

Washington State University

College of Education

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Will defend the dissertation on

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Time: 3:00 P.M.

Vancouver Campus - VUB 311

Zoom by request to gradstudies@wsu.edu

Faculty, students and the general public are encouraged to attend

FEEDBACK MATTERS: A STUDY OF THE LEARNING OF PRACTICING TEACHERS REGARDING PRINCIPAL FORMATIVE FEEDBACK FOR INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE IMPROVEMENT

Chair: Kristin Huggins

Market-Based reforms, such as high-stakes teacher evaluation models aimed at improving teacher instructional practice, have not addressed student achievement concerns, especially among marginalized student demographic groups. Research contends that principal instructional feedback to teachers is a worthy strategy to improve teacher instructional practice, but research does not distinguish high-stakes evaluative feedback from feedback for formative purposes. In addition, conflicting reports regarding teacher receptivity to principal feedback exist. Scant information is available that explains the influence of principal formative feedback on the instruction of teachers.

This qualitative study focused on the perceptions and influences of formative feedback reported by teachers who receive feedback from an instructional leader who prioritizes formative feedback as a component of their instructional leadership work is one half of a two-part study exploring principal (Perez, 2022) and teacher learning regarding formative feedback for teacher instructional practice improvement. Thirteen recognized principal instructional leaders committed to formative feedback, spread across three school districts in Washington State, were interviewed. Three focal principals were selected from this group to participate in a follow-up interview to further understand their experiences and commitment to formative feedback. Nine teachers from the focal principals' schools were interviewed to understand how teachers perceive and are influenced by formative feedback. Interview transcripts were analyzed in successive cycles, and analyzed again at the conclusion of data collection, to identify patterns and themes.

With regard to teacher perception and reported influences, findings indicate teachers believe formative feedback from their principal is of significant utility in their instructional practice improvement work because it focuses on their growth, contains multiple factors that are specific to their instructional goals, needs, and their students, and promotes and enhances their instructional practice reflection. These findings have implications for research to further describe and define feedback that teachers regard positively and utilize to improve their teaching. Implications for policy to move evaluation models towards prioritizing formative feedback also exist. Finally, by considering the findings and recommendations of this study, school organizations can conceptualize a vision for principal professional development to support principals in becoming instructional leaders who prioritize formative feedback for teacher instructional practice improvement. With more school organizations and principals prioritizing this work, teachers may have the kind of feedback they can utilize to improve their instructional practice and thus student learning.