Please rank the following conditions in order of what believe would cause you to recommend

a teacher for remediation (with 1 being the condition where you'd be most likely to

recommend remediation.) You can 'drag and drop' your responses into your preferred order.

1. Unethical

2. Blatantly disrespectful to students

3. Poor classroom management

4. Negative effect on school culture

5. Direct observation of poor teaching strategies

6. Demonstrating qualities of an ineffective teacher

7. Puts children at risk

8. Below average evaluations

9. Unable to engage students

10. Below average observations

11. Numerous complaints from colleagues

12. Continuous deficiency in a particular area or element

13. Ongoing, documented lack of skills

4. Please rank the issues in the that you believe provide the greatest barriers when attempting to remediate an ineffective teacher (with 1 being the greatest barrier.) You can 'drag and drop' your responses into your preferred order.

1. Teacher lack of awareness of their own weakness

2. Documentation required

3. Teachers who do not respond to communication

4. Teacher doesn't go above and beyond but doesn't behave poorly

5. Union support

6. Time in classrooms

7. Tenure time

8. Not an event or series of events that cause harm to a student

9. Building politics

10. Process isn't smooth

11. Lack of staff development

12. Courage

13. Teachers who do not take remediation seriously

14. Lack of support from other administrators

5. How many years have you completed as a principal?

6. Please check the appropriate option for the school where you serve as principal:

- Rural

- Suburban

- Urban

7. Please select the grade levels present at your building:

- K

- 1

- 2

- 3

- 4

- 5

- 6

- 7

- 8

- 9

- 10

- 11

- 12