

5-1-2015

Teacher Perceptions Related to Teacher Effectiveness: An Application of Hattie's Mind Frame Conceptualization

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Recommended Citation

DeYoung, Carissa, "Teacher Perceptions Related to Teacher Effectiveness: An Application of Hattie's Mind Frame Conceptualization" (2015). *Doctor of Education (EdD)*. Paper 59.
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TEACHER PERCEPTIONS RELATED TO TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS:
AN APPLICATION OF HATTIE'S MIND FRAME CONCEPTUALIZATION

By

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Presented to the College of Education
George Fox University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Education

May 12, 2015

George Fox University
School of Education
Newberg, Oregon

“TEACHER PERCEPTIONS RELATED TO TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS: AN ANALYSIS OF HATTIE’S MIND FRAME CONCEPTUALIZATION,” a Doctoral research project prepared by CARISSA DEYOUNG in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Education degree in the Educational Foundations and Leadership Department.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine teacher perceptions of effective teaching by giving teachers the opportunity to voice their perspectives. Teachers that were determined to be effective through observations were personally interviewed in order to explore the qualities and attributes of highly effective teachers and what they believe to have the strongest impact on student achievement and success. In addition to teacher perceptions, this study also examined how teacher perceptions aligned with John Hattie's work on teacher mind frame. By analyzing teacher perceptions five specific themes emerged from the data. Those specific themes aligned with seven of Hattie's eight mind frames of effective teachers.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I could not have completed this research and program without the help and support from many that were involved in supporting me. I would like to thank my chair Dr. Terry Huffman and my committee members Dr. Sue Harrison and Dr. Gary Tiffin for their guidance and support through the process of writing and researching.

Thank you also to the McMinnville School District and Kyra Donovan who has been instrumental in my growth and learning as an educator. I am thankful for the positions I have held in the McMinnville School District and the opportunities that have helped me to grow and develop as an educator in order to help and support teachers and students in the district.

Thank you to the six participants who were willing to meet with me on their own time in the midst of their busy schedules in order to share their stories and experiences. Your stories and experiences give great insight into teaching. Your outstanding work in teaching and what you accomplish with students is commendable. Your work does not go unnoticed and your students are very fortunate to have you in their lives. This research would not have been possible without your insight.

Most importantly, to my family, thank you for the support you have shared and the encouragement you have provided in the last few years. I'd like to thank my husband Chad especially. It wasn't always easy caring for our small children in order to allow me to complete my schooling.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Teaching and ensuring that learning takes place with students is difficult work and takes great skill with a particular attitude and mind frame in order to impact student learning. Teachers are constantly spinning plates in the profession in keeping up with fast paced initiatives, changing educational policy, and the ongoing responsibilities of planning and instruction within the classroom. An effective teacher can balance the day-to-day happenings as well as make certain that each student in the classroom is learning and progressing toward achieving goals and standards.

It is well documented that effective schools can have a substantial impact on student achievement (Marzano, 2007). Elements of an effective school consist of a clear and coherent curriculum along with a safe and well-managed environment. However, the single most influential component of effective schools is the individual teachers within the building. The effects teachers have on students can be dramatic but there are substantial differences among teachers and their ability to produce achievement gains (Nye, Konstantopoulos, & Hedges, 2004). Nevertheless, ultimately, effective teachers have a lasting impact on their students.

With the updating of core teaching standards for students, educators too are being held accountable at new levels in the attempt to improve student outcomes. Through the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support System (InTASC) a set of core teaching standards have been established to outline what teachers should know and be able to do in order to ensure that every K-12 student reaches the goal of readiness to enter college and the workforce. The InTASC standards outline common principles and foundations of teaching practices that range in all

subject areas and grade levels to promote and improve student achievement. The InTASC model core teaching standards are intended to be professional standards that articulate what effective teaching and learning look like in a public education school system and derive from current research on teaching practice. Key themes in the standards that are intended to improve student learning are personalized learning for diverse learners, a stronger focus on application of knowledge and skills, improved assessment literacy, collaborative professional culture, and leadership roles for teachers and administrators

Yet, simply recognizing that teachers make a difference can be misleading. It is important to consider the ways in which teachers differ in influencing student achievement and learning (Hattie, 2009). Achievement gains in students are associated with variations in teacher effectiveness and ways in which teachers deliver instruction (Nye et al., 2004). It is important for a teacher to recognize and evaluate his or her impact on student learning in order to make a difference and be considered a highly effective teacher. In short, an effective teacher knows and understands the learning of his or her students. Moreover, knowing and understanding the learning of each and every student helps the teacher to promote achievement efficiently (Hattie, 2012).

A teacher's beliefs and commitments have a major influence on student achievement. In his book, *Visible Learning for Teachers*, John Hattie (2012) argues that teachers must develop particular ways of thinking in order to have a major impact on student achievement. He refers to this notion as "mind frames." Mind frames or ways of thinking must support every action and decision in schools and systems.

Effective teachers aim for deliberate practice by participating in the act of learning. Thus how teachers' view their role as an educator is critical—it is the mind frames that teachers have

about their role that is crucial for student learning (Hattie, 2012). What teachers do matters; but what is most important is the mind frame teachers have relating to the impact of what they perform. Teachers need to embrace the necessity to assess and evaluate their effect on student learning.

Carol Dweck (2006) has developed a theory of mindset and writes about two concepts, the “growth” mindset and “fixed” mindset in her book *Mindset: the new psychology of success*. She states that teachers and leaders should send messages that intelligence is fluid, and they need to hear such messages too. They need permission to learn – the freedom to stretch themselves, make mistakes, and try again. Only in growth mindset cultures where teachers and administrators are encouraged to fulfill their potential will they be able to help their students to also fulfill their potential.

There is a great deal of research that identifies and defines effective teachers and the impact effective teachers have on student achievement. However, it is rare that teachers are asked what they believe has the greatest impact on student learning. Are effective teachers able to identify the qualities they possess that make them effective? This critical question has been ignored in the scholarly literature.

This study is important because it examines teacher perceptions about student learning and whether teachers can identify what has the greatest impact on student learning. Simply, can teachers identify qualities of effective teachers? Can they define what effective teaching actually is? Do teachers understand the impact they have on student learning and recognize their own contributions to student learning? Questions like these are important to both educational scholars and practitioners. What is more, however, these questions are also important to the learning of students.

Problem Statement

The purpose of this study was to examine teacher perceptions that relate to teaching effectiveness. Specifically, I used personal interviews to explore what qualities and attributes highly effective teachers believe have the strongest impact on student learning and ways in which teachers contribute to the success of students. In addition, this study examined teacher perceptions of student learning and how those perceptions aligned with Hattie's eight mind frames. An objective of the investigation was to give teachers a voice in sharing their perceptions on the nature of effective teaching and factors that have the greatest impact on the success of students and to offer an analysis on Hattie's mind frame conceptualization.

Research Questions

Using a qualitative approach through personal interviews, I addressed the following questions.

Research Question #1

What do "effective teachers" identify as having the greatest impact on student learning?

Research Question #2

How do perceptions of "effective teachers" align with the eight mind frames from Hattie's work?

Key Terms

Effective teacher is defined through observational data collected as part of my duties as instructional coach. Teachers are scored on a rubric that was created to determine proficiency in five areas (teaching to an objective, aligning lesson activities to the objective, using strategies to engage students, checking for understanding throughout the lesson and use of classroom management strategies). Teachers must demonstrate evidence in each of these areas in order to score proficiently. Those who achieve a proficient score are considered to be effective teachers.

Instructional Coaches in the McMinnville School District have created the instrument that was used to determine effectiveness.

Mind Frame as originally developed by Hattie (2012), is how a teacher thinks and acts. It is the belief that he/she is an evaluator, a change agent, an adaptive learning expert and a seeker of feedback about impact. A teacher also engages in dialog and challenge, develops a trust with all and sees opportunity in errors.

Limitations and Delimitations

Due to the fact that I conducted research within the same district that I live and work in, there was the possibility of bias. I am employed with the district as an Instructional Coach and my duties as an Instructional Coach are to observe teachers and provide feedback on their instruction. My roles and responsibilities are to impact instruction and encourage effective teaching. I have a relationship with many of the teachers in the school district and have worked with all teachers in some capacity. I have my own ideas and perceptions about effective teaching and who the effective teachers are in the district.

Because of my relationship with teachers, I was concerned that some of the participants may be too comfortable in sharing. In addition, because I work as an Instructional Coach and some teachers have an “us versus them” mentality between district personnel and teachers; teachers may see me as being on the district side and may not be open and honest or may say what they think I want to hear instead of what they truly believe.

Further, because I used a purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling strategy, I am unable to generalize the findings to the larger population of teachers. That is, the group I will have selected to participate in this study is limited to a convenience and purposive sample of six elementary teachers from one school district in Oregon. The study focused specifically on

effective teachers and what they believed to have the greatest impact on student learning.

Teachers asked to participate in the study were chosen based on specific criteria that define effective teaching and there are assessment data to prove the learning of their students.

In order to choose a convenient sampling of effective teachers, I used observation data that I have collected in my observations of teachers in my role as an Instructional Coach. The data I have collected requires me to score teachers based on their effectiveness in planning a lesson; establishing an objective assessment whether students have met the lesson objective; use of instructional strategies and strategies to engage students; and the ability to manage a classroom. A scoring guide was used to determine if teachers have met the criteria in each of these areas and a teacher is given a proficient rating if all areas are meeting. Thus, I recruited teachers for this study who have a proficient rating in the observation data.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Literature

Introduction

In recent years and since No Child Left Behind, there has been an increase in awareness about the impact teachers have on their students. The federal government has mandated a stronger accountability system through high stakes testing, a tighter evaluation system, and strict educational laws demanding effective teaching (Ravitch, 2010). Databases on student achievement, formulas for calculated growth and value-added measures, merit scales, mentoring and recruitment schemes are methods that American schools have adopted for improving teaching or developing effective teachers. Decisions for most schools are influenced by student achievement. More specifically, student achievement assessment scores drive the actions schools take.

There is strong evidence demonstrating that a teacher can have a strong effect on student achievement through high quality instruction (Stronge, 2007). Unfortunately, not all teachers are effective (Hattie, 2009). Nevertheless, a teacher's effectiveness is likely the most important factor leading to student success. Yet, it is still difficult to define and measure teacher effectiveness. Professional educators and scholars understand that measuring student achievement through standardized tests is not the only way to identify teacher effectiveness. Qualitative evaluations of teachers can be a simple and important indicator to teacher quality and effectiveness and reflect valuable aspects of teaching that are not captured in test scores (Rockoff, 2004).

Teaching effectiveness is both complex and abstract. Focusing on specific characteristics of effective teachers and strategies that they use helps in developing an understanding of this concept. It is important to know what teachers must do in order to promote positive results with students in regards to learning and achievement. Simply put, understanding, defining and improving teacher effectiveness is important in increasing student achievement and student learning.

In addition, it is important for teachers to know and recognize their impact on student learning and to evaluate that impact. An effective teacher knows and understands the learning of his/her students and subsequently is able to make decisions about student learning based on his/her insight (Hattie, 2012).

In this review I discuss key elements and characteristics of effective teaching. Most notably, the teacher as an individual, teacher experiences, instructional practices of teachers and classroom management are frequently identified as key elements and characteristics of effective teaching. First, however, I briefly consider the elusive concept of effective teaching.

Effective Teaching

Teaching cannot be merely reduced to technique (Palmer, 2007). What is more, completion of a teacher preparation program, knowledge of content or subject matter and experience alone do not make a teacher effective. Student scores on standardized tests can be useful in determining effectiveness, but those too cannot be the only measures of effectiveness. Thus, as with any complex, abstract concept, there must be multiple ways of thinking about and, indeed, measuring effectiveness.

With that said, it is safe to conclude that effective teaching is associated with what a teacher knows and does. Specifically, an effective teacher's primary objective is for students to

acquire maximum learning (Qureshi & Niazi, 2012). As such, effectiveness goes beyond just demonstrating the ability to interact with subject matter knowledge and pedagogy. It is important to understand that a teacher's decisions, experiences and behaviors influence his or her effectiveness. Thus, effective teachers have the ability to know and understand their subject matter deeply, understand learning theory, appreciate student differences, utilize instructional strategies, the individual needs of students, and apply and integrate all of these elements. Not only do effective teachers know and understand, but also their planning and instruction reflect their knowledge of pedagogical practices and the needs of students.

In one study, teachers were interviewed and identified a range of characteristics including goals and intentions, positive treatment of students, love for children, professionalism, collective responsibility, personal traits and response to change included in effective teaching. The different characteristics of effectiveness focus on a teacher's work and performance (Kyriakides, Campbell & Christofidou, 2002). Teacher behaviors such as implementing a variety of instructional strategies or whole class teaching that is interactive and structured with a teaching objective have a significant impact on student achievement (Muijs & Reynolds, 2002).

In addition, effective teachers assess student learning and make decisions based on student outcomes. Effective teachers are, therefore, reflective, collaborative and willing to continue to grow professionally. As such, an important quality that distinguishes effective teachers from ineffective teachers is the approach to instruction and the focus on student learning to inform teaching and instruction (Nye et al., 2004). There are substantial differences among teachers in the ability to produce achievement gains in their students. Effective teachers are constantly focused on their students' learning and are working to be flexible and grow in their professional abilities.

The Measures of Effective Teaching project that was launched by the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation set out to test new approaches in measuring effective teaching with the goal of improving the quality of information about effective teaching and to build fair and reliable systems that measure teacher effectiveness. The project is based on the premises of including student achievement gains in teacher evaluation and including feedback that supports growth. Eliciting feedback from students in determining teacher effectiveness and teacher observations are claimed to be crucial components in determining effectiveness.

Personal Characteristics of the Teacher

Teachers, merely by their personal characteristics have a tremendous impact on students (Hsiao & Yang, 2010). Research during the last ten years has increasingly focused on the connection between the personal traits and behaviors of teachers and student achievement. For instance, Stronge (2007) states that such personal characteristics as love of children, a love of work, and positive relationships with colleagues and with children contribute to a teacher's effectiveness. In his book *The Courage to Teach*, Palmer (2007) emphasizes the human heart as being the source of good teaching. He explains that connections made by good teachers are not held in their heads, but in their hearts. Teachers demonstrate a particular set of characteristics, build positive relationships with students, have high expectations for themselves and their students and establish a classroom environment that is respectful, caring, trustworthy, and conducive to high academic achievement and student learning.

Teachers often make a lasting impression on their students' lives and minds. Teachers that are effective are caring, kind, and have the ability to establish friendly and caring relationships between themselves and their students. By developing caring relationships, teachers have the ability to inspire and motivate their students (Qureshi & Niazi, 2012). These

healthy teacher-student relationships have a high impact on student learning (Hattie, 2009). It takes skill such as listening, caring, empathy and positive regard for others for the teacher to develop relationships with students. Building positive relationships implies respect from the teacher to the child. Hattie also contends that in classes where positive teacher-student relationships are present there is more engagement. In addition, he suggests, such dynamics lead to fewer behavior issues and higher achievement outcomes. Poplin et al. (2011) found that effective teachers in low performing schools displayed profound respect for their students. Moreover, teachers emphasized the importance that students understand and recognize that they respect them.

Creating an environment of respect and rapport is instrumental in establishing a positive relationship with students (Minnick, Warren, Riley, & Ingram, 2012). Additionally, Hattie (2012) emphasizes the importance of respect and rapport through care, trust, respect, and teambuilding skills. When a teacher creates an environment that is positive, caring and respectful it gives students a sense of control and safety in order to learn. Hattie also states that establishing a positive classroom environment is a prior condition to learning. Likewise a significant difference between effective and ineffective teachers is that effective teachers promote positive relationships through fairness and respect (Stronge, Ward, & Grant, 2011).

In addition to the importance of student relationships, scholars also report that teachers' expectations of themselves and their students have an impact on student learning and achievement. Effective teachers believe in their students and expect them all to learn (Stronge, 2007). Teachers who have high expectations for themselves and their students have greater gains in achievement and learning. In his book *Visible Learning for Teachers: Maximizing the Impact on Learning*, Hattie (2012) states that effective teachers have high expectations for all

their students and work hard so that they exceed their potential. Along those same lines, Poplin et al. (2011) iterate that highly effective teachers are genuinely optimistic about their students' futures and provided students with a vision of their best selves.

Furthermore, a teachers' sense of efficacy is based on the belief in their personal ability to impact students and their learning, including working effectively with difficult or unmotivated students (Stronge et al., 2011). Effective teachers also set out to achieve goals that they have set for themselves and for their students (Qureshi & Niazi, 2012). Setting goals and striving to achieve them demonstrates high expectations for learning on behalf of the teachers and the students.

Professional Experiences of the Teacher

The professional experiences of teachers have an impact on student achievement and learning. Specifically, professional experiences that concentrate on facilitating growth have a demonstrated positive impact on student outcomes. For instance, professional experiences that enhance greater teacher effectiveness include professional development, mentoring, peer support and collaboration with colleagues.

In a meta-analysis, Hattie (2009) found that while professional development is likely to impact a teacher's growth, it does not necessarily have an effect on a teacher's long-term behavior. In order for professional development to be impactful, it must be intensive, ongoing and connected to practice (Darling-Hammond, 2013). Intensive, sustained professional development activities that include application of knowledge to planning and instruction lead to greater gains in student learning.

Gabriel, Day and Allington (2011) found that exemplary teachers believed that professional development was influential in their growth as teachers. However, teachers in the

study also related that specific training focusing upon observing and interpreting student work (that helps to understand how to respond to students) had much more influence on their development than professional development focusing on general methods, materials or strategies. In an article of common characteristics of professional learning that lead to student achievement, Blank (2013) describes professional learning that has multiple, ongoing activities and designed to reinforce and follow up with teachers as more effective.

Researchers also identify the importance of mentoring, peer support and collaboration in impacting teacher effectiveness. Mentoring, peer support and collaboration provide teachers the opportunity to reflect, share ideas, and build a shared knowledge through communication. Effective teachers work collaboratively by planning instruction and assessment. Teaching can be an isolating profession, but built-in peer support can be vital to a teacher's ongoing growth and learning.

In one study, teachers reported being drawn to the enthusiasm of those around them and benefitting from the opportunity to exchange ideas and reflect with peers. Through teacher collaboration, teachers can be good sources for classroom ideas and can share a common vocabulary and context by building a shared knowledge about teaching and pooling expertise and experiences (Gabriel et al., 2011). Marshall (2009) identifies the importance of working collaboratively on planning and assessment to encourage teacher thinking about students and their learning. Teachers need opportunities to develop a shared understanding of effective teaching, examine practice for evidence of learning and promote reflection, and to learn how to provide effective feedback (Darling-Hammond, 2013). With these collaborative opportunities, teachers can learn from each other and improve their own techniques.

Instructional Practices

It almost goes without saying that a teacher's instructional practices have a strong influence on student achievement and lasting outcomes. Successful student achievement is only as good as the teacher's instructional practices (Skourdoumbis, 2014). Delivering quality instruction is complex and requires thoughtful planning and preparation. In planning and preparing, effective teachers thoughtfully select instructional strategies to move students toward learning and achievement (Kane, Taylor, Tyler, & Wooten, 2011). Instructional practices found to have greater student achievement include the use of questioning while delivering instruction, carefully organized and prepared lessons, and the ability to give feedback to students about the learning while also using student learning as feedback to guide instruction (Kane et al., 2011).

In classrooms where instructional time is maximized, student achievement is higher. Simply, teachers that prioritize their instruction, carefully plan lessons and organized materials are effective and have a greater impact on student achievement (Stronge, 2007). These types of teachers are intentional about their instruction in meeting the needs of their students. In thoughtfully planning instruction, an effective teacher is able to teach with clarity (Hattie, 2009). Poplin et al. (2011) found that instructional intensity, where teachers transitioned quickly and easily from one activity to another, was a characteristic of effective teachers. The study found that there was rarely any time when instruction was not occurring. Effective teachers carefully planned and organized their lessons and were explicit in their instruction.

The use of the questioning strategy is shown to have a powerful impact on student learning. This strategy is used by effective teachers and is typically employed so that questions are thoughtfully chosen and delivered effectively. Effective teachers employ a variety of questions including product questions (require one word answers) and process questions (require

more detailed explanations). In addition to the types of questions employed, effective teachers provide ample amounts of wait time or pause following questions (Kyriakides, Christoforou, & Charalambous, 2013). Thus, questioning is a powerful strategy that builds a student's comprehension. The overall effects of questioning can vary, but what matters most is the types of questions asked. Not surprisingly, higher order questions elicit a deeper understanding (Hattie, 2009).

In addition to planning, organization and the use of questioning, the use of feedback is an important instructional practice utilized by effective teachers. In fact, some scholars believe feedback is one of the most powerful influences on student achievement (Hattie, 2009). What is more, effective feedback includes not only teacher-to-student communication but also student-to-student communication. Further, how the teacher uses feedback to make instructional decisions is also important (Munoz, Scoskie, & French, 2013). Feedback is only as useful as a teacher's willingness to put it into practice.

Classroom Management

An effective teacher is able to organize a classroom through room arrangement, discipline, creating routines and planning how to arrange the learning environment (Stronge, 2007). Effective teachers are also able to respond to common classroom issues in order to focus the maximum amount of time on instruction.

Previous studies have found that effective teachers establish classroom rules and routines and maintain a physically safe environment for students. For instance, a study focusing upon influences on student learning outcomes documented the importance of establishing rules in order to create and sustain a structured learning environment in the classroom (Kyriakides et al., 2013). In another study, teachers believed that being strict was important to effective teaching

and for encouraging safety and respect among students (Poplin, et al., 2011). Furthermore, in a study on characteristics of effective teachers, a significant finding was that effective teachers maintain a physically and emotionally safe environment for students (Munoz et al., 2013). In this study, effective teachers ranked a safe environment as having a greater importance than less effective teachers did.

According to Stronge et al. (2011), effective teachers nurture a positive classroom climate by setting and reinforcing clear expectations throughout the school year. In this study, highly effective teachers had significantly less student behavior disruptions than less effective teachers. The researchers also found that teachers who were more effective were more organized and used routines and procedures with greater efficiency. These practices are associated with effective classroom management. Disruptive student behavior can have negative effects on student outcomes. Thus, it is argued, reducing student misbehavior needs to be a priority for a successful teacher (Hattie, 2009).

Hattie's Mind Frames

Growth oriented teaching can unleash children's minds. As mentioned previously, according to Dweck (2006), there are two types of mindsets: fixed and growth. A person with a fixed mindset believes that intelligence is a static trait. Essentially, some people are just smart and others, unfortunately, are not. A person with a growth mind set believes that intelligence can be developed by various means. Effective teachers believe in the growth of intellect and talent and are fascinated with the process of learning. They also love to learn themselves. They set high standards and expectations for all students and teach students how to reach those standards. In other words, effective teachers are learners of learning. In order to support a growth mindset

in teachers, teachers need permission to learn and to stretch themselves, make mistakes and, consequently, try again.

Dweck's work on mindset relates to Hattie's (2012) claim that the most powerful impact teachers have on students relates to how a teacher thinks. Hattie defines a teacher's way of thinking as mind frames. A teacher's set of mind frames reinforce every decision and action that is made within a school. Effective teachers have a mind frame in which they proactively and critically evaluate their impact on learning. In this regard, teachers are the key players in the education process and their ways of thinking or beliefs play a major role in the education process.

Hattie found that the difference between high-effect and low-effect teachers is related to the attitudes and expectations that teachers have when making decisions about key issues of teaching. He argues that teachers who develop particular ways of thinking have a greater impact on student achievement. Specifically, he conceptualizes eight mind frames (i.e., ways of thinking) that are more likely to have positive impacts on student learning. These eight mind frames include:

1. The belief that the fundamental task is to evaluate the effect of one's own teaching on student learning and achievement.
2. The belief that success and failure in student learning is about what the teacher did or did not do. The teacher is willing to make changes and is considered a change agent.
3. The desire to talk more about the learning of students rather than the teaching that occurs.
4. The ability to see assessment as feedback and as a way to evaluate the impact on students.
5. The ability to engage in dialog rather than monolog.

6. The ability to enjoy the challenge of teaching and never retreat to “doing their best.”
7. The belief that it is one’s role to develop positive relationships in classrooms and staffrooms.
8. The belief in one’s role to inform all stakeholders about the language of learning.

As Hattie’s work is foundational to this work, namely it will serve as a guide in the identification of patterns and themes during the data analysis, it is important to offer greater elaboration on each of the themes.

MIND FRAME ONE: Feedback and formative evaluation provide information for the teacher about where to go, how to get there, and where to go next in instruction. Hattie contends that effective teachers must have this particular mind frame in order to continuously and honestly evaluate the impact they have on students.

MIND FRAME TWO: A teacher that is a change agent sees it as his/her role to transform students from what they are to what they need to know and understand. Teachers must believe that achievement is changeable rather than fixed. With such a mind frame, teachers can take reasonable responsibility for enhancing the learning of students.

MIND FRAME THREE: Teachers must embrace multiple ways of teaching and learning and be able to model those various approaches. Instead of discussions about best practice and new methods of teaching, effective teachers must have collegial debates about learning and evidence of student learning.

MIND FRAME FOUR: Because feedback is essential toward the ultimate goal of enhancing student learning, teachers must be attentive to assessment processes and results. Simply, assessment must be viewed as important feedback for teachers.

MIND FRAME FIVE: Teachers must be able to listen to students and not regard their role as merely to impart information and learning. Teachers should listen to student questions, ideas, struggles, strategies for learning, successes, interaction with peers, outputs, and views about teaching in order to promote greater learning.

MIND FRAME SIX: Effective teachers must possess a positive attitude toward their career and the part they play in student learning. As such, the role of the teacher is to decide on how to engage students in challenging material and the challenge of learning.

MIND FRAME SEVEN: Students must feel comfortable in making mistakes and not knowing the answers. It is important for teachers to establish a climate in which mistakes and errors are viewed as learning opportunities.

MIND FRAME EIGHT: Many parents are not familiar with the language of learning in schools. It is teachers' responsibility to teach parents the language of learning in order to support student learning.

Teachers that have a deep understanding of the eight mind frames and are able to put them into practice ultimately have the greatest impact on student learning. Essentially, teachers who adopt these mind frames have the potential to become highly effective teachers. Hattie asserts that these mind frames should be the core focus in finding success and having major impacts on student learning and achievement.

Conclusion

Effective teaching is the most important factor to student success. The complexity of effectiveness can be broken down through the analysis of effective teaching and comparison of effective and ineffective teachers. Key elements to effective teaching is related to a variety of attributes and experiences including the personal characteristics possessed by the teacher,

professional experiences of a teacher, the educator's instructional practices, and the employment of classroom management within the classroom. Effective teachers that reach high outcomes with students and show gains in student learning have demonstrated all of these key elements. Moreover, Hattie (2012) strongly argues that teachers who develop a certain way of thinking have greater potential to positively impact student learning and achievement. He identifies eight mind frames, habits of the mind and practice, which contribute to student learning. It is these mind frames that serve as an analytical framework for this research investigation.

CHAPTER 3

Methods

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine perceptions held by a sample of teachers on what they believe makes an effective teacher and what they believe to have the strongest impact on student learning. I examined teacher perceptions with a convenience and purposive sampling strategy of effective elementary teachers by personally interviewing them. Potential participants were identified using observation data that I have collected as an Instructional Coach. An important objective of this study is designed to determine whether teacher perceptions align with John Hattie's (2012) eight mind frames.

Setting

The study was conducted in a small suburban school district in Oregon. The school district is located in the Northwest Region of Oregon in the Willamette Valley. The district is a relatively small district with a total student enrollment in the district at about 7,000 students. Of those students, 12.6% are identified as special education students and 14.2% are identified as English Learners. According to data from the 2013/2014 school year, about 60% of students within the school district were on free and reduced lunch. However, for the 2014/2015 school year, the district received a grant where all students are served breakfast and lunch for free. As such, 100% of the students are considered to be on free and reduced lunch. Student demographics include 1% African American, 1% American Indian/Alaskan Native, 1.9% Asian/Pacific Islander, 33.1% Hispanic and 62.6% White.

The school district is honored and recognized for its student achievement and two of the six elementary schools have been recognized as model schools for the state of Oregon for the 2013/2014 school year. A model school is one which receives performance ratings above the state average in testing. In addition, several administrators have been recognized and honored nationally and statewide for their leadership. Further, teachers in the district have an average of 13 years of experience with over 80% of teachers earning a Masters degree.

Participants and Sampling Strategy

In order to examine perceptions of effective teachers, six participants were chosen from two of the six elementary schools with which I am associated. Using observation data that I have collected in my job as an Instructional Coach, a purposive sampling of teachers was utilized. The observation data contains information I have collected from observing teachers and their instructional practice. A rubric or scoring guide is used to score teachers in five areas: lesson design, assessing students and whether they meet the objective, checking for understanding throughout the lesson, engaging students in the learning and managing the students and classroom environment. Teachers are given a proficient rating if they show evidence within their lesson in each of the five areas (see Appendix A).

Teachers that have a proficient rating were recruited to participate in the interviews for this study. By choosing teachers using this method, the teachers' effectiveness was already determined by the proficient rating in the observation data. Instructional Coaches in the McMinnville School District have created the observation tool and identified characteristics and actions of effective teachers that must be present in an observation.

Research Design, Data Collection and Analytical Procedures

This study used a qualitative approach using personal, face-to-face interviews as the primary means to explore and document effective teachers' beliefs on what factors they regard as most strongly impacting student learning. Thus, personal interviews with specific, open-ended questions were utilized (see Appendix B). Personal interviews were used because they allow a flexible research design providing agility to deeply explore the personal perceptions while also affording the opportunity to investigate unanticipated issues and experiences. I used a specific protocol of recording and transcribing to document the responses of the teachers I interviewed. In addition to the personal interviews, I kept a field journal in which I recorded any prominent themes or experiences as they emerged during the course of interviewing. I also used the field journal as a way to document any prominent and important observations that I made during the process of interviewing participants.

After the data were collected and transcribed, I searched for particular themes using a common qualitative three-stage coding process (Creswell, 2013). I used initial coding to first read through the transcripts and identify key patterns in the data. Specifically, I used the *in vivo* technique to create initial coding categories. The next step of the coding process was focused coding where I combined the initial codes into more significant codes in order to find themes in the data. The last step of the coding process was thematic coding where I found theoretical connections between the themes of the data.

In addition to the three-stage coding process, I used John Hattie's eight mind frames as a set of already existing codes or *a priori* concepts in identifying themes as well (Maxwell, 2005). *A priori* concepts are especially useful in examining previously established theoretical or conceptual frameworks such as Hattie's mind frames conceptualization.

Research Ethics

I did not begin data collection until I received approval from George Fox University IRB. In addition, I had initial contact with the participants to explain the purpose of the study and provided a letter of informed consent that, among other ethical considerations, notified participants that their participation was voluntary (see Appendix C). Participants remained anonymous and protected by using different names in order to protect the participants.

Data and files obtained in this study are locked in a file cabinet in order to maintain the confidentiality of the participants. All files, signed letters of consent and recorded data will be destroyed after a period of three years upon completion of this study.

Role of the Researcher

In the fall of 2011, I left my position as classroom teacher and accepted a new position as an Instructional Coach in the same district. My new role took me away from the walls of my own classroom to gain a new perspective on teaching. Until then, my only perspective was what I knew of my classroom and myself. My new responsibilities require me to observe teachers in other buildings and provide feedback to them. This opened my eyes and changed my perceptions on what is involved in being an effective teacher. In the last three years, I have learned a great deal about the characteristics common to effective teachers. I have observed and collected data in classrooms of both effective and ineffective teaching. As an instructional coach, I am able to gain a bigger picture perspective on teaching which has led to my interest in researching the perceptions of teachers and effective teaching.

My job has allowed me the time to research and read professional materials on effective teaching as well as analyze effective teaching in the field of education. Not only has my new role led to my interest in effective teaching but I am also completing a Doctor of Education

degree through the investigation of the perceptions held by teachers on effective teaching. I am interested in gaining greater understanding on how these perceptions may or may not align with Hattie's work on mind frames. It is important for me to gain a deeper appreciation about teacher perceptions on teacher effectiveness and student learning in order to support educators and my district through my instructional coaching.

It is essential to make clear that this research will take place with teachers in the district that I am employed. It is possible that I may have interviewed individuals who I have established personal and professional relationships. This fact could have an impact on the conversations that took place as part of the investigation. In addition, because I have worked as an Instructional Coach for three years, I may have developed preconceived notions or ideas on effective teaching that could influence the research and results.

These limitations, while not completely diminished, have been mitigated through a variety of validation strategies such as member checking and use of multiple data sources (i.e., field journal, direct observation) as a frame of reference for the personal interviews. Perhaps most important of all is the use of what Altheide and Johnson (1994) refer to as "validity-as reflexive-accounting" (p. 489) in which all data are thoroughly reviewed and considered from a wide variety of ways in order to make sense of the themes derived from the interviews.

Potential Contributions of the Research

Much of the research on highly effective teachers does not include the personal perceptions held by teachers themselves. A great deal of the research focuses on researchers investigating what they happen to believe have an impact on student learning. This research will enhance the existing literature by providing teachers the opportunity to voice their perspectives on what experienced, effective educators believe have the most impact on their students'

learning. In addition, investigation into this topic can provide further evidence that may support teachers in developing their effectiveness. Such insights ultimately will help develop capacities to have greater positive impact on student learning.

CHAPTER 4

Results

Introduction

The investigation was intended to examine teachers' understanding of their impact on student learning and their contributions to student learning. In addition, this study was designed to explore whether the perceptions of teachers and their beliefs align with John Hattie's eight mind frames or ways of thinking for teachers. In this chapter, I present a brief profile of the participants, discuss the major themes that emerged from the analysis of the data, and review the two research questions fundamental to the investigation.

Profile of Participants

Six educators, all of whom were identified as effective teachers, participated in this research. All of them were women and served in the same school district. Further, they were all clearly dedicated professionals who care deeply for students.

Mary

Mary can't remember a time that she didn't want to be a teacher. She has always loved kids and grew up watching her mom teach and wanting to be a teacher herself. She holds a Bachelor's degree in elementary education with a minor in Spanish, a Master's in curriculum and instruction and she has just completed a program to earn her ESOL endorsement. She has taught at the primary level including first and second grade. She believes her role as a teacher is to help students to learn and to create a classroom community that facilitates learning. Mary is also a data team leader for her grade level team where she collects data and leads discussions about

student achievement and goal setting. She is also a member of her school's site council and serves on various district committees.

Kate

When Kate was in eighth grade, she thought she wanted to be a kindergarten teacher. She loved kids and in high school participated in classes and experiences in different classrooms before going on to college to earn a Bachelor's in elementary education. In addition, she has earned a Master's degree in teaching and a reading and ESOL endorsement. She has always had a heart for kids and chose the teaching profession to help students much like her teachers helped her in school. Kate was on an IEP herself and received Title 1 services when she was in school. She is passionate about students who are on IEPs and have learning disabilities and feels she really understands those students because of her own experiences. She frequently hosts student teachers and strongly believes in the importance of giving pre-service teachers the opportunity to gain much needed experience in the classroom. She is passionate about teaching and helping pre-service teachers. Kate is a member of her school's site council and believes in staying current within her profession in order to learn and grow. She attends training and professional development on a regular basis to learn about teaching strategies and methods for meeting the needs of her students. She has taught for ten years in the primary grades.

Kim

Kim has been teaching for almost twenty years with a variety of experiences in both public and private school settings. She learned early in her career that private schools were not for her because of the culture in private school settings. She found that the emphasis in private school settings was more on the experiences of children rather than on standards and what students needed to learn. Kim has taught many different grade levels kindergarten through

fourth grade. She believes her role as a teacher is to prepare students for the next grade level. Kim holds a Bachelor's degree in early childhood and a Master's degree in education. She doesn't remember specifically why she entered the field of education or when she made the decision to become a teacher, but she has always loved kids and felt that it was a natural transition to enter the field after high school and attending college.

Beth

Beth has taught for 15 years. She knew when she was very young that she wanted to be a teacher and even remembers that as a kindergartener she told her mother she wanted to be a teacher. Beth is passionate about her job and believes she can make a difference in the life of her students and help them to have successful futures. Beth holds a Bachelor's degree in elementary education, a Master's degree in education and has an ESOL endorsement. She serves as the data team leader for her grade level team where she collects assessment data of fourth grade students and collaborates with her teammates to discuss strategies and instruction in meeting the needs of students.

Melissa

Melissa entered the field of education not as a teacher but through other roles in education before going to school to become a teacher. She learned about a bilingual program through a local university and was sponsored by the school district she worked for to attend the university. After earning her degree in education she has taught in various grade levels including fifth and third grade. She has also worked in specialist teacher positions. She has been teaching for eight years. Even though Melissa's father is a teacher as well as several of her family members, she isn't exactly sure why she entered the field of teaching. She is drawn to it because it is a service position and calls for helping others. However, in many respects, events just fell

into place for her with the opportunity from a university to earn a degree through their bilingual education program. She is passionate about helping students to become life-long learners and to have a drive and desire to learn.

Sharon

Sharon has always known that she wanted to work with children. She grew up loving kids and having the desire to help them. Her mom was an educator and she remembers going to school with her mom and helping out as a young girl. Currently, Sharon is in a specialist role. Her role is to support students who are learning English as a second language. In addition she is actively involved in providing professional development to teachers in helping teachers grow and meet the needs of their students. Sharon has taught primary grades as well and has been in the field of education for 11 years. She has a Bachelor's degree in early childhood/elementary education, a Master's degree in education and an ESOL endorsement.

Major Themes

This study examined the perceptions of effective teachers and what effective teachers believe to have the greatest impact on student learning. Five specific themes emerged in the analysis of the data. The themes that emerged include:

1. High Expectations of Students
2. Relationships with Students and Classroom Climate
3. Assessment and Feedback
4. Individual Needs of Students
5. Student Growth and Confidence

High Expectations of Students

High expectations of students means that teachers expect their students to genuinely try and do not give students the option of “opting out” of thinking or completing work. The teachers interviewed set high standards for their students and set attainable goals for them to reach. Kate emphasized the importance of expectations in relation to student success. She said, “student success is about having standards and high expectations for all of your students.”

Kim explained what she believes to be her greatest responsibility as a teacher. In reference to having high expectations. She said:

My job is to prepare my students for the next grade level by looking at the next grade level standards to understand what students will be expected to do and then building a foundation in the current grade. I expect my students to accomplish the goals that I establish for them in preparation for the next year.

Students are given many opportunities to learn and practice their learning through critical thinking. Giving students the opportunity to explain their thinking, discuss their thinking with peers and allowing students to investigate, illustrates the participants’ high expectations of students. Both Beth and Kim expressed the importance of their role as a teacher in giving students plenty of opportunity to discuss and investigate in order to learn. Kim said, “In having high expectations for students, I need to give them plenty of opportunities to explain, defend and prove their work and thinking.”

Participants shared their belief in students and conveying to them that they believe they are capable learners. Having high expectations for students meant that participants knew what their students were capable of and encouraged them to reach their potential and to do their best. Melissa also credits her students’ success to the high expectations she holds for her students.

When she identified particular students that demonstrated success in her classroom—especially those with behavior challenges, she said, “I have high expectations for my students and they start to believe in themselves because of my expectations I have of them. When students start to believe in themselves that to me is success.”

Likewise, Kim related, “Telling students they can do it, contributes to their success. When I tell them to do it, I expect them to do it. I think expectations are a lot. I wouldn’t put this expectation out for you if I didn’t believe you could do it.”

In addition to high expectations of students, participants emphasized the importance of following up on expectations and holding students accountable for those expectations. Effective teachers don’t give up on their students, but instead are constantly finding ways to help them and support them in order for them to move forward and show growth. When asked what advice she would give to a new teacher about how to be effective and have success among students, Beth said, “Follow up with expectations. Kids need to know your expectations and that you will follow through one-way or another. Don’t give an assignment and then file it away. Follow up on the assignment and show students what you expect of them.”

Having high expectations of students aligns with Hattie’s second mind frame. According to Hattie and his second mind frame, teachers with high expectations of their students are change agents and believe that student success is because of what he/she does in transforming students from what they are to what they need to know and understand.

Relationships with Students and Classroom Climate

When asked about teacher effectiveness, Kate said, “I think it’s a lot about relationships.” Developing positive student relations in promoting student success and achievement was overwhelmingly identified as a key contribution to student success and having a lasting impact

on student learning. In their estimation, positive relations establishes a safe classroom climate where students feel okay with making mistakes and with their understanding of lesson material. Beth offered, “I work hard to create a safe and happy environment where all students feel like they can take chances and risks. When students are willing to take chances and risks that demonstrates success for me.” Mary said, “My role is to be an encourager and to really focus on the positive. I work to create a safe environment where they (students) can try and do their best.”

Participants emphasized the importance of taking the time to build relationships by getting to know students at the beginning of the year and the importance of knowing students on a personal level as well as an academic level. Kate said:

My role as an educator is not only to teach them (students) the skills they need to demonstrate growth toward the standards but I think it’s also being a friend and a mentor to the students. It all goes back to relationships. For a struggling student that I have now, I can see his level of comfort with me because of the time I have taken to build a relationship with him.

Mary agreed, “I think a teacher is effective when they put the time in to get to know their students and know what works best for each individual student.”

Building relationships with students demonstrates respect and in turn students want to perform at higher levels and have greater respect for their teacher. The participants expressed the belief that the level of comfort their students demonstrate reflects the fact that they took the time to build relationships and show them they care. Kate shared, “You can’t just get in front of any class and expect them to want to learn from you unless you are connecting with them and connecting it (learning) to their lives.”

Participants do in fact notice that by getting to know their students, their students were more willing to work hard and perform at higher levels. Kate shared that because she took the time to get to know one of her struggling students, he now “jokes with her and shares things with her” where he didn’t at the beginning of the year. She also shared that he writes more than ever now when at the beginning of the year it was difficult to get him to write a sentence or two.

In addition, participants felt that the connections they make with students had an impact on whether or not students liked school and wanted to be at school. Participants believe that their students are more committed to attending school because they know their teacher cares about them and wants them at school. Kate explained, “It goes back to relationships. When measuring student success, it is getting that student who doesn’t like school to like school. They want to be there because of the relationship you have built with them.”

Even years later when students were no longer in their classrooms, teachers reported the lasting impact of those relationships with students and that students maintained contact with their teachers in subsequent years. Beth shared, “I had students like Johnny that still writes me letters and notes to check in and let me know how he is doing. It is really nice to have those kinds of connections with students even after they leave my classroom.”

In addition to developing positive relations with students, participants emphasized the importance of positive relations with colleagues or staff members, leaders, parents and the community. Melissa said:

Relationships are really important. I can almost define everything around relationships. It's working with your coworkers. It's the relationship you have with your supervisor, your students, the families, you know. I don't like the idea of being the only one in my

class...you know like coming into my room and shutting the door. I feel like it needs to be collaborative. So I think that relationships are really important.

Hattie's seventh mind frame is that teachers believe in developing positive relationships in classrooms as well as in staffrooms. Teachers that maintain this mind frame and build relationships with their students are able to help their students feel comfortable in making mistakes and not knowing the answers to every question presented in the classroom. Effective teachers create a classroom environment where mistakes and errors are viewed as learning opportunities. Teachers believe that in the same way relationships with students are important, relationships among school leaders and colleagues are critical in creating a safe school environment. In such settings teachers can talk to one another about teaching and their impact on student learning. In essence, collaborative relationships, complete with free exchange of ideas and feedback are essential to good teaching.

Assessment and Feedback

Identified as Hattie's first mind frame, Hattie claims that feedback and formative evaluation provide information for the teacher about where to go, how to get there and where to go next in instruction. Hattie contends that effective teachers must have this particular mind frame in order to continuously and honestly evaluate the impact they have on students.

The participants in this study also emphasized the importance of assessment and feedback and the impact it has on student achievement. Mary said, "My contribution to student success is just being aware of where everybody is with certain things." To effective teachers, assessment is viewed as evidence and insight into their students learning.

Assessment can take on many forms and is used to measure student success and an opportunity for students to demonstrate their learning. Teachers assess their students informally

by listening to conversations, observing and analyzing every day work produced by students. They also assess more formally with common formative assessments or end of unit assessments. What students produce and how they perform helps teachers to target individual students and provide them with the support and interventions they need. Participants expressed the importance of knowing where each student is and keeping track of each student with careful record keeping, observations and listening to the conversations among students. Mary said:

It is my responsibility to know where each student is and to keep track of each student in my classroom. I keep careful records to know where my students are at. Even though I know in my head where students are at, I like to do frequent and quick checks to check on student progress and have evidence of their learning.

Beth related:

I measure student success with evidence. I assess frequently in my every day teaching. I'm assessing through my observations of students, the discussions and conversations I have with them and their every day classroom work. Then I use that assessment to analyze and know where students are at. I'm in constant conversation with students and am always trying to figure out what they know and don't know.

Sharon agreed that student success is measured through her every day interactions and observations of students. She said, "I measure success through my every day interactions with students and my observations of students."

Effective teachers use assessment to collaborate with colleagues and have discussions about how to support students, effective strategies to implement and interventions to provide. This dialog among colleagues demonstrates a collaborative effort among teachers to support all students and their learning.

Beth mentioned that assessment helps her keep her finger on the pulse of her own classroom in order to know if what she has done had an impact on her students. She said, “I’m keeping my finger on the pulse of my own classroom in order to know if what I did had an impact on my students.” Not only do assessments provide feedback to the students, but assessments provide feedback to the teacher as well. Hattie’s fourth and fifth mind frames for teachers state that teachers see assessment as feedback about their impact and teachers engage in dialog and listen to the students’ learning. Teachers who hold these mind frames know their role in listening to students in order to promote greater learning and are attentive to assessment results that are viewed as important feedback.

Individual Needs of Students

Knowing each individual student and the needs of each student goes hand in hand with assessment and feedback as well as building relationships with students. Participants identified the importance of relationships, and assessment and feedback as important to effective teaching, but also knowing the needs of students in order to have an impact on student achievement is just as important. Kate said, “I think what contributes to student success is for me to know where each student is at.” When defining success in the classroom Kim said, “I think it depends on the student. The target for students has to be adjusted based on the needs of each student.” Kim also shared the importance of modifying whatever needs to be modified for students in order for them to be successful. “My role is to modify whatever needs to be modified for each individual student.” Mary said, “It is really important to know where each kid is and how they learn best.” She also said, “Effective teachers know their kids and their learning styles and try to meet the needs of each student.”

An effective teacher knows how to differentiate her instruction in order to reach students and take them to the next level. Each student is unique and has different needs based on level and understanding. Participants expressed the importance of meeting students where they are at in order to reach them and help them to grow. Effective teachers are constantly modifying their instruction and monitoring and adjusting to meet the individual needs of their students. Mary said, “Being aware of students, monitoring student progress and providing intervention and support are all important to success and the individual needs of students.” Kate also shared that it is important to know where students are at and to meet them at that level. Beth shared similar beliefs about effective teachers knowing how to differentiate, reach students at all levels and to be able to take students to the next level.

The value and importance that is placed on the individual needs of the student aligns with Hattie’s third and sixth mind frames. Teachers must embrace multiple ways of teaching and learning to meet the needs of students and model different ways of learning. What is challenging to one student may not be challenging to another. The constant attention to individual differences is crucial to an effective teacher. Teachers who embrace these mind frames engage in discussions about best practice and new methods of teaching and they engage in collegial debates about learning. They also scaffold or break challenges into manageable bits for students to understand.

Student Growth and Confidence

Effective teachers are able to identify success in students and know their impact on students when they can measure the growth of their students and potential for learning through assessment. Participants shared that they feel their students are most successful when they have demonstrated growth and can apply their learning in other contexts. In turn this learning helps

students to feel empowered and confident in themselves and their ability to think. Participants believe that it is their role to make the students feel comfortable and by feeling comfortable, students feel proud and have the desire to learn. Mary explained, “Student success is defined by building student confidence. Building confidence in themselves (students) as learners.” Not only do students grow with effective teachers, but students gain confidence in themselves and in demonstrating their knowledge. Kate said, “My definition for success is students showing growth. Students are successful when they can show growth and show their potential for learning.”

Sharon agreed that student success is demonstrated through growth. She believes that because of effective teaching, students demonstrate growth on a daily basis. The most rewarding moment for a teacher is when they see the light bulb go on for their students or that “ah ha” moment. Beth said, “For me, student success is demonstrated when you have those ‘ah ha’ moments. It is when you see the light bulb go on in students’ heads and they can demonstrate their understanding.”

For many teachers this is a sign that they have had an impact on their students and their learning by equipping them with skills and strategies. That “ah ha” moment for many effective teachers is the very reason why they entered the field of education—to help students learn and love learning. When students are able to apply their learning in different contexts this is an indicator to the teacher that she has done something right in reaching her students.

The participants shared that it is the responsibility of the teacher to build confidence in their students and to equip students with the tools that are necessary to be successful beyond the years of their classroom. Melissa shared that she feels her job is to help students to believe in themselves. Kate said, “I knew my student was successful when she could start to see it on her

own and she knew she had enough strategies in her toolbox to move forward.” Sharon said she knows her students are successful when she can see them build confidence in themselves.

Review of the Research Questions

As the previous discussion demonstrates, five important themes on effective teaching and the impact on student learning emerged. Based on these five themes, the data were analyzed in order to answer the research questions that structured this investigation.

Research Question #1

What do “effective teachers” identify as having the greatest impact on student learning?

Research Question #2

How do perceptions of “effective teachers” align with the eight mind frames from Hattie’s work?

In response to both research questions:

Six highly effective teachers were selected and interviewed. Teachers shared their perceptions and ideas as to what they believe have the greatest impact on student learning. Themes emerged from the data that was collected from each interview. The themes that emerged showing what participants believe to have the greatest impact on student learning were high expectations of students, relationships with students and classroom climate, an emphasis on assessment and feedback, focus on the individual needs of students and students showing growth and confidence. Of these themes, Hattie’s mind frames one through seven align with teacher perceptions. Participants demonstrated seven of the eight mind frames or ways of thinking when sharing their perceptions and beliefs about student learning.

With the exception of Hattie’s eighth mind frame, which states that, teachers and leaders inform all about the language of learning—teaching parents about the language of learning in order to understand the learning that takes place in schools. During each of the interviews, the

participants did not mention the importance or involvement in parents as having the greatest impact on student achievement.

This study revealed that participants believe high expectations of students, positive relations with students, assessment and feedback, meeting the individual needs of students, and fostering student growth and confidence are strongly associated with the greatest positive impact on student achievement. These perceptions generally align with Hattie's mind frames on how teachers consider their role as educators. Namely, because of a teacher's mind frame, educators are able to identify and assess their impact on students in order to promote high levels of learning.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

Introduction

This qualitative study examined teacher understanding and the perceptions of teachers regarding what factors they believe have the greatest impact on student achievement. The participants were interviewed and the data revealed specific themes about teacher perceptions on student achievement. This study and the themes that were revealed generally align with Hattie's mind frames. Based on the findings, in this chapter I present some important implications, suggestions for future research, and offer a discussion on some of the limitations of the present investigation.

Implications of the Findings

Teachers are the most influential resource in the classroom and to student learning. As a result, it is important for an educator to be aware of and recognize his/her impact on student learning. According to Hattie (2012), teachers that are able to reflect on and evaluate their impact on student learning are more likely to have major impacts on student achievement. As a result, teaching needs to be considered in terms of its impact on student learning. Teachers, in order to be effective, need to hold a mind frame that they have the greatest impact on student achievement. For educational practitioners, this research speaks on behalf of teachers by giving teachers a voice on their perspectives as to what they believe to have the greatest impact on student learning. The perspectives documented here may be shared perspectives among other teachers. Indeed, other teachers may relate to the viewpoints and perspectives of the teachers that participated in this study as well as learn from them as credible resources to further develop

their practice. In supporting teachers with student learning, we can learn a great deal from these teachers identified as effective and what they are doing routinely with students. In short, teachers who desire to grow can stretch themselves and adopt the mind frames that effective teachers hold.

Effective teachers aren't just practitioners who inately practice technique and theory. Effective teaching goes much deeper. If teachers are able to shift their thinking and adopt the mind frames in order to impact student learning, there could be less emphasis on test preparation and "teaching to the test" as is common when educators feel the pressure to prepare students to take high stakes tests. Effective teachers want to prepare students to be lifelong learners and understand that intellect can be developed; they must strive to instill in students a love for learning.

For scholars, this study helps gain insight and perspective into teacher beliefs and perceptions. Too often, educational research is conducted without hearing the documented voices of teachers. Much is to be gained from the perspective of those who daily interact with students. Understanding effectiveness is important to student achievement to ensure the best possible educational outcomes for students and promoting lasting growth and success. Furthermore, this research gives credibility to Hattie's mind frames in that teachers do indeed have set ways of thinking that are believed to impact student achievement.

With Common Core Standards and high stakes testing being developed and implemented, gaining knowledge from teachers on effectiveness and student achievement could aid in developing and implementing mandates that lend greater support to students and their achievement and help to inform teachers on their impact.

Furthermore, a teacher is often considered successful based on the results of their students and their performance with high stakes testing. By listening to the perceptions of teachers, evaluation systems could be developed that evaluate teachers based on positive relations with students and creating a conducive classroom climate, use of assessment and feedback, meeting individual needs of students, and expectations of students rather than merely evaluating students based on a one time high stakes assessment or purely evaluating teachers on technique.

Suggestions for Further Research

My recommendations for further research include interviewing teachers from different areas of the country and different grade levels including secondary grade levels. Interviewing teachers from a variety of socio-economic schools could provide more insight into how effective teachers have the greatest impact on student learning. A comparison of student perceptions on the greatest impact on student learning to teacher perceptions could present important insights on effective teaching as well. I believe it could be valuable to gain perspectives from different grade levels, different areas of the country and different populations to see how perspectives differ or if they differ.

I believe it could also be important to research more about Hattie's eighth mind frame and how teachers and leaders can teach parents and the community about the language of learning in order to support student learning. Many of our students needs are addressed in schools, but perhaps the needs of students and their learning in the home can be addressed with further research. According to Hattie (2012) not all parents know how to "co-educate" their children which is a major barrier for parents that are not familiar with the language of learning and schools. Teaching parents about the language of schooling could quite potentially have a

positive impact on students and their achievement. In the book *Classroom Instruction that Works*, Dean et al. (2012) speaks to the importance of parent involvement. Involving parent-child interactions could help to improve a student's performance when considering the use of homework. It is important for parents to understand the learning objectives of assignments. When parents have discussions with their children about topics they are studying, parents can understand the learning objectives and foster communication with teachers about the learning objectives and how the child is progressing and meeting those objectives.

In order to help parents understand and support their children, teachers can share information on structures and monitoring techniques for parents to use while at home (Dean et al., 2012). Providing information to parents about learning through parent workshops and by encouraging dialog with parents about school has demonstrated positive effects on student achievement in reading.

Additional research needs to be done on ways to measure success of students. When asked how they knew their students were successful, the participants reported that they knew they were successful because of growth, or because they were equipped with the tools to think and apply their thinking in other contexts. Moreover, they knew their students love learning because they witness it in their classrooms. Given these insights, it is easy to conclude that high stakes testing is a one-time shot evaluation and can be a false measure of success and student achievement.

Limitations of the Research

While teachers can provide great insight into the world of teaching and effectiveness, the importance of relationships continues to emerge as an important factor to student success. With this study it was evident that teachers place a significant importance on relationships and

attribute the positive relationships with students to academic success of students. Participants overwhelmingly emphasized the importance of getting to know students and creating a classroom environment for students where they felt safe and comfortable.

In addition the participants were very humble, but, nevertheless, aware of their impact on student learning. These teachers took ownership for their actions in the classroom and the impact of their actions on students. The participants seem to have a sharp eye for creating success in their classrooms and supporting students. They obviously care a great deal for each and every student and have their students' best interest in mind.

Yet, by conducting the study in one school district, the perspective is quite narrow and might have yielded different results or themes if conducted elsewhere. I would have liked to interview teachers from other school districts as well as varying grade levels such as secondary schools. I believe by interviewing teachers from various districts and grade levels, I could have gained even more perspective from teachers and what they believe to have the greatest impact on student learning. I recommend this approach to future researchers on this topic.

Conclusion

As educators, it is important to understand our impact on student learning and the actions necessary to have the greatest impact on student learning. It is also important to understand that our way of thinking has an enormous impact on the learning of our students. Not only is it important for educators to think in terms of growth, but it is also important to foster and encourage our students to think and grow and to know that intellect is not static, but instead can be developed through various means for both students and educators. When educators take responsibility for their own actions in the classroom students make the most gains.

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APPENDIX A

Teacher Proficiency Rubric

Observable Practices	Observable Evidence	Met
Evidence that all components of the lesson are congruent with the posted/stated learning objective(s) . Teacher monitors and adjusts as appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Clear written objective tied to standard · Objective communicated clearly to students · Anticipatory set congruent to objective designed to hook the learners · Modeled instruction and/or thinking congruent to objective · Guided practice congruent to objective · Independent practice congruent to objective · Closure congruent to objective · Assessment congruent to objective 	
Evidence that teacher uses strategies that engage students throughout the lesson <i>and</i> redirects those who are not engaged.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Student processing at each chunk of the lesson · Powerful Questioning · Wait time · Non-Linguistic Images · Collaborative Learning · Chants, Songs, Poetry, etc. · <i>Mandates:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -continually (at least every 5-7 minutes) -pair/share -white boards or response cards -think in your heads -total physical response/"show me" -quick writes -other: · <i>Additional Strategies</i> 	
Evidence that teacher checks for understanding of all students throughout the lesson.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Continually (at least every 5-7 minutes) · Every chunk of the lesson · Circulates, observes, listens · Calls on students or pairs randomly · Has students signal their understanding · Congruent with objective · Teacher monitors and adjusts lesson based on student needs · <i>Additional Strategies:</i> 	
Evidence that students meet the learning objective and the teacher identifies an additional strategy (s) for those who do not.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Exit cards · Quiz · CFA · Writing · Analysis of independent work · Informal Assessment of ALL students through_____ · Uses evidence to form objective for following lesson 	
Evidence that the teacher demonstrates management strategies that ensure all students learn in a safe and structured environment.	<p>SAFETY: emotional and physical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Proximity to Students · Individual recognition · Group recognition · Follows through on rules and expectations · Tone & expression match expectations · Greets students as they come into class · Compliments students on effort · Makes eye contact · Behavior contracts · Gives students ownership · Consistently models respectful behavior · Differentiates for high needs students (both behaviorally and academically) · <p>STRUCTURE: environment and systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Clear routines and procedures · Signals to get attention · Physical cues · Rules and expectations posted · Purposeful seating/grouping 	

APPENDIX B

Personal Interview Guide Questions

Please share about your educational background and how you entered the field of education.

Talk about your current role in education and your responsibilities in this role.

How long have you been in this role or position?

There are many definitions of student success in the classroom. How do you define student success in the classroom?

What is your role in contributing to student success?

Tell me 2-3 stories that illustrate your definition of student success and experience with student success in your classroom.

How did you know your students were successful?

What contributed to your students' success?

How do you define teacher effectiveness?

In your view what makes a teacher effective?

If you were to generalize based on what you told me in your stories, what advice would you give a new teacher about how to be effective and have success with student learning?

APPENDIX C

Letter of Informed Consent

Teacher Perceptions Related to Effectiveness
Letter of Consent

Dear Professional Educator,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research project. I am interested in collaborating with you on what you identify as having the greatest impact on student learning and how your perceptions of effective teaching align with John Hattie's eight mind frames of a teacher.

Insights gained by this study will give teachers a voice and autonomy in expressing their own beliefs about teacher effectiveness. I want to explore teacher perceptions in relation to teacher effectiveness and to gain an understanding of teacher perceptions and teacher effectiveness.

There is little risk associated with this research. Your responses to the personal interview questions are for the purposes of my own understanding. Your participation is completely voluntary and you may decline to continue at anytime or decline to answer any question at your discretion.

Personal interviews will be audio recorded and later transcribed. Information will be analyzed and presented in an anonymous fashion where no individual will be identified personally. All personal information and identities will be kept confidential.

All research materials such as audio recordings, transcriptions and signed consent forms will be locked in a separate and secure location for no less than three years. I will be the only individual that will have access to the materials and I will personally destroy the materials and delete audio recordings after three years.

I appreciate your time in considering this project. If you choose to participate, you are making a contribution to educational research. If you have questions regarding this research, I can be contacted at 971.237.0695. If you have additional questions, you may contact the chair of my committee, Dr. Terry Huffman at ____

If you understand the use of this research and agree to participate, please sign below.

Participant signature_____

Researcher signature_____