IN THEIR SHOES

A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF PEER OBSERVATION AND ITS
IMPACT ON COLLECTIVE EFFICACY AMONG ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL TEACHERS

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In Their Shoes:
A Qualitative Study of Peer Observation and its Impact on Collective Efficacy among Elementary School Teachers

By

Harriette Thurber Rasmussen

Abstract

In an era of increasing inequity and global complexity, the stakes for America's struggling education system have never been higher – for students, their futures, and our society at large. At a time when students are being asked to reach outcomes never before met, the level of collective efficacy across a school faculty remains one of the highest predictors of student performance (Elmore & Forman, 2011; Goddard, 2001; Goddard & Goddard, 2001). This study examined how the vulnerable practice of peer observation might develop the collective capacity of teachers to deliver on the promise of student success and break through the institutionalized socio-economic barriers so many of our students face. Narrative inquiry provided an in-depth examination of the experiences of five elementary teachers to determine if they were able to draw upon that process as a source of efficacy and increased confidence in the capacity of their peers. This study also considered the underlying organizational context and leadership behaviors that might have contributed to the development or regression of collective efficacy.

The study found the particular peer observation protocol used for this study to be a viable process for collective efficacy development and highly valued by the participating teachers, despite high levels of anxiety about being observed by their peers. It also revealed the qualitative contributions of positional authority to high levels of psychological safety and symmetry in learning and accountability systems. These factors

formed the context from which teachers were able to engage in honest dialogue and the

deep learning required to counter socio-economic negatives. The process can serve to

enhance a faculty's collective work toward equitable educational goals and offers an

intervention to counter misdirected educational policies.

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DEDICATION

To heroic teachers everywhere who dedicate their lives to our future, one student at a time.

And to Maddie, whose strength and courage helped me to find my own.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation has been a long time coming – not necessarily in terms of months-enrolled, hours at the keyboard, or feelings of forever. It started almost 20 years ago when, curious and frustrated with the ways in which society approached the task of educating children, I began my quest toward doctorate-level research, wanting to explore creative and credible alternatives. All I lacked was one small credential: the prerequisite degrees. This journey, therefore, started with a single professor at The Evergreen State College who saw promise in a fidgety, rebellious woman who aspired to change the world through education. So my first acknowledgement goes posthumously to Dr. Dave Hitchens. Without his creative and rigorous tutelage, none of this research would have come to bear. Dave, if you can pull yourself away from that heavenly bluegrass you love so much to note what is going on in the world you left behind, you will see that you have done well by me. I hope I have done well by you.

I hope the same for the brave members of my committee who committed to tired eyes and brains as they wrapped their heads around this tome. Four Arrows and Anna DiStefano, I appreciate more than you can know your willingness to push my thinking to places I did not know it could go. Lee Mahon, your calm wisdom and experience in leading education systems kept me grounded. John Roberts, your research and riveting storytelling served as inspiration for my own. And Jenefer Dayle Snyder, my unfailing cheerleader and detail lady, your belief in me seemed unearned but unequaled in its power.

Most importantly, I thank the teachers and leaders of the Vista School District[1] who gave so freely and openly of themselves to this study. Cal, your willingness to reach for what you need has set the path for countless others as they, too, lead the complex work of educating every student. Peg, your steely eyes on instructional excellence coupled with your warm heart sets a new standard in coherent systems. The same can be said for Marc and Gloria, whose naked curiosity and approaches to school leadership have mobilized an already outstanding teaching force. Finally, I am most grateful to the teachers whose stories are the heart of this study. Thank you, Sandra, for your consistent determined commitment to your students. Thank you, Joe, for your quiet fortitude and learning stance as you approach your classroom each day. Thank you, Steve, for sharing your bright curious mind and unwavering patience with your students. Thank you, Erin, for your courage. It takes courage to care as much as you do. And thank you, Michelle. Your passion and smile will live forever in my heart.

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[1] In the interest of confidentiality, my research participants and the district in which they serve have been assigned pseudonyms, but you know who you are.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

They can because they think they can.
(Virgil)

Erin[2] is a third year teacher. She's struggling with classroom management and routines as she tries to get her wiggly fifth graders to express themselves and stay on task during group work. She's got one little guy who likes to dominate every conversation and another student who is so shy she literally hides her eyes during class discussions. Although she routinely uses the cutting edge instructional strategies expected in her district, she wonders quietly whether she's making any gains with her students.

Sandra is a seasoned expert in primary literacy who diligently moves through the instructional expectations and pacing guides expected for her first-grade students. She came to the Vista School District from a larger neighboring district, preferring to be in an environment in which she is known well and that values her knowing her students well. A supervisor of student teachers, Sandra wants her students to be life-long learners, a value she tries to exemplify in her own professional learning choices.

Michelle has been teaching for more than 20 years and is known as the helper-bee among the faculty, cheerful and volunteering for everything and anything that needs doing. Few of her fifth graders have ever passed a state assessment, although she tries to convince herself that this is because of language issues and poverty. Her grade-level teammates talk around her during their professional learning community meetings.

Like Erin, Joe is also a new teacher. He looks barely old enough to have a paper route and as a Caucasian, he stands out in this school that houses many Hispanic teachers and mostly Hispanic students. His principal recounts Joe's visit to the school as a student intern and the words, "I think I have to be here," enthralled by the district's college preparatory standards and rigorous instructional approach for a demographic that often is subjected to rote and mindless learning. He has been rated exceptional on the new teacher evaluation instrument in the domains related to student engagement.

And Steve is a veteran teacher, sharing Michelle's longevity at Skyview Elementary. He is the resident math expert in the building, teaching multiple periods of math to help others who lack the pedagogical content knowledge

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[2] All individuals in this dissertation have been assigned pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality.

required for inquiry-based math. His level of expertise as a teacher makes him wary of his colleagues, however. He has little confidence that they are able to address the challenging learning needs of their high needs students and state test scores suggest he might be right. He is known for his extended wait times in the classroom, believing that students are entitled to the opportunity to solve academic problems, even if it takes certain students a little longer to do so.

What these five elementary school teachers have in common, aside from the fact that they all teach in the same school, is that they have been involved in a process known as peer observation, systematically watching each other teach lessons followed by a conversation and collective analysis of what occurred during the lesson. They are also my research participants. My goal in this dissertation has been to walk the proverbial mile in the shoes of these teachers, to understand how the process of peer observation enabled them to be vulnerable with each other and walk in the shoes of their colleagues. Specifically, this dissertation examined how engaging in peer observation contributed to these teachers' sense of efficacy, enhancing a collective confidence that they can succeed in the complex task of teaching today's challenging standards in a high poverty community.

This practice of peer observation may be among the most revealing and vulnerable activities teachers experience. It is certainly personal, as is the profession of teaching itself. Each teacher brings to their students a unique history as a learner and motivation for choosing such a challenging profession. Each teacher's background brings beliefs about potentiality and an accumulation of experiences that form how they approach the multitude of tasks and decisions that are made hourly, including how they interact with and regard their colleagues. Every classroom is distinct as individual students relate to each other, to the content, and to their teacher, forming an idiosyncratic classroom culture that changes each year. Every school seems uniquely different from

one another, drawing on the personalities of its leaders and the dynamics of staff and students to create a distinct community, with routines and expectations that become the norm of *how we do things around here*. As I have learned through my experience as an educational leadership consultant, every district establishes its own priorities through its goals and mandates, sometimes tacit, setting in motion a philosophy about learning through required professional development, its approach to accountability, and response to the political landscape.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to investigate how peer observation might function as a tool to bring about collective teacher efficacy. I also considered how any organizational processes contributed to the advancement or regression of collective efficacy. The primary questions this study explored were

1. In what ways did peer observation contribute to the development of collective efficacy among elementary school teachers?

2. What organizational processes helped to explain why collective efficacy did or did not develop through peer observation?

In this study, peer observation is defined specifically as a particular protocol used to facilitate this process, attached as Appendix A. This protocol has its origins in a process known as instructional rounds (City, Elmore, Fiarman, & Teitel, 2009). Instructional rounds is an iteration of the medical rounds model where physicians collaborate around data to better diagnose and determine an optimum course of treatment for a patient. It was designed to engage school and district leaders in collaborative inquiry around the instructional process to diagnose and treat systems-level problems

related to improving student learning. The process brings together nonjudgmental data for analysis to address a challenge related to the studied system's strategic improvement strategy. It calls for the collection of data across multiple classrooms with subsequent analysis to uncover patterns of practice that suggest a next level of work for the system's improvement strategy. The original educative volume on instructional rounds was *Instructional Rounds in Education: A Network Approach to Improving Teaching and Learning* (City et al., 2009). This volume was followed by *Instructional Rounds in Action* (Roberts, 2012) that described one district's implementation of the instructional rounds practice as a strategy for district-wide improvement.

An adaptation of this process is described in "Wrestling with Data" (Rasmussen, 2012) to show how the fundamentals of the instructional rounds process were able to cause a cultural shift around the use of qualitative data and student voice. Notable here was the addition of teachers to what had traditionally been a process for administrators. In that article I reported how teachers were initially skeptical of a process they worried might be evaluative, but that the ability to watch other teachers teach offered perspective on the classroom they had not before experienced. I also described the initiation of common vocabulary within and across schools and how teachers took on new leadership roles as a result of the ability to observe their peers. The teachers involved in this process noted immediate "use for the wisdom … [mined] from other classrooms … particularly the power of student voice as they reconsider[ed] the learning experience through their students' eyes" (p. 49). Teitel (2013) also described ways in which teachers might be involved in the instructional rounds process through case studies that detail teacher collaboration through peer observation. These volumes suggested the potential of peer

observation to bridge the gap between theory and practice as teachers watch each other work with students of a common demographic. City et al. (2009) described the importance of illuminating nuances in instructional practices between classrooms. They cited a powerful example of inaccurate teacher assumptions around the reasons for variances in student work that had been brought about because the teachers were unaware of how differently they were presenting and scaffolding the curriculum. The opportunity for teachers to recognize how the differences between teaching practices might explain within-school variances in student achievement (Rowan, Correnti, & Miller, 2002) seems critical to bringing high quality instruction, and by extension, improved performance, to all students.

America's Education Crisis

For the past two decades I have witnessed first-hand what has been termed a stagnation of improvement in exchange for change (Elmore, 2007, p. 211). As a nation, we are adept at devising new programs and policies, introducing changes designed to fix education, but we have made precious little improvement in America's ever-elusive search for higher levels of student performance or in achieving a deeper and common sense of purpose for the institution we call school. Of particular note are the persistent achievement gaps between White and minority students, especially in the last two decades where, as an example, White students have made twice the achievement gains of their Black and Hispanic counterparts (Reardon, 2011). Also significant is the performance disparity between rich and poor children that has grown exponentially in the last 50 years and in some cases exceeds racial gap patterns as defined by student achievement measures of reading and mathematics (Reardon, 2011; 2014). Nationally,

we graduate too few students, ranging from an overall graduation rate of 78% to even more appallingly poor rates for Native Americans (69%), African Americans (66%), and Hispanics (71%); (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013; Lee, 2002).

Less well known is the fact that many of our improvement efforts to date have continued to mask a largely inadequate level of performance among students with no apparent risk factors. Wagner (2010) found poor preparation for college and careers among graduates of some of the most esteemed schools in the country. Another example is the high rate of remediation required for students entering college; in some instances 40% of entering freshmen require what is now termed developmental education, including students from highly regarded schools (Attewell, Lavin, Domina, & Levey, 2006). Further, our standing in international testing ranks the United States far below other countries, a significant drawback considering the global economy today's graduates will enter (Ripley, 2013; Wagner, 2010).

Further, the political landscape to which schools must respond, and in which teachers practice, sits within deeper factors that command our attention and increasingly share the stage with stagnating and distressing achievement patterns. I refer to such factors as racial and income inequities (Alexander & West, 2012; Lemel & Noll, 2002; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009); increasing deception and corruption in our institutions (Gabriel, 2010; Vogell, 2011); widespread and pervasive violence (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, n.d.; Webster, Vernick, & Bloomberg, 2013); and tragic ecological destruction of life systems (Laszlo & Hubbard, 2010; Orr, 2004). If teachers and students do not feel that education somehow addresses these profound issues, where student achievement goals concern themselves primarily with test scores or school-to-

work motives, is authentic progress really a possibility? The education crisis facing our nation is a microcosm of society, unparalleled given the extreme challenges we face as a rapidly changing global economy and society that faces its future with an uneducated citizenry attempting to support a complex and increasingly divisive democracy.

Education's Response

The American education system's response to the crises of our era has shown a propensity toward solutions that are externally mandated, such as standardized testing, teacher performance pay, and curriculum interventions (Dee & Wyckoff, 2013; Elmore, 2007; Goodman & Turner, 2012; Jones, 2004). More recent efforts have focused on teacher effectiveness, not in itself an ill-advised strategy, but in ways that hold teacher evaluations hostage to standardized test scores of the students they teach. Even the use of more sophisticated measures (e.g., Value Added Measures) that intend to embrace the complex nature of teaching and learning are fraught with measurement error and can present a distorted view of highly or less effective teaching practices (Corcoran, 2010; Haertel, 2013). These initiatives, to which millions of federal dollars are tied, bear little resemblance to what research has illuminated about schools and systems that have been able to improve – professional learning, instructional leadership, and organizational coherence (Childress, Elmore, & Grossman, 2006). Instead, America's need for quantification, with the rationalization and order it represents (Mehta, 2013), has resulted in unintended negative consequences for teachers and the students they serve, with plummeting teacher morale, increased student test preparation, and an exodus from the teaching profession (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2014; Darling-Hammond, 2007; Franklin & Snow-Gerono, 2007; Mehta, 2013; Rasmussen, 2014b, 2014c).

There *are* particular dynamics within high achieving schools that "beat these odds" so to speak (Kannapel, Clements, Taylor, & Hibpshman, 2005). As one example, research in the late 1990s and early 2000s noted patterns among schools serving students with a variety of risk factors in which teachers exhibited the skill, will, and flexibility to meet student needs. The teachers in these schools responded coherently and adequately to external demands, navigating shifts in the political landscape and withstanding current "reforms du jour" in favor of strategies they knew made a difference with their particular populations (Abelman & Elmore, 1999; Elmore, 2003; Carnoy, Elmore, & Siskin, 2003; Elmore, 2007; Kozar, 2011). These schools demonstrated high levels of alignment between each teacher's personal sense of responsibility to students, the staff's collective expectations of students, and how people were asked to account for their actions. It follows that teachers who have established collective expectations of students and "hold each other accountable [to those expectations] vis-à-vis students" (Abelman & Elmore, 1999, p. 193) have also internalized the attribution that they are able to deliver on those expectations (Alderman & Beyeler, 2008). Teachers in these schools, I argue, have and exercise agency, believing they are able to make a difference for their students. In other words, they have efficacy (Bandura, 1997).

The Power of Efficacy

Efficacy seems like such a simple idea. Framed by Italian Poet Publius Vergilius Maro as "I can, because I think I can" (Virgil, n.d.), efficacy is a topic of inspiration taught in children's classics such as *The Little Engine that Could* (Piper, 1930), in which the engine experiences success because she "thinks she can," and advice from such heroic figures as Mahatma Ghandi: "If I have the belief that I can do it, I shall surely acquire the

capacity to do it, even if I may not have it at the beginning" (Ghandi, n.d.). Efficacy has

been studied extensively to understand the sciences behind this phenomenon and how to

leverage its potential in human productivity (Bandura, 1977, 1982, 1986, 1993, 1997,

2010; Rotter, 1966). Efficacy has been examined to explain academic motivation (Bong

& Clark, 1999; Dweck, 2000, 2007), with the conclusion that one's perception of self is

more important to motivation and human learning than environmental factors (Bong &

Clark, 1999). And teacher efficacy has been positively correlated to student achievement

(Elmore & Forman, 2011; Goddard, 2001; Goddard & Goddard, 2001; Goddard, Hoy, &

Woolfolk Hoy, 2004).

Individual efficacy has its challenges, however, in schools that are seeking to

develop high performance for students at scale. It can contribute to a teacher's resistance

to change practices (Guskey, 1988) and impede professional learning because of the level

of certainty that develops from experiencing success, or mastery (R. Elmore, personal

conversation, April 30, 2012). Curiously, Rowan, Correnti, and Miller's (2002) findings

on within-school differences in student achievement may have their origins, in part, in

efficacy. In fact, Elmore, speaking before a group of practicing instructional rounds

facilitators in 2012, claimed,

> you could make an argument that [individual efficacy] actually aggravates the
> problem…. The problem American schools have is that two thirds of the
> variation in classroom is explained by differences among classes in schools. If
> you increase individual efficacy, all you do is increase the variability.

Thus, it was significant to the challenge of educating all students that researchers

began to focus on *collective* efficacy, moving the unit of study from the individual

efficacy of the teacher to the collective efficacy of the faculty. Collective efficacy is

distinguished from individual efficacy through the consideration of peer competency.

Peer assessment, how competent are one's fellow teachers, is specific to the teaching task at hand – what students are expected to learn – and any predicted difficulty in helping them to learn (Goddard & Goddard, 2001). It represents the "beliefs of teachers that the faculty as a group can execute the courses of action required to educate students successfully" (Strategic Education Research Partnership, 2012, para. 3). Collective efficacy permeates organizational culture, explaining differences in student achievement between schools, with "stronger effects on student achievement than student race and [socio-economic status]" (Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2004, p.7).

Collective efficacy moves the concept of *I can* to *we can*. It also suggests the presence of social capital, which I define as the capacity to learn collaboratively, meaning that teachers are able to draw upon each other as resources in examining the complex challenges they face in meeting the academic needs of their students. Much has been written about the desirability of social capital as evidenced by the proliferation of professional learning communities and other opportunities for teachers and administrators to learn collaboratively (DuFour, Eaker, & DuFour, 2005; James, Dunning, Connolly, & Elliott, 2007; Leana, 2011). The topic of efficacy and its measurement has also been explored through social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977, 1982, 1986, 1993, 1997, 2010) and through its implications for teachers with, as noted above, consistent positive correlation to student performance over the last four decades (Armor et al., 1976; Ashton & Webb, 1986; Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2004; Goddard, 2001; Goddard & Goddard, 2001; Moore & Esselman, 1992; Ross, 1992). Of late, research has begun to quantitatively explore the relationship between collective efficacy and teacher collaboration as a manifestation of social capital, finding a strong association between the

two (Moolenaar, Sleegers, & Daly, 2011). If collective efficacy among a teaching staff is such a powerful predictor of student performance, the question then becomes one of how to further its development. There has been very little empirical study about the qualitative aspects of teacher collaboration that underlie the presence of collective efficacy and particular attributes of social capital that contribute to its development.

The Potential of Peer Observation

Developing internal systems within schools that are efficacious and collaborative is of paramount importance to the future of our public education system, if only to withstand the onslaught of external mandates that serve as the context for today's teachers. This study considered the possibility that the practice of peer observation, teachers observing and analyzing another's teaching practice, might move a faculty toward higher levels of collective efficacy. As described further in Chapter 2, Bandura (1977, 1982, 1986, 1993, 1997, 2010) claimed that teacher efficacy development derives from mastery and vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and particular affective states. Might peer observation enable teachers to witness practices that are particularly effective with a school's student population or to experience pressure from one's peers to try new instructional approaches?   Some peer observation protocols include a collective analysis component that might reinforce a teacher's impressions that they did, indeed, master a teaching challenge. Peer observation also offers the opportunity for teachers to make a determination about their colleagues' capacity to deliver on their students' academic needs and, potentially, to bridge the gap between individual and collective teacher efficacy. In my two decades of experience as a leadership and organizational development coach to school systems across the United States, I have observed more

shifts in teacher agency and practice as a result of teacher collaboration, in particular peer observation, than through any other intervention or support. The logic seemed sufficient to suggest the potential of peer observation to significantly contribute to collective efficacy.

Systems and Theoretical Framework

This study has assumed that improving outcomes for students requires new learning of those responsible for that improvement (Elmore, n.d.). A systems view of the nature of learning suggests that one cannot mandate deep, real learning; one can only create the conditions for it to occur. This perspective is true for student learning and adult learning. Thus, any understanding of the development and presence of collective efficacy has to take into account those conditions, including those of the studied school and the system in which it resides, in this case Skyview Elementary School within the Vista School District[3]. This study did not intend to further develop the construct of collective efficacy as a phenomenon or its link to student performance, both of which were well documented (Elmore & Forman, 2011; Goddard, 2001; Goddard & Goddard, 2001; Goddard et al., 2004). Very relevant to this study, however, are the organizational processes through which sources of efficacy may develop. Peer observation, the particular protocol that drove this investigation, sits within a set of organizational practices that are theorized to develop the inputs that lead to collective efficacy (Elmore & Forman, 2011). A qualitative systems-oriented investigation was thus essential to embrace the contextual complexity (Snowden, 2007) of schools as learning organizations that live within political, human, and emotional systems. In fact, Goddard, Hoy, and

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[3] The school and school district have been given pseudonyms to protect their confidentiality.

Woolfolk's (2000) claim that "collective teacher efficacy is an emergent group-level attribute, the product of the interactive dynamics of the group members… [and that] … this emergent property is more than the sum of the individual attributes" (p. 482) draws on systems science and concepts of emergent properties (Ackoff, 2007; Meadows, 2008; Gharajedachi, 1999; Holladay, Patterson & Eoyang, 2013; Sargut & McGrath, 2011; Senge, 2006; Thackara, 2005; Zohar, 1997).   The integrity of this study demanded a systems perspective.

Throughout my research, I used a theoretical framework articulated by Elmore and Forman (2011).   In their articulated theory of action around internal coherence, Elmore and Forman (2011) suggested certain leadership practices and organizational processes as essential contributors to collective efficacy. They imply, through the provision of teamwork, social capital as a preliminary step to efficacy development. Elmore and Forman's model also named a number of potential variables to consider in relation to collective efficacy that may be reference points to help explain why collective efficacy might develop through peer observation. These variables are reviewed in Chapter 2, examined in relation to collective efficacy development, and ultimately considered in relation to the practice of peer observation.

Study Significance

I found the quote that frames this chapter, "We can, because we think we can" (Virgil, n.d.), on a bulletin board display at Skyview Elementary School, the site of this study and a place of hope to almost 600 students of color, 90% of whom came from households of poverty. The teachers in this school seem to inherently realize the importance of efficacy for themselves, as individuals, for them collectively as a staff, and,

as importantly, for their students. This school resides in a district that appears to recognize the need for social capital and the power of each other in *we can*. Yet structures to promote collective efficacy and the delicate balances of accountability, psychological safety, and adult learning practices that truly transfer agency rarely show up in policy initiatives. I have observed that as a system we are inherently lousy at learning from within and putting research into practice. It is time to shine the light on practices that make a difference for students and for their teachers. I have yet to encounter a school in which teachers did not want the explicit and implicit support of their colleagues in the incredibly complex work they have undertaken.

Teachers today are being asked to reach outcomes never before met, with the highest stakes we have ever experienced for students, their futures, and our society at large. Enhancing this curious and emergent phenomenon of collective efficacy thus has significant implications. And if strategies to enhance collective efficacy are somehow able to connect the shorter term objectives of student achievement to the deeper issues of societal inequities, violence, and destruction, I believe positive outcomes to be likely even if an awareness of these larger ideas is all that exists and the targeted program goals ignore them. To the extent that this study, in process or results, acknowledged or brought to mind such awareness in itself portends significance.

Overview of Remaining Chapters

Chapter 2 reviews the literature base that informs this study, especially calling out specific gaps in the literature that this dissertation intended to address. I describe how efficacy is believed to evolve, how it has been historically measured, and the types of organizational and leadership processed thought to contribute to its development. I refer

to references relating to understudied areas in educational research that are relevant to

this study, in particular leadership and the strategic use of authority; the intersections of

psychological safety and accountability, and adult learning systems, including the need to

develop expert and self-authorizing adult learners. The chapter concludes with an

examination of literature relating to peer observation as a collaborative process and show

how this relates to my project.

Chapter 3 discusses the qualitative methods used for this study: narrative inquiry

and action research. I describe the study's setting, a rural elementary school that serves a

predominately minority population in an impoverished community. The chapter details

the particular peer observation process in which the teachers participated and its

foundations. It reviews the selection criteria for participant interviews, the invitation

process, and summarizes how the data were collected and analyzed. Chapter 3 introduces

the reader to the format in which the data will be presented: narrative stories from each

of the teachers introduced in Chapter 1 and a grand narrative that describes the system in

which these teachers work.

Chapter 4 presents this grand narrative to re-introduce the teacher participants

in the context of a typical day. This narrative provides a balcony view of how teachers

and administrators actually go about their jobs as they experience authority,

accountability, professional development, and peer observation. In it, I detail the actions

and attitudes of the superintendent and his assistant superintendent for instruction, how

they think of their roles in leading this school district, and what they actually do to live

out those roles. Readers will also meet the teachers' principal and assistant principal, and

note the presence of two external consultants to support math and literacy to learn the

roles they play in the district's learning system. Although this was constructed as a hypothetical day, all of these activities do occur, often on the same day, and it is not a stretch to realize that the day, in fact, is quite typical. I intend to leave the reader curious about how these five teachers – Michelle, Joe, Steve, Sandra, and Erin – really feel about the system in which they teach and, particularly, their experience with peer observation. The grand narrative is followed by an initial discussion of the data it contains to consider aspects of the system relevant to my research questions.

Chapters 5 through 9 tell the back-stories of Michelle, Joe, Steve, Sandra, and Erin and how they experience the system in which they teach. Each chapter is devoted to a single teacher, beginning with their personal narrative to illuminate how these individuals think of themselves as teachers, what inspires them, how and why they respond to challenges the way they do, and the emotions that surfaced as they approached and experienced the peer observation process. I conclude each chapter with a discussion of their story in light of the research questions: what evidence exists that they were able to establish efficacy through this process and how the surrounding system contributed, or detracted, from collective efficacy development.

Chapter 10 considers these stories collectively to illuminate common and contrasting themes among them. I draw evidence from the stories to form some tentative conclusions around whether or not peer observation served as an opportunity to develop collective efficacy and discover some connections with the teachers' presumed adult development levels, a variable discussed more fully in chapters 2 and 3. Chapter 11 does the same with the systems-level data, challenging some of my original hypotheses and

presenting unexpected intersections related to leadership, accountability, and learning

systems, all in explanation of their impact on collective efficacy development.

Finally, Chapter 12 presents some indications and implications of the research,

drawing conclusions while recognizing the limited generalized nature of this study and

suggesting areas for future study. I conclude with some reflection and questions this

study has raised for me around the larger issues associated with educating a marginalized

population for whom academic success represents the highest possible stakes.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Two key constructs are central to this study. The first is collective efficacy: what it is, how it differs from individual efficacy, and what is understood about how it develops. Theorists have suggested that collective efficacy develops as a result of deliberate or accidental actions taking place within an organization (Elmore & Forman, 2011; Mawhinney, Hass, & Wood, 2005). This review utilizes one such theory as an orienting perspective. In Elmore and Forman's (2011) internal coherence framework, described later in this chapter, collective efficacy was theorized as an outcome of leadership practices and particular organizational processes leaders put into place (Strategic Education Research Partnership, 2012).

The second construct considered was peer observation as a practice that extends beyond the specific protocol in use for this study and its situation in the literature around teacher collaboration specifically and, in a broader but critical sense, adult learning. What is understood about adult learning systems that might contribute to collective efficacy and how might peer observation embody those concepts?

Individual efficacy has been the subject of extensive study, as has collective efficacy although to a lesser extent (Bandura, 1977, 1982, 1986, 1994; Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2000; Goddard, 2001; Goddard & Goddard, 2001; Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2004; Tschannen-Moran, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001; Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). Educational leadership and organizational effectiveness, too, have been thoroughly investigated and there is little dissent on best practices (Elmore, 2000; Elmore & Forman, 2011; DuFour, 2002; Fullan, 2001; Schmoker, 2006;

Sergiovanni, 2000). Research linking leadership behaviors and organizational processes

to collective efficacy, however, is a more recent interest and has been less focused on

qualitative aspects of organizational systems and their impact on collective efficacy than

with defining efficacy and arguing its value.

This study did not attempt to prove or disprove Elmore and Forman's (2011)

framework on organizational coherence. It did seek, however, to qualitatively illuminate

particular aspects of leadership and organizational process that have received little

attention in the literature around efficacy development. Specifically, this study shows

how adult learning is considered and practiced, the intersection of psychological safety

and accountability in an educational setting, and the strategic use of authority within the

framing of leadership as influences on a cross-role collaborative activity – peer

observation – in the study school and the surrounding district. It is also important to note

that Elmore and Forman's (2011) framework is a school-level construct. A systems

perspective recognizes that schools exist in relationship to larger systems. I argue that the

processes and behaviors of adults within a school cannot be understood without a district,

or systems, perspective and consideration of these essential relationships.

The purpose of this literature review is to reveal unexamined concepts, or gaps, in

the literature base that informed this study, specifically relevant aspects of collective

efficacy, what is known about its development, and its relationship to the deeper

unaddressed goals for education that ultimately act in service or erosion of a sustainable

society. Each topic is discussed below with an explanation of its relevance to this study

and how the study intended to address the gaps I argue are critical to answering the

question of how and why peer observation contributes to the development of collective efficacy.

<div align="center">**Efficacy Theories and Measurement**</div>

Individual Efficacy

Collective teacher efficacy has its roots in individual teacher efficacy, defined as "the extent to which a teacher believes he or she has the capacity to affect student performance" (Berman, McLaughlin, Bass, Pauly, & Zellman, 1977, p. 137). Individual efficacy has been heavily examined since Rotter (1966) published his conceptions of efficacy through the lens of social learning theory. He found that an individual's beliefs about whether success "is dependent upon their own behavior or is controlled by external forces" (p. 25) was a consistent trait within individuals. This locus of control theory became the basis for the first attempts to measure efficacy by the RAND Corporation through such questions as, "When it comes right down to it, a teacher really can't do much because most of a student's motivation and performance depends on his or her home environment" (RAND measure; Armor et al, 1976). Others followed with numerous iterations and attempts to quantify efficacy (Rose & Medway, 1981; Guskey, 1988; Ashton, Olejnik, Crocker, & McAuliffe, 1982) but still holding to Rotter's (1966) framing of efficacy through one's beliefs about locus of control and predictive behavior as a result of those beliefs.

Rotter's theory and the resulting efforts to quantify degrees of efficacy and its effects provided a landmark idea that a teacher's perceptions about whether he or she was or was not in control could impact student behavior and learning. A decade later Bandura (1977) added to Rotter's social learning theory, proposing efficacy as a social cognitive

function and relating it to a teacher's belief in his or her capacity to achieve a particular outcome. This nuance is important as it relates to a teacher's willingness to engage in professional learning to enable particular outcomes through his or her increased capacity as a teacher. Of particular relevance to this study, situated in a high poverty community in a school district of historically low performing students, is the idea that teachers might be more successful with students if they increase their own effectiveness in the classroom, rather than rely on the intellectual capital students derive from out-of-school sources. The belief that the ability to teach one's students is within one's control and that one has, or can acquire, the capacity to do so, goes hand in hand with persistence, a willingness to teach challenging students who may come to a classroom with significant skill deficits. Did the peer observation process that oriented this research, intended to increase teacher capacity, also increase the level of collective efficacy and cause teachers to persist in their efforts to teach what by most would be considered to be an extremely challenging population?

Over decades of research around efficacy, Bandura consistently agued that efficacy derives from four sources: (a) mastery experience, (b) vicarious experience, (c) verbal persuasion, and (d) physiological and emotional states (1977, 1982, 1986, 1993, 1997). These four sources of efficacy contribute to a teacher's sense of agency, but it is the convening of these sources in a sense-making function, or cognitive process, that results in an individual's assessment of one's *personal teaching competence in the context of the teaching task itself*. Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, and Hoy (1998) explained,

> In making judgments about efficacy, teachers must assess what will be required of them in the anticipated teaching situation; this is what we have called the analysis of the teaching task. The analysis produces inferences about the difficulty of the task and what it would take for a person to be successful in this context. (p. 231)

Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) claimed the phenomenon of efficacy to be reinforcing, where student performance indicators are examined as outcomes of efficacious behaviors (e.g., persistence, goals for students, scaffolding, etc.) and become new sources of efficacy information, creating a cyclical system of experiences and beliefs shown in Figure 1 (p. 228).
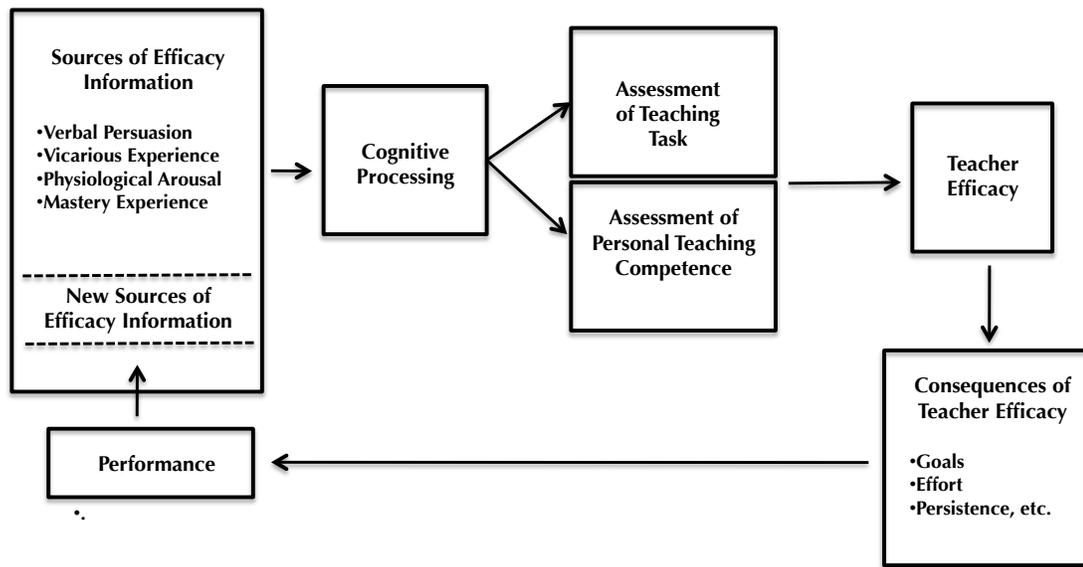
Figure 1. The cyclical nature of efficacy and its sources.

Collective Efficacy

Researchers began to wonder about a productive role of peer pressure, social capital, and the idea of efficacious *schools* as far back as 1982 when Bandura (1982) argued for a thorough analysis of the effects of collective efficacy. It was not until the early part of this century, however, that researchers began to empirically examine the phenomena of collective efficacy and develop corresponding measures (Goddard et al., 2000; Goddard, 2001; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). They determined that

it is the element of cognitive processing, where teachers assess their colleagues'

competence in relation to the teaching task at hand and form efficacy beliefs based on

that determination, that distinguishes individual from collective efficacy. Rather than

assessing one's own capacity, collective efficacy involves the assessment of one's peers

to build a group-level confidence in the faculty's capacity as a whole (Goddard et al., 2000).

This construct, the sources of collective efficacy and the subsequent determination of

group-level competence, became foundational to this study as I examined whether or not the

peer observation process itself provided opportunity for teachers to experience any or all of

the sources and/or for any reflective processing relevant to efficacy formation to happen. This

goal necessitated a qualitative approach, which set this study apart from many other studies of

individual *or* collective teacher efficacy.

Efficacy Measurement

When Goddard et al. (2000) set out to measure collective efficacy, they made a

determination to measure a group orientation to collective efficacy rather than through

individual responses that indicated efficacy (e.g., "I am able…. versus teachers in this school

are able"). They adapted and tested a Likert-style assessment of individual teacher

efficacy developed by Gibson and Dembo (1984). In essence, they substituted "we or they"

perception for "individual" perception in Gibson and Dembo's survey, for example, "a

Gibson and Dembo item such as 'I can reach a difficult student,' was restated to assess

collective efficacy as follows, 'Teachers in this school can reach a difficult

student'" (Goddard et al., 2000, p. 487). Their final 21-item survey questions are included

here as Figure 2 to illustrate the kinds of questions found to elicit evidence of the presence of

collective efficacy.

Item

1. If a child doesn't learn something the first time teachers will try another way.
2. Teachers in this school are skilled in various methods of teaching.
3. Teachers here are well prepared to teach the subjects they are assigned to teach.
4. Teachers in this school really believe every child can learn.
5. If a child doesn't want to learn teachers here give up.
6. Teachers here fail to reach some students because of poor teaching methods.
7. Teachers here don't have the skills needed to produce meaningful student learning.
8. Teachers in this school have what it takes to get the children to learn.
9. Teachers in this school are able to get through to difficult students.
10. Teachers here are confident they will be able to motivate their students.
11. The lack of instructional materials and supplies makes teaching very difficult.
12. Teachers in this school do not have the skills to deal with student disciplinary problems.
13. Teachers in this school think there are some students that no one can reach.
14. The quality of school facilities here really facilitates the teaching and learning process.
15. Homelife provides so many advantages they are bound to learn.
16. These students come to school ready to learn.
17. Drug and alcohol abuse in the community make learning difficult for students here.
18. The opportunities in this community help ensure that these students will learn.
19. Students here just aren't motivated to learn.
20. Learning is more difficult at this school because students are worried about their safety.
21. Teachers here need more training to know how to deal with these students.

Figure 2. Collective Efficacy Scale questions (Goddard et al., 2000).

      Other quantitative measures of collective efficacy utilized Goddard's Collective Efficacy Scale or iterations (Adams & Forsyth, 2006; Kiest & Patras, 2013; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001; Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). Whiteoak, Chalip, and Hort (2004) tried and compared a variety of quantitative measurement methods in a single study, finding little difference in consistency or outcome. Moolenaar et al.'s (2011) study that linked collective efficacy to teacher networks is relevant to this study of peer observation and collective efficacy in that it examined the role of collaboration on efficacy development, but it, too, employed quantitative methodology.

In all, qualitative research of collective efficacy development is scarce in relation to quantitative studies. Prior to Goddard's scale development, Gibson, Randel, and Earley (2000) compared group efficacy assessment methods and found that group discussion provided richer data on group efficacy than survey measures, although it is important to note that these data were based on external researcher determination, rather than perceptions of the group members themselves; the measures determined the level of efficacy that occurred while observing group discussion around a specific task. Soisson's (2013) mixed-method study of teacher and principal collective efficacy in middle school began to address school-based practices that contribute to efficacy. Her findings were inconclusive in terms of efficacy patterns among teachers and pointed only to the existence of collaborative opportunity as important to teachers, rather than identifying qualitative aspects of that collaboration that contributed to efficacy.

This study did not attempt to duplicate the extensive research base on efficacy and collective efficacy, but as a qualitative study it addresses the under-examined aspects of efficacy development that Soisson's (2013) study, as an example, failed to uncover. These aspects, namely the personal nature of experiences, e.g., sources of efficacy that may be derived through the process of peer observation can, to date, only be inferred through quantitative data. By examining the lived experiences of teachers in the context of their classrooms and in interaction of their peers, this study illuminates how teachers may actually, personally and collectively, construct confidence in the capacity of their peers.

It is also notable that the literature on individual and collective efficacy tends to predate current educational mandates and trends, such as rigorous learning standards that

transcend state boundaries, e.g., Common Core State Standards, and a propensity for states to adopt and mandate frameworks that represents instructional quality, often as a part of a more rigorous teacher evaluation system. These systems level influences are among the many organizational facets that may contribute to or inhibit collective efficacy development and, indeed, I found attention to these mandates to be significant to my findings.

Creating Collective Efficacy

> It's extremely hard to create collective efficacy and knowing that it works doesn't help. (R. J. Elmore, personal conversation, 2012)

Understanding individual and collective efficacy to the point of actualization was important to this study's findings. The findings were dependent upon recognizing the sources of collective efficacy and determining whether and where they were realized through the peer observation process. I also needed to determine if these sources actually contributed to some level of collective efficacy. As noted in Chapter 1, this study did not intend to further develop the construct of collective efficacy as a phenomenon or its link to student performance, but instead was designed to examine whether and how peer observation, as an organizational process, was an opportunity for the inputs that lead to collective efficacy (Elmore & Forman, 2011). Over the past two decades, a number of organizational elements have been found to significantly influence efficacy development, including school climate, decision-making structures, principal leadership, and the school community (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993; Lee, Dedick & Skyview, 1991; Moore & Esselman, 1992; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007). This study, however, utilized a more recent construct to examine organizational influences on collective efficacy development, presented below.

Orienting Framework

Elmore and Forman (2011) theorize that collective efficacy originates with leaders who put into place organizational processes that result in efficacious belief systems. Depicted in their internal coherence framework, shown as Figure 3, they articulated leadership practices that model public learning, develop teamship, promote risk-taking, and support instruction through professional learning. Elmore and Forman
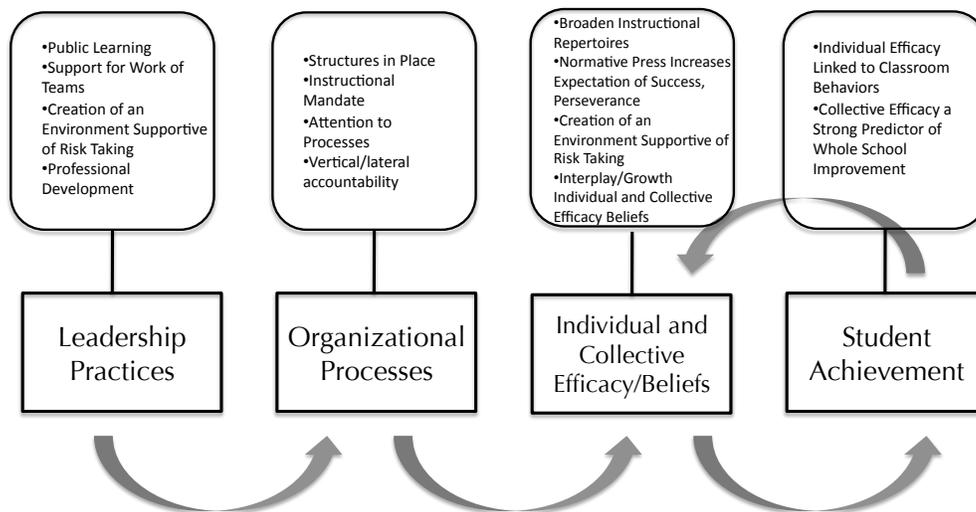
Figure 3: Internal coherence framework (Elmore & Forman, 2011).

suggested that contributing organizational processes include lateral and vertical accountability with a delineated instructional mandate. They claimed that it is the interplay of these practices and processes that culminates in an instructional system that enables both individual and collective efficacy; these experiences may challenge or build upon existing beliefs, successes, and ensuing expectations. Within this framework, three areas are reviewed in detail here as they illustrate gaps in the literature: leadership and the strategic use of authority, the intersection of accountability and psychological safety,

and systems of adult learning that develop expert learners. Other organizational

processes, such as structures and systems for collaboration, are considered in a discussion

of peer observation. Figure 4 shows the intersection of these influences, their relationship

to peer observation and, potentially, collective efficacy. It also illustrates assumed

influences among these areas, for example, how might strategic authority impact the

levels of psychological safety among teachers? Or, how does a learning system affect

teachers' individual and collective sense of accountability and is that accountability to

each other, to authority, or both? And how do these influence teachers' experiences with

peer observation? Each of these factors is discussed below within the broader context of

relevant research.
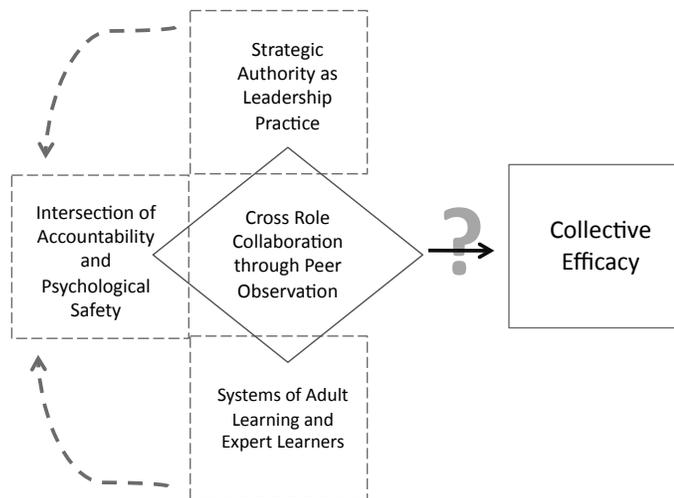
Figure 4. Intersection of examined organizational influences on cross-role peer observation

Leadership and Authority

Wheatley (2005) folds her beliefs about leadership into the complexity of

organizations as systems, but notes that

> most schools systems aren't systems. They are only boundary lines drawn by
> somebody, somewhere. They are not systems because they do not arise from a
> core of shared beliefs about the purpose of public education. In the absence of
> shared beliefs and desires, people are not motivated to seek out one another and
> develop relationships. Instead they inhabit the same organizational and
> community space without weaving together mutually sustaining relationships.
> They coexist by defining clear boundaries, creating respectful and disrespectful
> distances, developing self-protective behaviors, and using power politics to get
> what they want. (p.103)

Wheatley claimed the potential of organizations to be self-organizing systems, able to

thrive and adapt nimbly to changes in the external environment, if three core principles

are developed and nurtured: (a) a living identity that shows itself through interpretation

and decisions, (b) abundant information that becomes the intelligence of the system, and

(c) relationships that enable the organization's intelligence to be accessed so that the

system ultimately is able to learn from itself. With this perspective it is not surprising

then that Wheatley's optimal leader is one who has, and demonstrates, an unwavering

belief in the capacity of those they intend to lead, engaging people's intelligence and

values toward reflective action that is responsive, not reactive. She described these

leaders as able to withstand the temptation to act with "imposition" and to "tinker with

the incentives, reshuffle the pieces, change a part, or retrain a group" (p. 66). She is not

alone.

The literature around leadership in general and educational leadership specifically

is replete with descriptions that de-emphasize the use of authority in favor of more

collaborative and adaptive strategies that build ownership and capacity among

stakeholders (Cashman, 2008; Fullan, 2001; Gardner, 1995; Heiftez, 1998; Heifetz &

Linsky, 2002; Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009; Kouzes & Posner, 1995; Sergiovanni,

2000; Shein, 2013; Wagner et al., 2006; Wheatley, 2005, 2006). Wheatley's systems

principles are important to this study in that the qualitative aspects of collective efficacy

development will be viewed within nested systems: the teachers in relationship to their

school, the school in relationship to its district, and the district in relationship to its

external environment. These relationships were explored and analyzed in this study.

   Adaptive Leadership. Of particular relevance to leading complex social systems

are the practices of adaptive leadership (Heiftez, 1998; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002; Heifetz

et al., 2009). Adaptive leadership practice includes finding ways to gain perspective on

the myriad of day-to-day occurrences within an organization, applying a systems lens to

inform leadership moves. This lens complements systems scientists who maintain that

essential patterns of behavior, structures, and beliefs systems are often hidden below the

surface of a particular event or challenge, but become essential to see in order to

overcome barriers to successful outcomes (Ackoff, 2007; Meadows, 2008; Gharajedaghi,

1999; Holladay, Patterson & Eoyang, 2013; Sargut & McGrath, 2011; Senge, 2006;

Thackara, 2005). Leaders, as key contributors to the systems they lead (Collins, 2001),

must have an ability to step on the balcony (Heiftez & Linsky, 2002) and view the system

as a whole. Without this perspective, leaders may be unable to see how their own

contributions can aid or preclude progress. Sargut and McGrath (2011) likened this to

"inattentional blindness," where one's concentration on a task precludes the ability to

notice even "dramatic events going on around them" (p. 5). In the study school, the

principal participated in the peer observation process. Thus an examination of how the

leaders are able to participate as partners in a peer learning process while still maintaining

a systems-level lens illustrates how leadership behaviors interplay with teachers' experiences in peer observation and influence some of the key organizational processes.

Another element of adaptive leadership particularly relevant to this study is the distinction between adaptive and technical challenges as they relate to the use of authority in schools and concepts of adult learning. Technical challenges are defined as those for which there is a known solution and for which the use of authority and authority's expertise is appropriate. Adaptive challenges, on the other hand, require the involvement of those impacted by the challenge itself, thereby necessitating the need to develop collective intelligence, or internal expertise (Heiftez, 1998; Heifetz & Linsky; 2002; Heifetz et al., 2009). Adaptive challenges necessitate learning: by the leader, by the followers, and by the system itself. This kind of learning relates tightly to Elmore and Forman's assertion that leadership practices that lead to collective efficacy involve public learning. The development of teacher leadership falls into this category and was found to have positive correlation to collective efficacy (Angelle, Nixon, Norton, & Niles, 2011). Thus adaptive leadership might be expected to be present in schools where collective efficacy develops.

Heifetz et al. claim, however, that one of the biggest missteps leaders make is to treat adaptive challenges with authority (Heiftez, 1998; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002; Heifetz et al., 2009). They specifically downgrade the role of positional authority in complex systems. Sergiovanni (2000) suggested that "ideas and commitments function as the source of authority for what people do" and that authentic authority is something people create together (p. vii). In classrooms, the term "moral authority" is used to describe the outcome of a strong teacher-student relationship, where a student will work hard for a

teacher who has earned the right to deliver that challenge (Karschney, 2012). Authority

that is productive in social systems, then, becomes relationship-based and presupposes

structures that enable that development. Yet schools, as structurally atomized institutions,

have historically weakened incentives toward collaboration (Elmore, 2007). Leadership

that supports teamwork and public learning may involve some level of formal authority

to establish and drive the very processes that ultimately become shared and distributed.

In "Leadership as Conversation" (Rasmussen, 2011) I note that

> When I first began coaching education leaders, my biggest challenge was just
> getting them to use their authority. Coming off two decades of site-based
> management where facilitative leadership was in vogue, I found leaders at all
> levels who were reluctant to make decisions. (para. 6)

I further argue that

> Adaptive leadership requires conversation, specifically a dialogue focused on
> mutual understanding, that, in the best of circumstances, enables mutual learning
> and collective commitment. The trick is knowing which conversations need to
> happen with which stakeholders and when. Leaders in positions of authority have
> a tremendous advantage for making this happen if they use their authority
> strategically. (para. 5)

What is absent from Elmore and Forman's framework and scarce in the literature

is the use of authority as a strategic function of leadership and organizational process.

The scant mention of authority in the literature is somewhat surprising. When it is

mentioned, it is generally to distinguish acts of leadership that mobilize followers from a

leader's use of position to make decisions. Heifetz carefully discriminates between

authority and leadership to illuminate situations where the answers and direction

authority figures provide fail to adequately address challenges that are adaptive in nature

(Heiftez, 1995, 1998, 2011; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002; Heifetz et al., 2009). He concedes,

however, that authority ultimately has a role "as an important backbone of any social

structure with many virtues for any community" that is enabled by the fulfillment of the trust expected of that individual (Heifetz, 2011, p. 2). There have been a few other studies that cite the possible value of authority in social systems. For example, Eglene, Dawes, and Schneider (2007) also found that authority could be a productive component in their study of public sector knowledge networks, particularly in fostering participation and communication patterns. In "A Tapestry of Inquiry and Action" (Rasmussen & Karschney, 2012), I describe how positional leaders model vulnerability through nested cycles of inquiry, where leaders at each level of the system publicly commit to a theory of action around their leadership role in the learning process and share the data they collect around their successes and failures. In "Wrestling with Data" (Rasmussen, 2012) I document the journey of a mixed-role network where teachers and their supervisors adopt a mutual learning stance to clinically examine characteristics of student engagement. In both examples, I illustrate the strategic use of authority as a leverage point to building psychological safety, an essential first step toward collaborative capacity (Edmonson, 1999).

Studies related to leadership and efficacy also point to the use of authority in buffering and protection, and the provision of resources (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993; Lee, Dedick, & Skyview, 1991; Hipp & Bredeson, 1995). In a study that examined how varied leadership styles affected organizational culture, Goleman (2000) found that authoritative leadership, as compared with five other styles – coercive, democratic, affiliative, pacesetting, coaching – had the most positive effect on organizational climate (p. 5). Although Goleman cautioned that no style should be used exclusively, he noted that organizations led by authoritative leaders enable people "to innovate, experiment, and take calculated risks" (p. 7).

All of this is to say that the literature on the strategic use of authority in leading complex systems is, at best, mixed. There is enough, however, to suggest that the strategic use of authority *may* be used to create psychological safety. The literature has also raised questions about how position can be used to advantage in the development of collective efficacy. This study responds to the need for more investigation into how teachers experience positional authority in the context of peer observation. Did the psychological safety required to learn collectivity occur spontaneously or was the careful orchestration of strategic authority a necessary element? How did the presence of authority develop or regress feelings of psychological safety in the peer observation process? These contextual questions were critical to understanding the relationship of peer observation to collective efficacy development.

Psychological Safety and Accountability

Psychological safety as a component of culture, or climate, is necessary for individual or organizational growth and development, denoting the security of an individual or team to take risks (Edmonson, 1999, 2008; Higgins, Ishimaru, Holcombe, & Fowler, 2011). Team psychological safety "alleviates excessive concern about others' reactions to actions that have the potential for embarrassment or threat, which learning behaviors often have" (Edmonson, 1999, p. 355). One might presume that such safety would be a prerequisite to having one's peers watch the vulnerable act of teaching and any authentic conversation that follows. Edmonson (1999) found that this sense of safety is tacit and that the presence of an explicit group norm around safety or risk taking is unrelated to whether or not it actually exists within a group (p. 354). She further noted that the leader plays a distinct role in creating psychological safety by modeling learning

and personal risk-taking versus acting in "punitive ways" (p. 356). In the first empirical study of the relationship of psychological safety, experimentation, and leadership to organizational learning, Higgins et al. (2011) found strong correlations but no definitive answers on whether these factors were a precondition of organizational learning or whether they were derived through its presence:

> The second-order factor of organizational learning predicts levels of psychological safety, experimentation, and leadership that reinforces learning. In other words, in schools with strong organizational learning cultures, teachers are more likely to report higher levels of psychological safety, experimentation, and leadership that reinforces learning. (p. 87)

Edmonson (2008) compared "efficient execution" to that which enables organizational learning in much the same way as Heifetz compared technical to adaptive work, where leaders provide answers or engage employees in problem solving and discovery, admonishing the need for leaders to "first, make it safe" (pp. 4-5). She explains,

> Psychological safety is not about being nice—or about lowering performance standards. Quite the opposite: It's about recognizing that high performance *requires* the openness, flexibility, and interdependence that can develop only in a psychologically safe environment, especially when the situation is changing or complex. Psychological safety makes it possible to give tough feedback and have difficult conversations—which demand trust and respect—without the need to tiptoe around the truth. (p. 6)

Edmonson (2008) also argues for the presence of accountability, however, and that when both are present, high performance results. As shown in Figure 5 below, when psychological safety is high and accountability is low, performance tends to lag and become complacent; it erodes to apathy when psychological safety is removed from the equation. Alternatively, when psychological safety is low and accountability is high, organizational cultures are likely to be characterized by anxiety and low levels of teamwork.

Psychological Safety and Accountability

High | *Comfort Zone* | *High Performance & Teamwork*

Psychological Safety

Low | *Apathy & Politics* | *Anxiety & Low Teamwork*

Low | **Accountability** | High
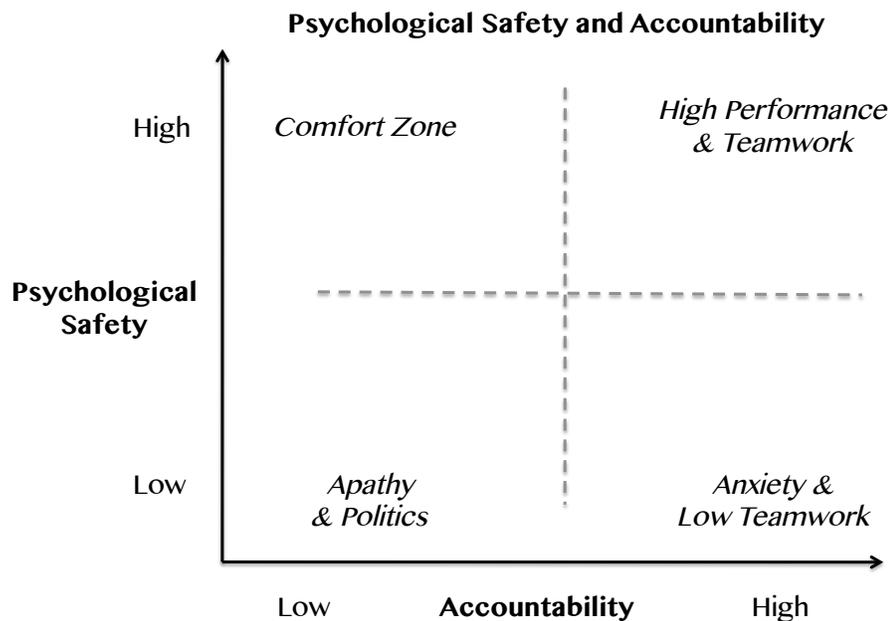
Figure 5. The relationship of accountability to psychological safety in organizational performance (Edmonson, 2008).

Thus the presence of accountability and psychological safety in tandem becomes an important organizational element to consider in this study. What was expected of teachers and what did they expect of themselves? To what did they feel, or were held, accountable, and by whom? Where did accountability and psychological safety show themselves as teachers described their experiences with peer observation?

Whereas most accountability systems denote the presence of teacher evaluation or state testing, what I label formal accountability, another aspect relevant to this study was the presence of informal vertical accountability. By informal vertical accountability I mean the everyday actions of administrators who employ what Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Education Director Vicki Phillips terms "gentle pressure, relentlessly applied" (V. Phillips, personal communication, 2005). As an example, administrators

might establish expectations that teachers will try new strategies they have learned through formal professional development sessions and follow up that directive by visiting classrooms and offering support as teachers attempt to implement new practices. Teachers in schools with these types of leaders might say they were "volun-told" to try something new in the classroom or with their colleagues (J. Lind, personal communication, 2012). In "Beyond the Core" (Rasmussen, 2014a), I describe a phenomenon I label "professional press" where teachers experience the same type of rigorous learning they are asked to expect of their students. Of relevance to this study are ways in which positional authority influenced teacher participation in peer observation, the relationship of that authority to teachers' feelings of psychological safety, and the impact of any "professional press" to how teachers experienced peer observation.

Also relevant to this study are findings around any lateral accountability systems and how they might be demonstrated in peer observation. In a recent analysis of school-based peer observation practices Teitel (2013) found an evolving lateral accountability among teachers engaged in authentic inquiry into their practice. Wenger (2009) claims, "producing knowledge that is livable in the experience of practice entails a different accountability than traditional research-based knowledge" (p. 3). He articulated two types of accountability to consider in social learning spaces: accountability to one's practice as the curriculum for one's learning and accountability to one's identity that embraces the mission of most teachers to change the lives of their students for the better. Wenger's claims establish an arena in which to consider how teachers experience lateral accountability through peer observation and, as well, in other collaborative structures that define the system in which they practice.

Peer-based lateral accountability and its interplay with any informal vertical accountability systems may relate to high levels of psychological safety and could place a school's climate into the upper right-hand quadrant of Edmonson's (2008) psychological safety-accountability grid (Figure 5). These connections are virtually absent from the literature and underexamined in peer observation, suggesting the need for clearer definition on how school or district leadership can promote or hinder the type of accountability that leads to collective efficacy. I posit that in psychologically safe environments that incorporate lateral and vertical internal accountability systems, teachers might be more inclined to take risks in their classrooms and with each other, trying new and perhaps uncomfortable practices that lead to success with students and a resulting "we can do it" attitude.

Trust. Somewhere in an equation that enables high levels of psychological safety and informal accountability is the notion of trust – the trust Heifetz (2011) maintains must be present for authority to be productive. In fact, Bandura (1986) claimed trust to be a key element of the effectiveness of verbal persuasion in developing efficacy. Thus an essential consideration to developing collective efficacy through peer observation becomes trust, making it worth exploring what is understood about trust in schools, how it relates to school climate, and what types of cultures enable high psychological safety and accountability. Wagner et al. (2006) refer to culture as "the invisible but powerful meanings and mindsets held individually and collectively throughout the system" (p. 102). They argue that organizational culture sparks or inhibits momentum toward change and that real improvement occurs in cultures where individuals act through purpose and strategy, with commitment, and in collaboration with others, in contrast to cultures in

which people routinely react to external demands without clear direction, work in isolation from each other, and hold attitudes of compliance. Goddard, Salloum, and Berebitsky. (2009) found a relationship between compliant cultures and low levels of trust.

There are two seminal works on trust in schools that described its elements. Tschannen-Moran's (2004) empirical study of four decades of research on trust uncovered five facets: benevolence, honesty, openness, reliability, and competency. These correlate with the findings from Bryk and Schneider's (2002) study of 12 elementary schools undergoing reform-based restructuring that uncovered the concept of relational trust as "key to advancing improvements" (p.16) in schools. Bryk and Schneider describe the underpinning of relational trust as the expectations and obligations that exist between various roles within a school and the presence of mutual dependencies with related vulnerability. Even within a differentiated power structure, all parties are aware that student success is dependent upon others in the system and forge expectancies of others based on their role in the system. In other words, the basis of trust in schools is "founded on beliefs and observed behaviors" (p. 22) of what that individual should be doing that sets the context for interpreting whether or not that person is worthy of trust. Within that context, Bryk and Schneider call out four elements that are essential to trust in schools: (1) *respect* as evidenced by authentic listening; (2) *competence* that the individual holds the capacity to deliver on assigned roles and responsibilities; (3) a belief that each individual in the relationship holds genuine *personal regard* for the other, and (4) *integrity*: do the actions of the individual align with what they say is important, specifically related to the best interests of children (p. 23-26)? To this latter point, and

specifically relevant to this study, Bryk and Schneider argue

> In the context of schooling, when all is said and done, actions must be understood as about advancing the best interests of children. Teachers demonstrate such integrity to their colleagues when they willingly experiment with new forms of instruction to improve student learning, even though this entails additional work and the risk of failure can be high. (p. 26)

Positioning trust within role expectations is paramount to understanding the dynamics of peer observation, particularly as, in this instance, a differentiated power structure exists within the process. In the studied school, the principal and assistant principal (in the role of instructional coach at that time) participate in the peer observation process. As noted below in this chapter's section on peer observation practices, cross-role participation is discouraged in the literature because of its negative impact on trust and psychological safety. It was thus necessary to learn how the teachers experienced the presence of authority in this process and the thinking behind the decision to include the principal and his assistant. My interviews explored the impact of their presence on trust during peer observation, as well as the nature of other aspects of the teachers' interactions with these authority figures. I also interviewed the principal and assistant principal to (a) determine how the intent of their actions aligned with the ways in which teachers described these complex relationships and (b) gain their perspective on teachers' responses to their presence and the process itself. What did the teachers and principals expect from each other during this process? How did those expectations actually play out during peer observation? What evidence do they offer that suggests teachers felt psychologically safe enough to take risks with each other and in the classroom that are in the best interest of their students?

Adult Learning

> Elmore (n.d.) described a shift in the external environment, one in which
>
> school systems are increasingly evaluated…on whether they add value to the learning of students in classrooms and educators evaluated not on whether they are acting in what they *think* are the best interests of students, but on whether they can demonstrate that students are actually learning what society-at-large expects them to learn. … Trust is now based on the concrete currency of student learning and demonstrated performance. (p. 2)

The shift Elmore notes negates intentions in favor of results, adding increased weight to the component of *competency.* Bryk and Schneider relate to trust and challenging the balance of trust they found a decade ago. Meeting this challenge, Elmore argues, will require "not just a cultural shift, but a shift in knowledge, in what people know how to do and what they have to know how to do in order to get the results." "It becomes," he claims, "a learning challenge" (R. J. Elmore, personal conversation, April 30, 2012). Elmore's assertion that those responsible for educating students are all being asked to do something they do not yet know how to do firmly categorizes this challenge as adaptive. Those responsible for meeting the challenge must learn their way through the work (Heiftez, 1998; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002; Heifetz et al., 2009; Wagner et al., 2006). Such a challenge places extraordinary pressure on organizations to enable learning for adults at every level of the system. Unfortunately, implementing effective systems of adult learning is something schools and their surrounding districts have not done especially well.

If nothing else, peer observation is an opportunity for teachers to learn by putting instructional concepts into practice, from feedback of others, and through personal reflection. The orienting framework for this study (Elmore & Forman, 2011) specifically calls out professional development as function of leadership. I argue that the way in

which professional development typically occurs for teachers will impact how they approach peer observation as a learning practice. For example, if teachers are accustomed to rigorous challenging tasks, they may be more likely to fully engage in a constructivist learning experience such as peer observation. On the other hand, if teachers' adult learning experiences center around procedural or memorization tasks, the ambiguous nature of the peer observation protocol may cause such dissonance that the benefits might be mitigated by emotional distress. In this dissertation I refer to this type of alignment as symmetry and maintain its importance in teachers' learning experiences for reasons noted above, but also in ways that align adult learning with student learning – in theory and in practice. This section describes briefly how schools and districts typically go about developing teacher capacity, often titled professional development, and then considers three concepts I argue are relevant to developing a teacher's ability to effectively address student learning needs and thus experience efficacy: systems that embrace rigorous learning through symmetry, the distinction between novice and expert learners, and stages of adult development.

Professional Development. Abundant research shows that job-embedded and collaborative professional development is critical to the kind of adult learning that will bring about greater levels of teacher effectiveness and student achievement (Goddard, Goddard, & Tschannen-Moran, 2007; Leana, 2011; Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008). Yet despite evidence that traditional workshop-style sessions are neither collaborative nor job-embedded, having little or no effect on teacher practice or student achievement (Bush, 1984; Yoon et. al., 2007), workshops are by far the most prevalent form of professional development in most schools. According to one study, over 90% of teachers

in the United States take part in short workshop-style inservices (Darling-Hammond, Chung Wei, Andree, & Richardson, 2009). Darling-Hammond at al. (2009) claimed that districts provide one-shot workshops instead of sustained, collaborative, and inquiry-based adult learning experiences because they generally lack the capacity and infrastructure for the latter. Too, districts seldom have an explicit theory of adult learning with which to guide professional development and adult learning practices (E. City & R. J. Elmore, personal communication, April 30, 2014). Not only do these types of workshops fail to embody standards for professional learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Learning Forward, n.d.), they fail to transfer agency of the workshop content to teachers so that they are able to implement new practices for students (Elmore, n.d.).

Adult Learning Theory. There are numerous theories of adult learning in use. Often referred to as andragogy, most are distinguished from pedagogy through an emphasis on self-direction and intrinsic motivation through relevant and applicable experiences (Committee on Developments in the Science of Learning with additional material from the Committee on Learning Research and Educational Practice, et al., 2000; Glaser, 2002; Knowles, 1980; Richardson & Tait, 2010; Thakara, 2005; Vella, 2008; Wilson, 2013). Pandragogy, combining a solid core of content with instructional practices that are explicitly purposeful and emphasize learner-centeredness (Buendia & Morales, 2003) is mentioned here because most teacher professional development addresses a distinct body of knowledge teachers are expected to learn and falls within this theoretical framework. This study found the modal professional development system in Vista School District to be consistent with pandragogical theory.

The theory that most closely resembles the peer observation protocol is heutagogy, which emphasizes self-determined learning, yet integrates a systems orientation into the learning process (Hase & Kenyon, 2003, 2007; McAuliffe, Hargreaves, Winter, & Chadwick, 2008). Its principles rely heavily on process (McAuliffe et al., 2008). As a theory, heutagogy "recognizes that people learn when they are ready and that this is most likely to occur quite randomly, chaotically, and in the face of ambiguity and need" (Hase & Kenyon, 2003, p. 3). This theory, notably, distinguishes between *competency*, termed as knowledge and skills, and *capacity* as an attribute that enables one to use "competence in novel situations rather than just the familiar" (Hase & Kenyon, 2007, p. 113). In fact, Hase and Kenyon (2007) contend that "knowledge and skills or competencies can be acquired and even reproduced. But this is not learning at a deeper cognitive level" (p. 112). In the sections below I argue that this type of deeper learning, what Bereiter and Scardamilia (1993) call expert learning, is an essential building block to teacher efficacy, be it individual or collective.

Novice and Expert Learning. What does it mean to be an expert in the learning process and how might peer observation enable such expertise? Bereiter and Scardamilia (1993) describe experts as those who "tackle problems that increase their expertise, whereas non-experts tend to tackle problems for which they do not have to extend themselves" (p. 78). Richardson and Tait (2010) argue that addressing complex situations requires a different level of expertise. In their discussion of conceptual change, Posner et al. (1982) distinguish between rational learning as retention and conceptual learning as inquiry. The learning process and its relationship to the content teachers are required to teach is extraordinarily complex, necessitating deep and conceptual expertise.

The peer observation protocol that orients this study approaches the act of teaching in a spirit of inquiry and problem-solving, pattern notation, and subsequent action; it should support the type of expert learning described by Bereiter and Scardamilia. But peer observation practices in a school take place in the context of a larger system with an established system of adult learning, or professional development, in place. How adult learning is conceived within the school and district (e.g., is there a body of knowledge to be learned and retained or are there practices that become the basis for inquiry and experimentation) and the systems that are subsequently put into place to support that conception, illuminate that system's theories of adult learning, be they tacit or explicit. This was an important framing for my study to determine how teachers approached peer observation, how they experienced the process, and the value they derived from participation.

Symmetry and Rigor. Earlier in this section on adult learning I discussed the importance of alignment, or symmetry, in adult learning systems, arguing that consistency in how adults typically learn will impact how they approach new learning experiences, particularly those that entail risk-taking, such as peer observation. Also relevant to teacher efficacy, and this study, are the standards students are expected to reach; recall that efficacious teachers make judgments about efficacy based on their effectiveness with students, or the teaching task. Curiously, many of the standards for effective professional development that have been in place for more than a decade (Learning Forward, n.d.) mirror the kinds of critical thinking and analysis skills often found in constructivist teaching and now expected of students in a majority of states who must master Common Core State Standards (Council of Chief State School Officers,

2008). Roberts (2012) and Elmore (n.d.) discuss this level of symmetry, where teacher

learning models that expected of students, so that teachers and administrators experience

firsthand the intellectual press and emotional response to that press. This, in turn, enables

them to design and scaffold the rigorous academic tasks students are asked to master.

Roberts (2012) argues that educators should "understand what it's like for students to

struggle with rigorous or cognitively demanding tasks" (p. 103) and admonishes them to

"not ask students to do something you're not willing to do yourself" (p. 113).

Roberts' focus on rigor is particularly important to this dissertation in that the

learning standards for students in this century (such as those articulated in the Common

Core State Standards) are the expectations for which teachers need to feel efficacious.

They require more complex and rigorous instructional strategies than are generally

practiced in most schools or experienced by most teachers (Wagner, 2010). Teachers are

rarely exposed to rigorous learning tasks themselves or, as noted earlier, the theoretical

underpinnings of the desired learning outcome (E. City & R. Elmore, personal

communication, April 30, 2012). They may not have knowledge and skills that extend

beyond the controlled environment of a professional development session to the

classroom where they must adapt generalized strategies to individual students (Rebora,

2008; Tomlinson, 2003; Tomlinson & McTighe, 2006).

Roberts claims that the process of instructional rounds, the process from which

the peer observation protocol that orients this study was derived, is a rigorous learning

experience for educators where they experience the ambiguity of rigorous tasks along

with their associated emotional states. His argument extends the value of symmetry to

the empathic benefits of experiencing rigor. His claim infers that failing to engage

educators in rigorous learning experiences will not adequately build the pedagogical knowledge required of teachers to successfully educate today's very challenging generation of students to the high standards they are now expected to meet. This distinction requires teachers who are experts in the learning process and what Burney (2004) described as the craft knowledge of teaching. Peer observation was not the only professional development practice in which the teachers involved in this study participated. Any consideration of symmetry thus incorporates other adult learning experiences sponsored by the school and district and the extent to which they could be called rigorous.

Adult Development Stages

Another factor I considered in my questions, observations, and analysis relates to stages of adult development and the implications of these stages on adaptive challenges, such as teaching. By having a sense of the varying ways in which my participants related to authority, I was better able to understand reasons behind their responses to being observed, to receiving feedback, and corresponding feelings of competency. Helsing, Kegan, and Lahey (2013) describe two dominant stages of adult development relevant in considering adaptive challenges: (a) the socializing mind, where sources of authority are drawn externally and (b) the self-authorizing mind, where adults are able to draw from a variety of sources and establish the locus of authority (or authorship) within themselves. Although the majority of adults have not reached the stage of self-authorship (Berger, 2012; Helsing, Kegan, & Lahey, 2013; Kegan, 1983, 1998), Helsing, Kegan, and Lahey (2013) argue that leadership demands the capacity to consider alternate perspectives, exercise judgment, and maintain sufficient authorship and efficacy to manage the

uncertainty of adaptive challenges. I argue that this stage of development is also essential for teachers as they approach the increasingly complex task of enabling students to master the high standards now demanded of all students.

It is the latter claim that establishes the relevancy of adult development stages as defined by Kegan (1983, 1998) to collective efficacy development among elementary school teachers and to this study. The research base linking these adult development stages to teacher learning is shallow but I inferred that the capacity for teachers to self-author is critical if they are to successfully address the varying needs of students as demonstrated in Bereiter and Scardamalia's (1993) novice/expert distinction. Curriculum application is one example. In general, curriculum provided to teachers includes a script (detailing how to introduce a topic, time to be spent on academic tasks, etc.), as well as pacing guides that dictate appropriate timing for each unit's progression. A teacher with a socialized mind would be inclined to follow the curriculum precisely, regardless of its impact on students. A self-authored teacher would incorporate his or her knowledge of the students, continually assessing their learning needs, and deviate from the prescribed curriculum where suggested by student responses. A socialized teacher might also exhibit more characteristics of the novice learner as described by Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993), completing tasks as defined by others without considering the next level of learning required to truly understand and address an individual student's needs. Using Bereiter and Scardamalia's definition, expert teachers would be self-authored in that they are drawing from relevant data and exercising independent judgment.

Another example of the relevance of teachers' developmental stages to this study of efficacy relates to the use of instructional frameworks to define effective teaching. The district in which this study takes place utilizes such a framework. A socialized mind

would incorporate directives from an adopted framework, regardless of the impact on students and might explain any deviance to expected results by blaming students or exhibiting a perspective that the learning target cannot be met. In contrast, a self-authored teacher would be more inclined to use instructional frameworks as a guide, creating an intentional repertoire that intersects with student needs and the learning targets. Self-authored teachers might also be less likely to fall prey to belief systems that suggest learning targets are not accessible for some students although it could be argued that a self-authored mind does not predict a particular set of beliefs.

This is where consideration of the teachers' adult development stages intersect with collective efficacy and, specifically, to peer observation. Helsing, Kegan, and Lahey (2013) claim that adults move from socialized to self-authorizing minds through dissonance and experiences that cause "enough frustration and disorientation that we feel the limits of our current ways of thinking" (p. 4). They also claim that some level of efficacy must be present in order for adults to move to the next developmental stage. In their description of conditions that help the socialized mind move toward self-authorship they suggest that adults be asked to "assume responsibilities and make decisions in complex situations without predefined pathways to solutions" and in which other adults are available as resources but not the source of answers (p.13). The protocol for peer observation that orients this study involves processes that are intentionally ambiguous and emotionally challenging as they had no "correct" answer associated with participants' sense-making. Peers were used as resources in a collective interpretation of the observed lesson. As a byproduct of peer observation, I considered any cultural shift among teachers from a tendency to "overconfirm socializing forms of understanding" (p.

18) as they were confronted with ambiguity to a culture that encouraged healthy debate and examination of "differing expert opinions" (p. 18), those of their peers.

Peer Observation

With the influencing elements of leadership, psychological safety and accountability, and adult learning systems established as potential system-level variables, this review now turns to the literature on peer observation itself as a distinct practice of collaborative adult learning and as a process I hypothesized might lead to collective efficacy. The level of collaboration within a school has been linked to higher levels of efficacy (Chester & Beaudin, 1996; Rosenholtz, 1989). Working with one's peers is the heart of collaborative practice and, as a practice, extends beyond the specifics of observation or the protocol utilized in this investigation. Collaboration as an essential element of teacher learning will be examined first in this section, followed by a review of the literature on the specific collaborative practice of peer observation.

Teacher Collaboration

In arguing the value of collaboration, Wagner et al. (2006) cited the motto of a New York City district: "Isolation is the enemy of improvement" (p. 113). Teacher collaboration, the practice of teachers working and learning together, has been well studied. Leana (2011) claims that social capital trumps human capital as the critical leverage point to reforming education and consequential outcomes for students. Her argument is not new to the literature base. More than 20 years earlier Featherstone, Pfeiffer and Smith (1993) "discovered that the relational and emotional aspects of teacher learning are at least as important as the substantive and technical" aspects (Clark & Florio-Ruane, 2001, p. 10). In their extensive documentation of professional

development practices, Lieberman and Miller (2001) cite the importance of professional conversation as a key principle of teacher learning that leads to improving practice. It is, in fact, hard to find an example of best practice that does not detail the need for teachers to learn together (Barth, 2006; Danielson, 2009; Drago-Severson, 2004; Dufour, Eaker, & DuFour, 2005; Sweeney, 2003; Vescio et al., 2008; Zavadasky, 2009). Sergiovanni (1994) describes the inherent human desire for community and suggests that, as a community of learners, teachers are then able to embark on "an adventure not only in learning, but an adventure in shared leadership and authentic relationships" (p. 155). He claims that through collaborative inquiry, teachers create ties that enable them to become a learning community (p. 167). The last decade has brought forth a proliferation of school-based professional learning communities, structures in which teachers, meeting within grade levels or departments, collaboratively determine what students should know and be able to do, how they will know when students have accomplished those skills, and what steps should be taken if they have not (DuFour, Eaker, & DuFour, 2005). In the setting for this study, teachers meet twice each week in grade-level teams to consider the kinds of questions suggested by the professional learning community structure. This established structure for collaboration created an important backdrop to peer observation, which utilized grade-level teams as an organizing structure for the peer observation process as well as its professional learning communities.

Cross-Role Collaboration. Although most of the literature on teacher collaboration involves conversations between teachers, it could be argued that collaboration across roles embodies similar aspects of collaborative learning. In *Wrestling with Data* (Rasmussen, 2012) I describe a mixed-role network of teachers and administrators engaged in collaborative classroom observation and analysis and how in the beginning of their work together they "all walked on eggshells in fear that [their] time together would be mistaken as evaluation" (p. 47). By the end of 3 years together, however, the idea that networks might *not* include mixed roles and the perspective each enabled was inconceivable to them (p. 49). I concluded that "this network's sophistication has come from years of rigorous work between principals and teachers and from a real struggle with ambiguity made possible through the trust they've found in each other as colleagues" (p. 49). Teitel (2013) also described successful school-based rounds networks that include mixed roles, at the district level and within schools. Ross (1992, 1995) found that teachers with high efficacy were more willing to work with an instructional coach and participate in smaller units of collaboration that crossed roles, but excluding the supervisory aspect that may exist in a teacher-principal coaching relationship (Knight, 2009, 2011; West & Staub, 2003). Knight (2011) documented seven principles of partnership between instructional coaches and teachers:

- Equality, where teachers and coaches act as equals;
- Choice, suggesting teachers should select their own coaching goals;
- Voice, enabling teachers to lead the conversation about their practice;
- Reflection, with collective sense-making between the coach and the teacher;
- Dialogue, with active and respectful listening of both parties;

- Praxis, with expectations of application and subsequent reflection; and

- Reciprocity, where both parties are learners in the process (para. 5-21).

Each of these principles are reflected in instructional rounds practices (City, et al., 2009; Teitel, 2013; Roberts, 2012; Rasmussen, 2012; Rasmussen, 2014a) and are explicitly or implicitly a part of the peer observation protocol for this study. What has not been documented, however, is how these elements present themselves in peer observation processes that include the presence of supervisory authority and how that presence impacts the participant teachers' willingness to fully engage in the learning process. It is important to note that the peer observation process for this study included the principal and the school's instructional coach, who later became the assistant principal.

Not all teachers desire to collaborate with others and many acknowledge cultures of competition, resistance to sharing practices, frustration over workload increases caused by the time required for collaboration, and differing belief systems that result in conflict (Achinstein, 2002; Johnson, 2003). As is true in all group dynamics, teachers engaged in collaborative learning need to clarify their purpose for being together, determine roles and negotiate relationships, and consider how they will engage in the learning or task at hand, or make decisions (Bellman & Ryan, 2009; Tisdell & Eisen, 2000). Even the seemingly simple art of conversation involves skills that may be outside of a particular group's capacity without support (Patterson, Grenny, McMillan, & Switzler, 2012; Wheatley, 2002). Vella (2008) emphasized the need for safe and productive relationships to foster collaboration, suggesting that Edmonson's (1999, 2008) concepts of psychological safety might transfer to groups that do not encounter authority but instead rely on the will of their colleagues to adopt and maintain group norms. These studies

served as a relevant backdrop to consider any reluctance reported by teachers as they

describe their experience with peer observation and/or supports that helped to overcome

resistance.

Peer Observation Practices. The need for safety in collaborative work becomes

glaring as we move into the specific practice of peer observation. Barth (2006) observed

that "no practice provokes more apprehension among educators than the prospect of one

of our peers camping out in the back of our classroom for a few hours and watching us

engage in the difficult art of teaching" (p.11). There is often an inherent suspicion

among teachers that any observations are evaluative (Rasmussen, 2012; Sandt, 2012) and

in cases where peer observation has been used in the context of evaluation, it "did not

require or promote critical debate and discussion about teaching" (Bryne, Brown, &

Challen, 2010, p. 225). Showers and Joyce (1996) found positive response from teachers

to peer observation activities, although their protocol stopped short of feedback as they

found that with its provision,

> collaborative activity tends to disintegrate. Peer coaches told us they found
> themselves slipping into "supervisory, evaluative comments" despite their
> intentions to avoid them. Teachers shared with us that they expect "first the good
> news, then the bad" because of their past experiences with clinical supervision,
> and admitted they often pressured their coaches to go beyond technical feedback
> and "give them the real scoop." (pp. 14-15)

Murray and Xin Ma (2009) found, however, that without the depth of discussion enabled

through authentic feedback, the practice of observing one another made no difference on

classroom practice or student achievement and that their conversations "lacked reflection

and rethinking of each other's classroom instructions" (p. 209). They infer that authority

must play a role in the process in order for the process to enable "meaningful

collaborative interactions that promote professional growth" (p. 210). They stopped short

at suggesting the principal participate in the actual observation process, instead suggesting mandates related to increasing content knowledge and other structural supports to the process such as videotaping.

Bryk and Schneider's (2002) work on role expectations in the context of trust becomes relevant here, as the research on peer observation illuminates the complexity of relationships within a school. Sandt (2012) raised the challenges of power relationships in peer observation and the institutionalized expectations of teacher autonomy in creating cultures that nurture collective learning. He claims that "it is the structure of teacher autonomy that does not allow for a systematic and seamless incorporation of peer observation as professional development" (p. 369). He warns of "shallow cooperation" unless peer observation is practiced within a strongly collaborative school culture (p. 370). This concern begs the question of how leadership and authority play a role in creating a collaborative culture as a prerequisite to successful peer observation and what happens when peer observation is mandated. As a principal, Barth (2006) found that his teachers were reluctant to practice peer observation until he modeled himself being observed, an act that broke the logjam that was occurring even when he responded to their issues of time and control and resorted to social pressure and administrative mandate (p. 11).

Sandt's (2012) finding that peer observation needs to be integrated into a larger system of collaboration and adult learning has historical underpinnings. Peer observation, sometimes referred to as peer coaching and dating back to the 1970s, originated through efforts to incorporate knowledge about how people learn into schools and in frustration that most professional development efforts did not lead to changes in

practices (Showers & Joyce, 1996). Showers and Joyce (1996) argued that peer observation is ineffective as a stand-alone activity, but that it must operate in a context of training, implementation, and general school improvement" (p. 12). This finding is consistent with other research that asserts that classroom observations of any sort will not leverage improvement in student performance unless they are part of a collaborative culture *and* clearly linked to improvement strategies (City et al., 2009; Roberts, 2012; Teitel, 2013).

Summary

This study investigates how peer observation contributed to collective efficacy among elementary school teachers and the attributes of the surrounding school and school district to explain its development.   As outlined above, a review of the relevant literature uncovered gaps in the research or critical intersections in a number of areas that supported the need for this study:

- *Peer observation as a particular process* in which teachers' experiences become sources of efficacy and that offers the opportunity to reflect on their collective capacity to meet students' academic learning needs;
- A *qualitative* understanding of how teachers come to experience collective efficacy;
- Organizational attributes of the school or district that influence how teachers experience peer observation and which may impact the development of collective efficacy, including
  - The use of *positional authority* as a leadership practice to foster collective efficacy;

- The intersection of *informal accountability systems with psychological safety* in a school setting;

- The way *adult learning* is conceived and modeled within the larger system, that is, whether teachers are expected to be *experts and self-authored*, and how these expectations influence the way teachers approach and experience peer observation and potentially, efficacy.

- *Cross-role collaboration* embedded into the peer observation process, including the presence of positional authority and any influence on the trust required for teachers to participate authentically in peer observation.

The point of doing peer observation is its capacity to improve student performance through teacher effectiveness. As this study considered the potential of peer observation to provide experiences that result in collective efficacy, Leana's (2011) claim that human capital, or individual teacher effectiveness in the classroom, is less important to student performance than the collective capacity of the staff offers a final point of departure for this study. Her study aligns with others that show collective efficacy as a stronger predictor of student performance than individual efficacy (Elmore & Forman, 2011; Goddard et al., 2000). Yet, her conclusion seemed to imply that students receive direct benefit from social capital rather than from increased teacher expertise (human capital) that comes *as a result* of that school's collective capacity, which may include collective efficacy. In reality, teacher expertise and the ability to establish relationships with students around critical content are the *only* ways to improve student learning (City et al., 2009). Learning is a dynamic process and, as a system, any improvement, or adjustment, requires multiple interventions to address the level and complexity of the

content being studied, the role of the student in the learning process, and, most pertinent to this discussion, the knowledge and skill of the teacher (City et al., 2009; Cohen, Raudenbush, & Ball, 2003; Newmann, Skyview, Allensworth, & Bryk, 2001). The 2002 study noted in the introduction examining the causes of student achievement variability found that that 72% of those differences were present *between classrooms*, as compared to 12% between schools[4] (Rowan et al., 2002).

These findings suggest some clear contradictions in the research and raise questions as to whether the knowledge and skills of each teacher are less relevant to student learning than collegial relationships and school-wide practices. I argue that social capital development must be *in service of* the development of human capital and that without a corresponding impact on teacher expertise, collaboration in any form becomes irrelevant to student learning. While it was not the purpose of this study to prove or disprove the balance of human versus social capital in student performance, it was a relevant context in which to examine how teachers actually experienced peer observation, how it impacted their sense of agency, and their perceptions of their colleagues.

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[4] The remaining factor measured was home effects at 28%.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Research Methods

Narrative Inquiry

The personal nature of teaching and the influence of contextual elements on teachers suggest a qualitative approach to capture and embrace how teachers have experienced peer observation and understand why, if at all, it has promoted collective efficacy. As noted previously, collective efficacy is "the perceptions of teachers in a school that the efforts of the faculty as a whole will have a positive effect on students" (Goddard et al., 2000, p. 480) and the depth of understanding I sought around this topic was possible only by detailing the journeys of individual teachers. The fact that I have never been a teacher, "in their shoes" so to speak, made it all the more imperative for me to grapple with the nuances surrounding each teacher's history, professional situation, and how they experienced peer observation, which I believe critical to uncovering the differences among them and, important to this study, commonalities to explain if and how they became collectively efficacious.

Thus, the structure of my research, including its presentation, is oriented toward narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry uses "experience as expressed in lived and told stories" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 40). As a method, it relies heavily on details revealed through storytelling; these stories become the data to be interpreted, as in any qualitative method, through the researcher's own lived experience. In this study, I also carry with me the external lens of the outside facilitator of the peer observation process, discussed in more detail below. My own observations of the process became a filter

through which the teachers' experiences were interpreted and at times, conflicted with the teachers' recollections. These contradictions, and the deeper questions they raise, are discussed openly in my analysis and my interpretation of the teachers' experiences.

Narrative inquiry, embodying a "three-dimensional inquiry space," provided the framework for this qualitative examination in an illumination of each teacher's personal and social dimensions within the studied situation over time (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 54). Through in-depth interviews I examine how five representative teachers from one school experienced a particular protocol of peer observation and where the process provided them an opportunity to draw upon sources claimed to produce collective efficacy (Bandura, 1997, 1994, 1982; Goddard, Hoy & Woolfolk Hoy, 2004): mastery and vicarious experiences, productive emotional states, verbal persuasion, and peer assessment. I wanted to understand the emotions that surrounded the observation process, how being observed and observing others elicited productive and/or disassociating feelings. The interviews reveal tugs and pressures the participant teachers felt from their peers and from their principal, how it felt to be observed, to take risks, and to try new instructional practices. I asked the teachers to discuss the presence of positional authority and any impact this may have had on their feelings of psychological safety. I asked them to consider the collective analysis component of the peer observation protocol and how that provided an opportunity to analyze their own competency as a teacher and/or that of their peers. Through their stories, I have learned how they believe they have changed as teachers over the period of time they were involved in peer observation, if at all, and any shifts that may have occurred in how they viewed their own competency and that of their peers.

Of particular relevance to understanding any individual teacher's journey to improve his or her practice and impact on students when using narrative inquiry is the concept of personal identity. Gopaldas (2013) claimed that one's personal identity is derived through an intersection of "race, class, and gender in fostering life experiences" (p.90). His concept of intersectionality can be broadened to include a teacher's professional calling, preparation, and the accumulation of experiences that position how a teacher approaches the act of teaching and experiences peer observation. Narrative inquiry embraces these *personal dimensions* of teaching as it considers and presents each interviewed teacher's experience in its entirety and in the context of each teacher's personal identity: how they see themselves as a teacher. This method also examines the *social dimensions* of experience, particularly relevant to collective efficacy, which, as described earlier, adapts the cognitive processing element of Bandura's efficacy construct to the collective as teachers assess faculty competence (Goddard et al., 2000). These latter elements contribute the social aspect of narrative storytelling through the interchange of a teacher's personal experience as he or she consider the capacity of his or her peers.

Narrative inquiry as a method also addresses *the situation*, which, in this study is represented by the process I hypothesized might develop collective efficacy: peer observation. Because I focus this research on a single school, all of the teachers interviewed were involved in the same situation being examined, separated only by their unique histories, professional identities, and cumulative experiences in the classroom. Finally, the *temporal* nature of narrative storytelling recognizes that any development of collective efficacy among a staff is a journey and will take place over time. In this

instance, the teacher vignettes in Chapter 1 represent a demarcation point for this investigation. At the time of my study, each teacher at the study site had experienced 1-2 years of peer observation with a single facilitator and a consistent protocol. While a survey might be able to discern whether or not there had been an adjustment in the level of collective efficacy among the staff across that 2 year period, it was only through the gathering and dissecting of their stories, learning how they have experienced this process, its emotional aspects, and how it shifted perceptions of their peers, that I am able to understand *why* any efficacy development took place.

It is important to note that the presence of efficacy has been found to be context-specific, making narrative inquiry a particularly appropriate method for my study as it captures details through stories that might not be considered relevant until they emerge. For example, several teachers identified areas in which they felt more or less comfortable instructionally and the emotions that surfaced for them when confronted with challenging teaching tasks. In fact, teachers report that their efficacy levels change when teaching different content (Raudenbush, Rowan, & Cheong, 1992; Ross, Cousins, & Gadalla, 1996), suggesting greater challenges for elementary teachers to achieve high levels of efficacy given that in general they are responsible for teaching multiple subjects. As well, teacher efficacy has been found to vary with different groups of students (Raudenbush et al., 1992; Ross et al., 1996), between novice and experienced teachers (Chester & Beaudin, 1996), when working with low achieving students (Yeo, Ang, Chong, Huan, & Quek, 2008); and when using different instructional strategies, specifically contrasting didactic to constructivist instruction (Nie, Tan, Liau, Lau, & Chua, 2013). These findings supported my decision to use narrative inquiry to capture

the experiences of teachers within these types of nuances and the logic of a single site investigation.

Action Research

My study also includes an action research component, due in part to my consulting role with the Vista School District and because of the nature of the peer observation protocol. Action research in education has many iterations and takes many forms, but is most often utilized as a structure to consider a problem, develop a plan, that may or may not include a theory of action, take action, and then reflect on what happened. At the smallest level, it involves teachers doing research into their own practice. In the broadest sense, a community-based strategic planning process could be considered action research as that process generally incorporates those stages (City & Curtis, 2009). Some systems incorporate individual cycles of inquiry toward coherent practice and an inquiry-oriented learning culture that engages all levels of the system (Copland, 2003; Rasmussen & Karschney, 2012). The common thread among these is action by whatever unit of analysis defines the problem being studied, be it teacher, superintendent, school, or district.

In this study, the participants in the peer observation process were, and continue to be, involved in informal action research as individual teachers and as grade-level teams. Indeed, part of the peer observation protocol described below introduces teachers to the idea that they are researchers into their own practice. In this protocol, the teacher being observed determines which aspect of his or her practice would most benefit from observable data, with the collected data intending toward actionable changes in practice.

It is also true that while the study interviews were not formally structured as action research, it is highly likely that future action will occur as a result of this research. In "Leadership as Conversation" (Rasmussen, 2011), I argue that leading change is about "putting the right conversations before the right people at the right time" (para. 2). Open-ended interviews that ask for and cause reflection cannot help but lead to shifts in understanding and, ultimately, behavior. It has been my experience as an executive coach that making one's practices – or changes in practice – explicit, becomes occasion to make successful practices more deliberate in the future. As teachers participated in the interviews, they had the opportunity to reflect on their experiences with peer observation, no doubt experiencing some insights about the value of the process itself to their practice.

On a larger scale, the results of this research will be shared with the leadership of Skyview Elementary School and the Vista School District to consider how its benefits might drive future action related to collective efficacy development or other areas suggested by the research. Although peer observation is supported in all of Vista's schools, the structures in use at Skyview are unique to that building. On both levels, then, the leadership will be able to consider appropriate action to extend the benefits of the process to better support teachers and their students.

And, on the broadest scale, it is possible that this study could promote social change or influence policies or practice, another hallmark of action research (Beaulieu, 2013; Small, 1995), as the investigation suggests that the peer observation process yielded the opportunity to develop collective efficacy. Even though not generalizable, the study results suggest this protocol as a low-resource, high-impact improvement strategy for others to consider.

A Note About My Role

In both narrative inquiry and in my indirect role in action research around peer observation, I was more than a researcher. As the designer and facilitator of this peer observation process, I took this journey with the teachers, the school's leadership, and to some extent, the district's leadership. As noted by Veroff and DiStefano (2002), "the relationship between researcher and the 'subjects' of the research (whether those are the persons who participate in the studies or the questions that shape the inquiry) is most often hidden from view" (p. 1188). As the process facilitator, I am present in several of the teachers' stories and was, in reality, not an agnostic observer as I learned about their experiences. There were a number of references to the peer observation protocol itself and my own visible role as they reconstructed their journeys. At times, I inwardly cheered as I realized that an intended impact had, in fact, been made. There were just as many other instances, however, when I cringed and realized ways in which I might proceed differently in the future – and in fact, have done so. But as the researcher, it was my responsibility to ask questions in ways that would answer the research questions. My subjectivity as researcher presented itself through nuances in how questions were framed and followed, and where each participant then took the interview. And finally, how I ultimately made sense of the data was no doubt influenced by my presence in the process. There were interpretations I was able to make, incidences I recalled and knowledge, at times, that I possessed that was unknown to the research subject. My role in this process no doubt influenced my interpretation of the data events along with my judgment, background, and values. My awareness of the reflexivity of this investigation, particularly in its analysis, is, I hope, critical to the integrity of these findings.

Setting for the Study

This is a single case study of an elementary school in a rural Washington state school district I shall call the Vista School District[5] where I facilitate the peer observation process described below. Vista is well suited for this study in that it primarily serves low-income students of color, many of whom are second-language learners. With challenging demographics such as these, it seems likely that teacher efficacy – the belief that one's agency is adequate to meet the academic needs of one's students – is particularly important to student success and might be equally elusive. Significant too is the district's constructivist instructional philosophy as demonstrated through a decision to implement inquiry-based mathematics and balanced literacy. Constructivism, which asks students to construct their own conceptual schema yet stay within the range of required content (Richardson, 1997), requires complex pedagogical approaches, with high levels of teacher discretion and the capacity to teach in ways that Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993) described as expert.

The Vista School District also has a history of high expectations for its students, evidenced by its early adoption of Common Core State Standards and decision to pilot their accompanying assessments that measure their acquisition before being required to do so by the state of Washington. These high expectations translate into assignments and academic tasks that routinely require students to analyze, synthesize, and apply conceptual understanding of content to be mastered. Vista's commitment to high standards is important to this study in that a distinguishing procedural element of

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[5] To protect the confidentiality of those who so graciously gave their time and perspective to this research, the school, school district, administrators, and teachers were given pseudonyms.

collective efficacy development is the assessment of the competency of one's peers *in relation to* the difficulty of the teaching task, which correlates to what students are being asked to learn (Goddard, Hoy & Woolfolk Hoy, 2004).   While this study is not intended to be generalizable, I believe that examining how collective efficacy might be developed in a school with the at-risk demographic Vista serves *while reaching for high levels of attainment through complex and rigorous academic tasks found in inquiry-based learning*, is particularly relevant to the educational and societal challenges noted in Chapter 1. The implications of this research for high-risk populations, many of which are often recipient of low-level tasks and instructional approaches determined and reinforced through low levels of efficacy, cannot be overstated[6].

This study is informed by the teachers at one elementary school in the Vista School District that I call Skyview Elementary School. Each of these teachers had participated in the peer observation process described below for at least one year at the time the study took place. Also informing the study is Marc Elliott, school principal, Gloria Fuentes, the school's assistant principal, both of whom participated in the process (the latter in the role of instructional coach at the time), Cal Younger, the district

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[6] Common Core State Standards have become the subject of significant controversy over their origin and the potential impact their use will have on student well-being and overall performance. As a consultant to school systems, I am familiar with these standards and the turmoil over their adoption. It seems appropriate here to both recognize these opinions and my orientation to these standards as they relate to this study. This study supposed that the Common Core State Standards themselves represent a level of rigor in their expectations for students. It does not attach any particular curriculum to those standards; curricular resources are a local or state decision. And, as this study did not measure student achievement, the tests that accompany CCSS are also disassociated unless brought up independently and the data relevant to the development of collective efficacy. In the same vein, other external factors, such as linking test results to teacher evaluation systems, often politically associated with CCSS, were not included, nor was any information shared that would make these factors relevant to the research question.

superintendent, and Peg Koenig, the district's assistant superintendent responsible for instructional improvement.

Peer Observation Protocol

The peer observation protocol, attached as Appendix A, that framed this study was derived from the instructional rounds process described in Chapter 1, where all participants are learners (City et al., 2009; Roberts, 2012; Teitel, 2013). In what might be called classroom-based instructional rounds, the teacher being observed, known as the host teacher, determines a focal point for the session's learning (e.g., engagement) and teaches an entire lesson in front of his or her peers. Similar to other iterations of instructional rounds, the observing teachers and administrators are asked to record literal descriptions of what they see and hear related to student and teacher behaviors, or other environmental elements pertinent to the host teacher's identified focal point. The lesson observation is followed by a collaborative data analysis session in which the data are considered and then shared by the observers. The host teacher provides his or her own reflection on the lesson and eventually participates in the collegial data analysis process.

For teachers, observing or being observed by other teachers is significantly different when it takes place in a school other than one's own. It seems that the stakes feel higher to be observed by the teacher in the next classroom, with whom they may share students and where cultural dynamics within a school may challenge existing levels of trust. Thus, the instructional rounds protocol of adhering to descriptive observable data within a very structured analysis process is critical to building sufficient psychological safety among teachers to enable them to fully engage in this learning opportunity. This particular protocol allows the teacher to be in charge of the data by

posing a question of inquiry in a pre-observation briefing that orients the descriptive data

to be collected during the observation. For example, under the broad umbrella of

engagement, a teacher might ask for data around the production of student talk: *When*

students are engaged in group work, are they deepening each other's conceptual

understanding of the content or are they furthering misconceptions? The data collected

may then include scripting of student conversations as they engage in group-work so that

subsequent collective analysis can determine whether or not patterns of student discourse

suggest a response to the host teacher's question of inquiry. The analysis might then be

followed by discussion on ideas for interventions, if suggested by the data, or other

pedagogical directions, again related to the data.

Unlike many consultancy protocols, this process precludes the use of any

adjectives during the debriefing process (i.e., good, great, high, low, etc.). Even affirming

comments are discouraged, the reason being that attaching any judgment robs the learner

of the opportunity for interpretation, a critical component of effective adult learning

(Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993; Committee on Developments in the Science of Learning

with additional material from the Committee on Learning Research and Educational

Practice, et al., 2000; Posner, Strike, Hewson, & Gertzog, 1982; Richardson & Tait,

2010). The group may come to a collective understanding during the analysis process

that a particular pattern of data led to certain student outcomes, or as examples, that

questions could be rated as high or low on a critical thinking scale. Collective evidential

understanding that can be mapped back to actual events in the classroom is encouraged.

The ability to keep one's comments and perspectives to observable data is in itself a skill

to be learned and often requires the intervention of the group's facilitator to help

participants restate comments in ways that do not imply judgment as the process is learned (City et al., 2009; Rasmussen, 2012; Rasmussen, 2014a; Roberts, 2012; Teitel, 2013). Peer observation sessions conclude with reflective questions posed by the facilitator with implications for the observing teachers on their own practice.

<center>**Data Collection**</center>

Data Sources

In Chapter 1 I explain that while the primary research question for this study is to consider how the peer observation process outlined above contributes to the development of collective efficacy, it is equally critical to investigate any organizational processes that might explain why. In Chapter 2 I introduced Figure 4, the Intersection of Examined Organizational Influences on Cross-Role Peer Observation, to illustrate how particular leadership and organizational processes are hypothesized to influence each other and the cross-role peer observation protocol that orients this study. In reviewing relevant literature, I noted three areas I believe to be underexamined, particularly in a school setting: strategic use of authority as a leadership practice, the intersection of psychological safety and accountability, assumed to be influenced by leadership practices and potentially by the use of authority, and how adult learning is conceived within the school and surrounding district. The last topic concerns itself with whether teachers are developed as self-authoring experts and the symmetry throughout the system that aligns notions of rigorous learning for adults with the learning experiences of students for whom they are responsible. As I considered data sources that might provide clues as to the role these aspects and the intersections among them play in the development of collective efficacy, a more nuanced view of Figure 4 was required to call out the particular

relationship to the research questions. In other words, and recalling Elmore and

Forman's (2011) theory around efficacy development (Figure 3), the data to be collected

needed to illuminate leadership practices and organizational processes to determine if

they, manifested through peer observation as an organizational process, became sources

of efficacy for the faculty at the studied school. Figure 6 below illustrates the

intervening variables and hypothesized link of peer observation to sources of efficacy.
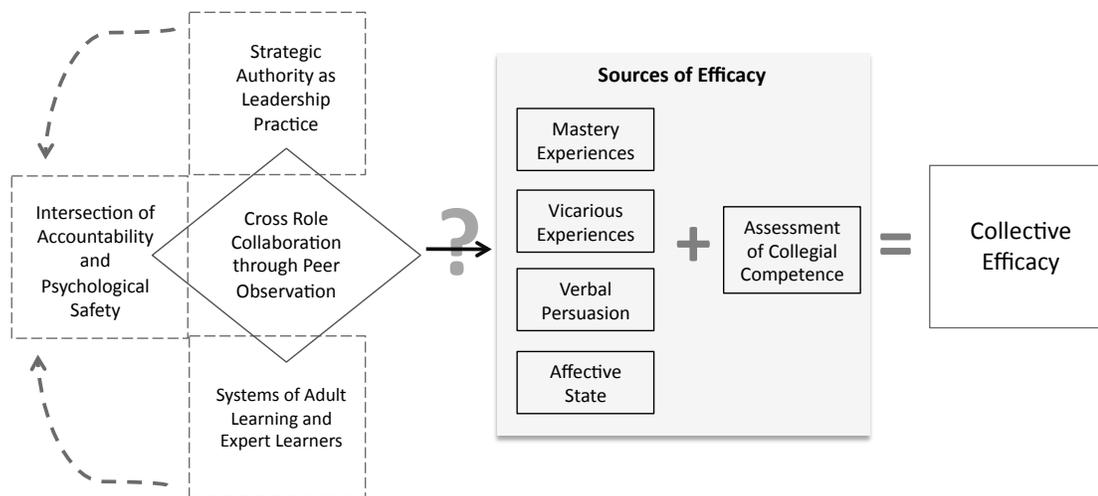
Figure 6. Potential link between leadership practices and organizational processes and sources of efficacy.

Each topic in itself suggests a rich potential for study; the confluence of these

somewhat diverse and discreet elements of leadership and organizational processes is

admittedly complex. Yet it is exactly in these intersections that I expected to find the most

robust clues that would ultimately lead to some conclusions around the relationship of

peer observation to collective efficacy. To inform the narrative inquiry methodology

selected for this study, I identified two sources of data: interviews and artifacts. Figure 7

maps the data sources to the examined organizational influences on cross-role peer

observation. As shown, and appropriate for narrative inquiry, the bulk of the data will

come from teacher and administrator interviews. Each of the data sources and collection

methods is described in the section below.
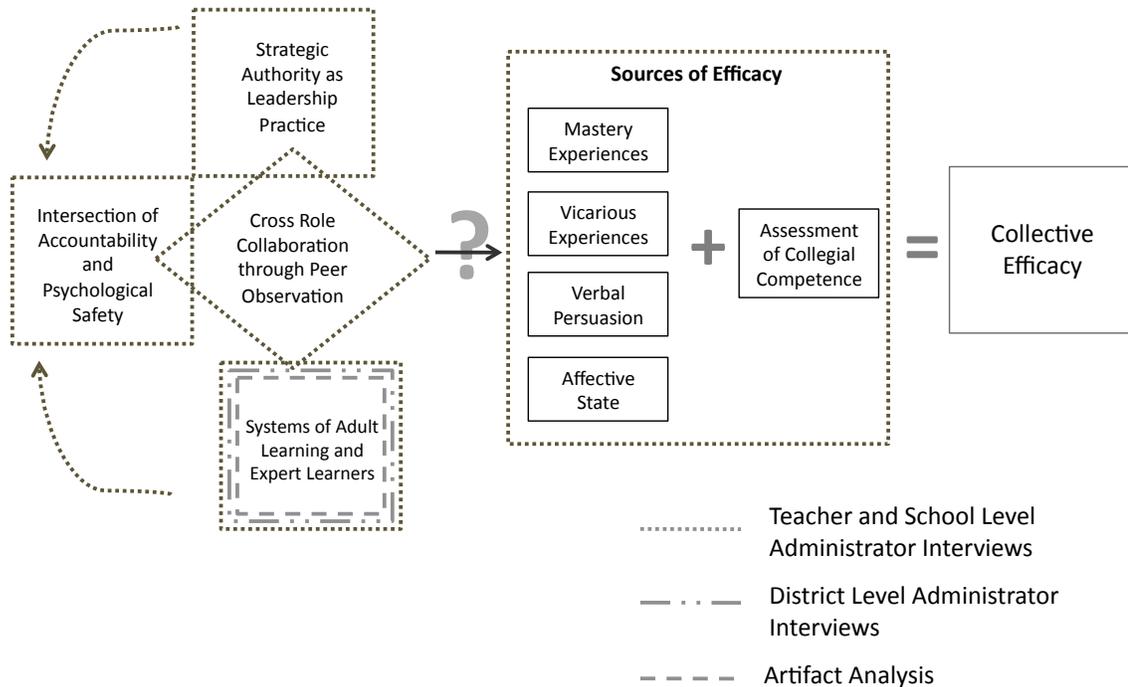
Figure 7. Data sources to examine organizational influences on cross-role peer observation.

Background of Peer Observation Process

The peer observation process at Skyview Elementary School began in the fall of

2012. Skyview was one of four schools in the Vista School District that opted (to quote

from the consulting proposal) *to engage teachers in collaborative practice networks that*

support reflective research into their own and others' practice. They hoped to *build a*

common language around key instructional practices related to a district-adopted

instructional framework that would eventually guide teacher evaluation. The district

paid for my time as an external facilitator and provided substitutes for participating

teachers for up to four visits during the school year. The principal at each participating

school worked directly with me to customize a structure. Skyview's principal, Marc

Elliott, and the instructional coach at that time, Gloria Fuentes, desired to involve every

teacher in the process over the course of the year and opted to continue the process for a

second, and then third, year. Due to a limited number of peer observation sessions, not

every teacher was observed teaching, but all teachers in the school were involved in at

least one, and often multiple, peer observation sessions with their grade-level peers.

Often the sessions involved several grade-level teams working together (i.e., primary or

intermediate levels). At the time of this study, most of the teachers had been involved in

this process for 2 years. As will be noted below, the actual length of participation in the

process was one of the desired variables in the teacher interview group. In addition, each

of the sessions over the 2-year period included at least one, and generally two,

administrators: Marc Elliott, the principal and Gloria Fuentes, the school's full-time

instructional coach who later moved into the role of assistant principal. The district

superintendent, Cal Younger, attended one session over the 2-year period; Peg Koenig,

assistant superintendent, did not attend any of the sessions but was responsible for

allocating available substitutes to the process as she controlled the professional

development calendar for the district. In specific ways, each of these individuals played a

significant role in the process directly and as integral members of the district's robust

instructional improvement system.

Interview Participants and Process

The interview data for this study thus came from interviews from all of the involved roles and included four administrators and five representative teachers. The interview invitations were emailed after the superintendent, and subsequently the school principal, granted approval for the study. The invitations all included a confidentiality agreement and explained the purpose of the research, how the data would be collected and stored, and the disclosure that the size of the school and district could result in their identification, even though aliases would be used in the dissertation and any findings that might subsequently be made public.

Administrator Interviews. The administrator interviews were designed to (a) locate the situational context for peer observation, (b) examine deliberate acts of authority intended to enhance teacher effectiveness, (c) understand any theories and actions related to systems of adult learning that are in place, and (d) at the school leadership level, gain additional perspective on changes observed in the practices of individual teachers and the faculty as a whole. All four administrators responded affirmatively to the interview invitation (Appendix B). The school site administrators were interviewed together in one semi-structured 60- minute interview with questions about organizational and leadership practices, their role in the peer observation process and/or follow-up to that process, and any changes they noticed in their teachers' instructional practices and/or relationship with peers (Appendix C). The purpose of a joint interview for the school leaders was to allow for the expansion of their own perspectives and observations through those of their colleague. This process proved to be beneficial as I developed a comprehensive picture of the structures and systems in place

at Skyview Elementary. The principal and assistant principal were given the opportunity to review and delete any direct proposed quotes prior to inclusion in this dissertation. All proposed quotes were accepted without revision.

The district superintendent and assistant superintendent were interviewed similarly, together in one semi-structured 60-minute interview, again, to utilize a collaborative opportunity to foster additional perspective and to be efficient in the use of their time. As noted earlier, these individuals were not formally involved in this school's peer observation process, but were responsible for the allocation of district resources that enabled it to take place. This interview primarily explored district-level organizational and leadership practices, including leadership development, district-level professional development practices and goals, perceptions of the peer observation process and/or follow-up to that process, any changes they noticed in school-based leadership practices (Appendix D). They, too, were given the opportunity to review and delete any direct proposed quotes prior to inclusion in the dissertation. The assistant superintendent edited a number of her quotes for clarity; the superintendent accepted all of the proposed quotes without revision.

Together the administrator interviews provided an important framing for understanding the world in which the teachers at Skyview Elementary practice, including intended mandates and support systems. They were instrumental in creating what Clandinin and Connelly (2000) term a grand narrative. Presented as Chapter 4, the grand narrative and its subsequent discussion articulates the themes that describe the system in its entirety, taking into account all of the contextual factors that may have influenced the development of collective efficacy or which might explain its absence. Grand narratives

differ from narrative thinking in that they describe "events and things…characterized in and of themselves. They are seen 'to be,' to have a timeless sense about them" (p. 30).

Teacher Interviews. The heart of the interview data came through 90-minute in-depth individual interviews with 5 of the 28 classroom teachers at Skyview Elementary. Even though collective efficacy is a phenomenon that impacts the entire faculty, my desire to fully explore the conditions and emotions of teachers as they reflected on peer observation necessitated a representative sample of teachers. I chose teachers whose backgrounds were as diverse as possible so that a heterogeneous interview group would make the common themes discovered among them meaningful to the research questions. Because I could not be certain who among the teachers would be willing to be interviewed, I began with an initial "ideal" interview group that crossed several criteria: teaching tenure, tenure in the school district, grade level, the number of years participating in peer observation (one or two), and their role in the peer observation process. Not all of the teachers at the study site school were observed teaching; some were only observers in the process. One teacher was selected for this reason in the event that her participation was markedly different from those who were actually observed and this proved to be true. Another teacher began participating in the process during its second year and was also new to the school in the second year.

I also considered the existing trust element between the teachers and myself, the researcher, believing that our relationship might suggest authenticity in how they describe their experience. I was aware of the possibility that some teachers might resist sharing any negative feedback about the process to me as the individual responsible for its design and facilitation. To mitigate this possibility, I drew on my background as an executive

coach and experience in reflective questioning strategies. One teacher did, in fact, spend

significant time during the interview focusing on my role as the process facilitator. While

some possible explanations for the ways in which she focused on my facilitation during

the interview are discussed in Chapter 10, it is also true that her comments were not

always affirming and I believe them to be authentic.

I determined the initial interview group in collaboration with Skyview Elementary

School's principal and assistant principal. They made one recommendation to the initial

participant list. It is important to note here that as an external consultant, I had no

authority over the teachers; there was no risk of repercussion that could arise for the

teacher participants as they reflected on and explained their experiences with peer

observation.   The initial invitation (Appendix E) yielded responses from four of the five

invited teachers. After several follow-up attempts with no response from the fifth teacher,

I invited an alternate teacher to participate. I selected her in part because she shares a

grade level with another participant and I realized the opportunity to explore any

similarities or differences that might be attributed to the dynamics of a particular grade-

level team.

The teacher interviews followed a traditional protocol for narrative inquiry,

detailed more fully below. In general, however, the teachers were asked to explore their

experiences with this peer observation protocol and any impact it may have had on their

practice as a teacher, to student performance, and their perceptions of their peers. They

were also asked about organizational practices, such as leadership, school and district

accountability systems, adult learning opportunities, and other supports available or

accessed by them as teachers. I told each teacher that their interview would be crafted

into a personal narrative of their experiences over the period they were involved in peer observation and included in the dissertation after they had the opportunity to review their narrative stories for potential revision and final approval. At the conclusion of each interview, I gave each teacher a note card that stated "Overall, the peer observation process was/was not (circle one) a valuable use of my time." These cards were used to ensure that I was not superimposing an affirming lens on the interview data.

Teacher Interview Protocol

> Narrative inquiry is a process of entering into lives in the midst of each participant's and each inquirer's life. (Clandinin & Huber, 2010, p. 10)

Intersection of Narrative Inquiry with Subject-Object Perspective

In Chapter 2 I discuss adult developmental stages and my belief that teachers must be able to self-author if they are to successfully meet the complex needs of today's students, providing several examples of situations in which teachers must be able to adapt their practice, consider alternate perspectives, and exercise independent judgment. I also note the limited research base linking adult development to teacher efficacy. There are particular protocols available to uncover an individual's development stage in Kegan's (1983, 1998) hierarchy, one of which is the subject-object (SO) interview to determine how a person positions him or herself in the world, as the subject of interpretation or as the interpreter (object perspective) of any given situation (Lahey, Souvaine, Kegan, Goodman, & Felix, 2011). While I am not certified in subject-object (SO) interviewing protocols and their subsequent analysis, I did utilize certain aspects of SO interview technique in my interviews as described below and include reference to subject-object perspective in my analysis. The analysis does not attempt to validly qualify any of the interviewed teacher's development stages. However, I looked for evidence that suggests

each teacher's development phase to apply that perspective to understanding the teacher

narratives and any role the peer observation process might have played in shifting

teachers from a socialized state of mind to one that is more self-authored.

Narrative inquiry, considered to be "a form of unstructured, in-depth interview

with specific features" (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000, p. 3) mirrors the SO interview in a

number of ways. Because it is important that the story being told authentically belongs to

the participant, narrative and SO interviews are open-ended and questions are formed

carefully so as not to prematurely analyze the participant's story and influence the

narrative. Both interview protocols invoke a particular structure designed to hold the

integrity of the narrative, yet still guide the participant toward the types of reflective

thought that will elicit required data. Critical to this study, SO and narrative interviews

both require the interviewer to be attuned to the structure underneath the participant's

story so as to understand how the participant makes meaning of the events he or she

describes. In narrative inquiry,

> The plot is crucial …. It is through the plot that individual units (or smaller stories
> within the big story) in the narrative acquire meaning. Therefore a narrative is not
> just a listing of events, but an attempt to link them both in time and in meaning. If
> we consider events in isolation they appear to us as simple propositions that
> describe independent happenings. But if they are composed into a story, the ways
> in which they are related allow for the meaning-production operation of the plot.
> It is the plot that gives coherence and meaning to the narrative, as well as
> providing the context in which we understand each of the events, actors,
> descriptions, goals, morals and relationships that usually form a story.
> (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000, p. 2)

Structurally, however, narrative and SO interviews differ in that SO interviews

intersperse questions throughout the interview process in an attempt to uncover areas for

which the participant takes responsibility, that highlight central conflicts within the story,

find perspectives he or she takes in relation to his or her experience and her peers, and surface assumptions about the world that underlie the story (Berger, 2012, p. 55). In other words, the process itself may cause the narrative to shift during its telling. I considered these elements where I felt they led to a more complete understanding of the impact of peer observation on the participants and any shifts the process may have caused in their own development. Nevertheless, the interviews for this study followed a traditional narrative inquiry format, with SO-oriented questions inserted within the narrative inquiry structure toward the end. I was able to work with Dr. Berger this fall to develop and hone my skills and consider how to weave SO questions into the interview process in ways that preserve the integrity of both processes.

Interview Structure

As noted earlier, the teacher participant interviews followed a narrative inquiry structure. Jovchelovitch and Bauer (2000) describe narrative interviews as comprising four phases, each of which is bounded by particular rules and protocols. The first three phases of the interview were recorded and subsequently transcribed; the fourth phase, as recommended by Jovchelovitch and Bauer, was not recorded for reasons explained below. During the interviews I took notes so as to be able to refer back to specific comments when needed for clarification or further depth. Each phase is described below and is detailed in Appendix E.

Phase 1: Initiation. In this 20-minute phase I reviewed the purpose of the research study, the process itself, and the expected product. It was during this time that I asked the teacher participants to sign an interview consent form and reviewed issues related to confidentiality, including the fact that although pseudonyms would be involved,

it was possible that someone from their region might identify their personal story, the study school, or the district in which the study school resides. I encountered a great deal of curiosity from the teachers about who else was being interviewed. I let them know that I would not tell them who else was in the study, nor would I disclose their participation to their colleagues, but that they could share that information if they chose to do so. I explained the process for finalizing the individual narratives, assuring them that they would have full editorial rights over their personal narrative before inclusion in the dissertation. In fact, three of the five teachers chose to edit their narratives, sometimes for clarity and once to reinsert verbatim statements that I had edited out of the interview transcripts. All of the edits were incorporated in the narratives.

Often in this phase, the interviewer takes the time to establish a relationship with the participant and some initial rapport; in this case I knew each of the participants so less of this relationship-building was necessary, although I did reiterate my role as researcher and my desire to truly understand their experience so as to answer my research questions. During this phase I also asked for a brief history of their teaching experience, their tenure at Skyview Elementary, and to describe a typical teaching day. This phase grounded our conversations in their personal teaching experience and helped me to write and interpret authentic narratives for the five interviewed teachers.

I then explained that I wanted them to tell me about their experiences in peer observation in ways that would take us both back to those moments, to help me to understand what happened, how it felt, and any changes they noticed in their own practice as teachers and how they relate to and consider their peers. I encouraged them to include detail, any aspects of their peer observation experience that might help me to

understand any role it played in their professional lives, and as a story, to include a beginning, middle, and an ending. These components encompass what Jovchelovitch and Bauer (2000) refer to as self-generating schema: detailed texture, relevant fixation, and closing of the gestalt (p. 3).

Phase 2: Main Narration. During the main narration phase of the interview, I had the participant tell his or her story without interruption. These narrations lasted anywhere from 20-45 minutes, varying greatly among teachers. My role was to attend to the story with encouraging non-verbal cues to keep the story going until its natural end. I took verbatim notes on my computer as they talked, highlighting areas in which questions emerged, particularly in areas that suggested efficacy-source opportunity and development: mastery and vicarious experiences, emotional state, verbal persuasion, and cognitive processing that could lead to efficacy determination. I also highlighted areas of potential questioning around subject-object determination: responsibility, conflicts within the narrative itself, perspective-taking, and underlying assumptions (Berger, 2012).

Phase 3: Questioning. The questioning phase did not begin until the narration came to a natural end as suggested by Jovchelovitch and Bauer (2000 p. 5) so as to capture the purity of the teacher's story. Important to this phase was the absence of *why* questions; instead questions were asked to fill gaps in the story, bringing in detail that may have been obvious to the participant but not to me as the researcher. These questions were derived from the exmanent notes I took during the narratives and translated into immanent questions, drawing on the language of the participant and probing gently from that perspective. There were also areas in which I needed to inquire that were not brought up in the narrative that related to the research questions. Each participant was

asked about other professional learning experiences, the role of the principal and vice principal during and outside peer observation, perceptions and experiences related to accountability, and the way external expectations are understood. This was also the component of the interview process where the teacher's subject-object orientation was probed, through questions designed to understand from where they derived their authority, attachments to external systems, concepts of responsibility, and assumptions. Berger (2012) suggests that asking the same questions in different ways can begin to move people into the sense-making phase of their narrative. And although I tried to avoid any semblance of cross- examination and did, in fact, probe only in those areas that arose from the participant (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000), this portion of the interview did include the use of why questions. For example, each teacher was asked to describe the best and worst parts of peer observation and then to explain why a particular aspect was positive or negative. It was through these types of questions that some of the clues related to each participant's developmental level emerged.

Phase 4: Concluding Talk. In the last phase of the interview the recorder was turned off to enable a more relaxed reflective conversation about the narrative. During this phase I sought to deepen my understanding about their experiences as "an entry point for the analysis later when the theories and explanations that the storytellers hold about themselves ('eigentheories') become a focus of analysis" (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000, p. 6). During this phase I referred to a graphic organizer I prepared in advance to make sure I touched on consistent and critical dimensions for this study. And during this more relaxed time I asked about the deeper societal challenges the teachers and their students

face, such as social inequities and ecological concerns, to learn how, if at all, these issues impact the teachers' perceived or actualized agency and efficacy.

I organized the interviews so that there was time between them, intending to record a more thorough and personal reflection on the interview, including subject-object dimensions that emerged. In reality, I spent this time reflecting on the interview process itself, what worked, what did not, and considered ways in which to better combine two different interview techniques – narrative inquiry and subject-object determination. This reflection allowed me to hone my skills, particularly for the latter. I found the two protocols to be less compatible than I had hoped.

Data Analysis

It is important to keep in mind that the nature of this study was to understand any inputs to collective efficacy that may have been experienced through the peer observation process. Known as sources of efficacy, they include mastery and vicarious experiences, heightened productive emotions, and verbal persuasion (Bandura, 1997, 1982). I did not intend to re-examine whether or not these sources do, in fact, cause efficacy. Thus I was not specifically seeking evidence that these sources resulted in collective efficacy. Bandura's sources of efficacy (1997, 1982), therefore, provided the initial organization of the teacher interview data so as to understand where and how the peer observation process may have contributed to these sources.

Teacher Interview Analysis

The first step to my data analysis was to construct the individual teacher narratives. While I had intended to have the teacher interviews transcribed by an outside service, I found that doing it myself allowed a stronger entry point into the data. By the

time I wrote each teacher's narrative, I had reviewed the interview at least four times,

enabling me to feel intimate knowledge of each teacher by reliving his or her actual

language, its tonal qualities, and body language. I was looking for that "something"

within each story that seemed to define the teacher and used that impression to organize

each narrative. The narratives were then sent to each teacher, reminding them of what

would happen with the final narrative and offering the opportunity for editing. That

descriptive email is attached as Appendix F.

I had intended to use only the narratives as the basis for coding, but found the

actual transcripts to be more useful. So with the approved narratives as a guide, I used

NVivo to code the data around Bandura's efficacy sources and any evidence that

suggested the process involved or resulted in assessment of peer competency or teaching

task analysis. I included references to overall expectations for students and instructional

practice as suggested by Goddard et al. (2000). I used a second set of codes to organize

data that described the surrounding systems, or contextual elements, that may have

contributed to collective efficacy development. I utilized Elmore and Forman's (2011)

internal coherence framework (Figure 3), specifically leadership practices that include but

are not limited to public learning, support for teamwork and risk taking, and professional

development and organizational processes, such as instructional mandates and lateral and

vertical accountability practices. In order to specifically address the gaps in the literature,

I coded evidence that illuminated the use of positional authority, intersections of

accountability systems and psychological safety, conceptions of adult learning around

expert and self-authored learners, and the influence of cross-role collaboration on trust.

In addition, I looked for evidence that teachers had broadened their instructional

repertoire during or as a result of the peer observation process (Elmore & Forman, 2011).

The last step of the individual teacher interview analysis was to consider each teacher's developmental stage, along with any evidence of developmental shifts toward self-authorship during the time the teachers were involved in peer observation. I wanted to determine if the process itself may have supported such development. Determining one's subject/object perspective requires the researcher to review interview transcripts in ways that elicit the underlying structure of an individual's meaning-making system and is best done in collaboration with others (Berger, 2012). Thus I elicited the support of three volunteer research assistants whom I met during a training session with Dr. Berger in subject-object perspective. As a group, we comprise varied levels of training in subject-object interviewing and scoring; none of us are certified. Our protocol called for the verbatim transcripts to be read at least twice, searching for clues that might inform a conclusion. This preliminary work culminated in a collaborative phone call to review the transcripts and come to consensus. Part of our analysis protocol involved routine use of the question, "How could you be wrong?" when assertions were made about a developmental level so as to bring forth other ways in which a particular comment might be viewed. Each interview transcript was analyzed and discussed by at least three individuals; three transcripts were reviewed by four analysts.

Systems Analysis

I then looked for common themes *across* the teachers' narratives to understand what might be considered organizational phenomena, context themes, as opposed to those that were teacher-specific. The school leader and district leader interviews were coded in the same fashion as the teacher interviews, although excluding codes that related to

collective efficacy source contribution. At the conclusion of the coding process, I had

data that illuminated

1. Efficacy Source and Context Themes: Teacher-Specific

2. Efficacy Source and Context Themes: Teacher Common and Contrasting

3. Peer Observation Experiences and Organizational Practices: School
    Leadership

4. Organizational Practices: District Leadership

Artifacts

In addition to conducting interviews, I collected a number of artifacts to more

thoroughly understand some of the systems elements that may have impacted collective

efficacy development through peer observation. In particular, I was interested in how the

district's professional development aligned with the peer observation protocol, believing

that in an aligned system teachers would approach the rigorous and often ambiguous

analysis component of the protocol with more confidence. In addition, I earlier argued

the need for teachers who are experts (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993) and advocated, as

did Roberts (2012), for rigorous adult learning experience and systems with symmetry,

where adults routinely experience the type of rigor in their own learning that they expect

from student learning. If nothing else, this type of symmetry offers greater illumination

to any instructional mandate in place, an element of Elmore and Forman's (2011) theory

around efficacy development. While Roberts claims that the instructional rounds

protocols, and by extension any protocols that embody the same types of ambiguity and

cognitive press such as the peer observation protocol, are rigorous, I believe that the way

teachers approach peer observation is influenced by other professional development

opportunities and expectations. While much of this surfaced during the teacher, school, and district leadership interviews, I looked for correlating evidence that the teacher and administrator professional development sessions were, in fact, rigorous.

During the 2-year period of peer observation that oriented this study, the district employed two professional development consultants: one in literacy and one in math; these individuals supported all of the district's elementary school teachers in developing and refining pedagogical content knowledge. Because these individuals provided services to the district consistently during (and prior to) the time the study school conducted peer observation, I infer that these sessions represented typical professional development for teachers experienced outside of peer observation. I obtained lesson plans for three teacher professional development sessions in math for the school year 2013-2014 in which the teachers at Skyview Elementary participated, along with a number of lesson plans for administrator professional development during that time in order to assess the rigor denoted in the lesson plans. The district's assistant superintendent provided these artifacts for analysis.

I analyzed these documents with a tool I developed to assess adult learning tasks. This tool utilizes a framework adapted for adult learning from Newmann, King, and Carmichael's (2007) definition of rigor. This tool, attached as Appendix E, also incorporates conceptions of Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993) expert learning, elements drawn from *How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience, and School* (Committee on Developments in the Science of Learning with additional material from the Committee on Learning Research and Educational Practice, et al., 2000) and national professional development standards (Learning Forward, n.d.). While not intended to be conclusive, it

offers an additional perspective to the interview data that discussed the contextual systems of adult learning in the Vista School District.

Systems Perspective

I expected the process of considering the teacher stories alongside the organizational process data to be complex, and it was. The data on an individual level took on different characteristics when considered collectively and in the context of other information. There are times when the individual teacher data appeared to contradict some of the larger indications in this study, illustrating how exponentially complex these relationships become when considered from different perspectives. Often I was certain that I had discovered a trend, only to find when I went back into the data, the evidence suggested something else.

Reskin (2012) recognizes this complexity and calls for research methods that embrace the systemic nature and influences of the studied phenomena. To aid my exploration of the complex data set I had accumulated, I used my background in systems thinking and knowledge of the district gained through my consulting work with other schools in the Vista School District. This allowed me to consider the data in light of such conditions as the existence of an instructional framework intended to describe effective teaching, the use of student support strategies (e.g., AVID) and the intersection of the district's instructional philosophy favoring inquiry-based math and balance literacy with the Common Core State Standards. I drew on this background knowledge and considered the systemic nature of these elements to create the grand narrative and analytic discussion of my findings.

The analysis of each data source was conducted, and is presented, in good faith and with all the uncertainty that accompanies the interpretation of human beings as emotional systems.   At all stages of this study I was, and continue to be, humbled by the passion and commitment represented by these educators' stories. They reinforce the audacity of imagining that anyone can truly walk in another's shoes.

CHAPTER FOUR: A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A LEARNING SYSTEM

The narrative that follows represents a typical day for the teachers and administrators at Skyview Elementary. It introduces the nine individuals who were interviewed for this study:

- Joe, fourth-grade teacher;

- Peg Koenig, assistant superintendent for instruction;

- Steve, third-grade teacher;

- Marc Elliott, principal;

- Sandra, first-grade teacher;

- Erin, fifth-grade teacher;

- Michelle, fifth-grade teacher;

- Sandra, first-grade teacher;

- Gloria Fuentes, assistant principal; and

- Cal Younger, district superintendent.

Readers will also note reference to one of Joe's colleagues, Floramie, and two consultants hired by the district to support literacy and math, Julia and Deborah.

This narrative was developed with the interview transcripts of the study participants, collected artifacts, and my observations and notes as facilitator of the peer observation process. Its purpose is to bring the reader into the world in which these educators practice. Readers will learn how the teachers and administrators in that system

live out their roles and interact with each other, see accountability and professional development in action, and witness peer observation as it occurs. This is the context in which these teachers experience the peer observation process and sets the stage before delving into their personal narratives, which will reveal more intimately their responses and feelings to the system, to peer observation, and signs of efficacy development.

Monday Morning

It is Monday. At 7:00 a.m. Joe drives up to the school that sits at the end of the road at the far end of town, a mile away from the complex that serves the rest of Vista School District's 3,500 students: two other elementary schools, a middle school, a comprehensive and an alternative high school. Skyview Elementary School's parking lot is half full at this hour but the traffic on the adjoining road that leads in and out of this agricultural community is quiet, save for a truck or two delivering to the neighboring auto supply store and Safeway. Joe slides his ID badge across the security system, says hi to a few other teachers who are checking their mailboxes, and stows his lunch in the staff room refrigerator. He sees that Marc's office is still dark and notices the long list of subs for today on the white board outside the conference room. "Eight," he says to himself. "Three-fourths of the district's sub quota" and hurries to his classroom. Joe is hoping to connect with another teacher about a literacy issue he is having with several of his students. Floramie is far more expert in literacy than Joe and she is his go-to when he's feeling stuck.

He's in luck. Floramie looks up from the white board where she's recording the math and literacy learning targets for the day along with the success criteria that lets

students know the activities they will be asked to do related to reaching those targets. They confer for a few minutes and as she asks more and more questions about the students, he realizes that both of these students are considered to be poor readers by the other students.   Joe and Floramie discuss what they've learned recently about complex instruction (Cohen, 1984) and how he might elevate the status of those students to increase their participation. They decide that the district's new argumentative writing is a viable way to highlight things those particular students do well if given the opportunity by their peers – expressing their opinions – and consult the K-12 argument writing continuum (Appendix H) to see where their fourth-grade students might fall. The continuum is new to them both this year and they consider several of the Level 3 criteria next to the Level 4 for one of the elements: Introducing an Opinion or Argument.

Level 3	Level 4
Writes a beginning that gets readers' attention. Writes about topic or text he/ she is writing about and gives opinion.	Writes a beginning which states an opinion, but also sets readers up to expect that the writing should try to convince them of it.

Joe predicts that most of his students will need to start at Level 3 but that they should rapidly progress to Level 4 and quickly maps out a strategy to call attention to the two students whose status he wants to elevate among the others. He will ask them to take on the role of translator for some of the newer students in the class who recently arrived from Mexico. Both students happen to sit in table groups that could benefit from additional translation and he thinks that asking them to help in this way will bring positive attention to the students he is trying to support.   Joe thanks Floramie and heads to his classroom to get his entry tasks ready before their 8:30 staff meeting.

Peg

Peg plans to drop in on that staff meeting. As assistant superintendent for instruction, she supervises Marc and wants to see how he's orchestrating the new data requirements for the teacher professional learning communities (PLCs). While driving to work she reflects on what she has learned about how teachers are using data, or where they are not, realizing that although they have spent a lot of time in the last few years discussing data, and that the PLCs are looking at data way more than they ever have, the teachers are not yet using it to drive instruction, at least not as skillfully as Peg would like. She makes a mental note to commend her principals who are leading successful data cycles – analyzing the data with the teachers, planning next steps, getting in and watching teachers teach and re-teach lessons, and then analyzing the results. Peg recalls a recent conversation she had with a teacher at Skyview.

> You analyze [the data], but what are you going to do with that analysis, the results, once you get it? Are you going to re-teach it? Are you going to provide it in what we call review/repair in math or routines? Are you going have a small group? How big is the gap? It's hard to fit everything in – so let's think about what will be the best structure to provide the intervention needed. You need to have different layers of intervention and sometimes we provide only one layer. The first layer is core for all. We go from the core to the intensive in reading for the kids that are a little behind … and then the intensive … but what about the intermediate layer? You need to fit all those pieces in. Let me know how I can support you…or Marc or Gloria.

It is so important, she thinks, to acknowledge how hard it is for teachers to fit in all of the pieces in the number of hours in a given day – but it is their reality. She hopes that came across.

Peg arrives at the Vista School District office a few minutes after 7 to make sure she has time to compare the professional development agendas from Deborah, her math

consultant, with the invoice dates (Table 1) and wonders, not for the first time, how they will manage next year without Deborah who has written their math Common Core-oriented units of study and lessons. Without textbooks, and with only two math coaches for the district, it is challenging to give teachers the depth of knowledge they must have to teach the level of math required by the Common Core, especially at the elementary level. They have agreed that, for now, they will continue to grow the coaches content and pedagogical knowledge to continue to support the teachers' conceptual understanding because they have to actually teach it.

"Deborah is irreplaceable," Peg sighs, as she puts the district's math needs out of her head to focus on literacy.

Table 1

Vista School District Math Professional Development Calendar

Fall Math Professional Development Consultant Schedule	
Monday Sept 18th	After school 6th grade
Thursday, September 20th	MS coaching After School 3-5 Leadership
Friday, September 21st	HS Data Snap K – 2 PLC
Monday, September 24th	Skyview Data Snap After School K-2 Leadership
Wednesday, September 26th	After School 8th
Monday, October 1st	After school 3-5 Leadership
Friday, October 5th	3 – 5 Intervention HS PLC
Monday, October 8th	K-2 Leadership coaching Elementary School A
Tuesday October 9th	3-5 Leadership coaching Skyview
Wednesday, October 10th	K-2 Leadership coaching Skyview
Thursday, October 11th	3-5 Leadership coaching HT
Friday, October 12th	3-5 Teacher Inservice
Monday, October 15th	3-5 Leadership coaching Elementary School A After school K-2 Leadership
Tuesday, October 16th	Middle School After School 7th grade RISE UP
Wednesday, October 17th	5th grade
Thursday, October 18th	HS Coaching After school 6th grade
Friday, October 19th	Algebra K-2 PLC
Thursday, November 15th	HS Coaching
Monday, November 26th	After School 6th grade Elementary School A (half 4th-half 5th)
Monday, December 10th	Coaching Elementary School B After school 3-5 Leadership
Tuesday, December 11th	Coaching Elementary School A
Wednesday, December 12th	Middle School
Thursday, December 13th	Coaching Skyview
Friday, December 14th	HS Coaching HS PLC

Julia, the district's literacy consultant, walks into Peg's office promptly at 7:30 and the two of them review a draft unit assessment template Peg has crafted for principals and teachers to report out data in math and literacy. Peg explains her purpose for introducing this new requirement: Principals tell her that most grade-level team PLCs are sufficiently analyzing and recording lesson results at the end of each unit but she is not seeing the analysis. They discuss how literacy will look different from math in some instances. Julia suggests certain adaptations and they move on to discuss the week's literacy professional development and any specific concerns that have come up since Julia's last visit to Vista. Even though Julia stays at Peg's house to save on travel costs from her home in San Diego, they seldom have time to visit during the week, even socially. Every minute of Julia's 15-hour days in the district is booked.

Peg lets Julia know that her classroom visits suggest the need to build more sophisticated questioning skills, specifically related to literacy.

"I am hearing some general questions that are always good. *How do you know? Tell me more. Explain your thinking* … questions that can work in any content area, that first layer of questioning. But the second and third layers of questioning need some honing. What I watched the other day, for example, during conferring, went something like this: 'Okay Luke, tell me what's going on.' And Luke just does the basic retell. So the first thing I notice is that Luke is not inferring. He's not really talking about the character in the book because he's not making inferences. So I would want to hear from the teacher, something like, 'Tell me more about this character. What do you know about him?' And then maybe I would want to see them together go back and reread the section

to notice something the character said, with the question, 'What does that tell you about the character when she says something like that?' It is that kind of questioning that I am not seeing enough of, helping kids to understand, as in this example, that authors build characters through words, actions, and relationships. Those are the layers our questioning needs to get to. Make sense?"

Julia concurs, agreeing that she has noticed similar patterns, and hurries off to consider how to make any needed adjustments to her lesson plans. Peg feels lucky to have found consultants who share her beliefs about what good instruction looks like, what learning should look like in the classroom, and who keep up to date with current research, whether it is standards or instruction or content. Both women are also incredibly skilled in developing relationships with her staff so that they can jump in and take over a lesson for a teacher, or even one of their building coaches when required. It is not a skill set she sees every day.

Back at Skyview

Steve slides into the staff conference room at 7:45 in time for his third-grade professional learning community (PLC) meeting. Known as the war room, the conference room walls are covered with pictures of students. Each grade level's PLC student learning goal is flanked by the current data trends to show progress in meeting that goal. Underneath, and organized by classroom, are their students' faces, grouped as Below Benchmark, On Target, or Exceeding Target. Their eyes are a constant reminder that these are kids, not just numbers. The bulk of the pictures, falling in the Below

Benchmark groupings, are a harsh reminder of the constant struggle to move this impoverished community forward academically.

As the rest of Steve's third-grade team arrives, they jump into the topic of the day – the data they will share with the full staff in a few minutes that describes progress toward the PLC goal they've set. Theirs relates to conceptual understanding of multiplication and division demonstrated by students' ability to fluently multiple and divide within 100 with 90% accuracy. The baseline assessments taken in November found that only 2 out of their 107 students were able to meet that goal. Today they will share that 27 are now able to meet that multiplication goal; 7 have reached proficiency in division.

Steve finds his impatience getting the better of him as he starts firing questions to the other teachers about that last division lesson they tried, that he thinks kind of bombed. "I'm trying to figure out why this didn't work like we thought it would. Did I miss something critical in the set up so that they couldn't access the next part?   Do I need to go back and readdress the prior knowledge that they needed?   Was my class asleep that day? Did I just deliver it completely wrong? Was it the day after a holiday or something, you know? Maybe I didn't understand the content." He knows he's pushing hard and he can read some of the body language in the room. Peer accountability is a slippery slope, he thinks, and softens his tone a little. "I really want to know how it went for you, to get underneath these disappointing results. I just keep thinking about all those things that might have gone wrong so I can figure out how to give the kids the support they need."

Marc has joined them by this time, adding his own curiosity about how's and why's of the third graders' performance. As the school principal, Marc believes in modeling what he wants from his teachers and his interest in getting underneath the results is visible. His love of math and affirming manner tones down the meeting a bit as he flips through the assessment documents, looking at the student work that they have used to assess progress, and listens intently as the team debriefs the lesson in question. He adds a question here and there to the discussion. "Why do you think your students could do that? Why was this student successful and this one wasn't?" He references each student by name, adding what he knows about their background, things he recalls from their performance in second grade, or reminding them of another student's prolonged absence due to a ritual 2-month winter visit to family in Mexico. "We can't use that as an excuse, but we do have to figure out how to get him back up to speed on those skills he missed."   One of Marc's professional goals this year is to know each of the school's 590 students by name. He is making progress.

Preparing for Substitutes

Sandra arrives at Skyview in time to review her substitute notes to make sure each of the five required components of the morning's 90-minute literacy block are covered – phonics, independent reading, shared reading, interactive writing, and leveled literacy intervention. She leaves specific notes on three of her students with whom she would have conferred that day were she not going to be in a full-day math professional development session with the other primary grade-level math representatives from the district.

After her 50-minute commute, Erin walks into the staff room at 8:00 a.m., 5 minutes before her contract specifies she is to be there. She spies Michelle by the mail boxes and they grab a minute to determine which of them will go first during that day's peer observation session. Michelle says she wants to go first, to get it over with and Erin, also nervous, agrees to shift her math block to the afternoon as she wants to be observed teaching a math lesson. Erin makes a mental note to make that schedule change on her sub notes and her white board as she walks briskly to her classroom to unpack her computer. On the top of her computer are three sticky notes with items to add to her to-do list, the only thing left on her desk from the day before. She updates the list, makes the changes on her sub notes, changes the class schedule on the white board, double checks her entry tasks, and, glancing at the clock, realizes she still has 8 minutes until she needs to be at the staff meeting. She scans her to-do list and writes a hasty e-mail in response to a parent, crossing that off her list.

The Staff Meeting

At 8:30 Steve's PLC joins the rest of Skyview's faculty for their bi-monthly staff meeting. Marc spots Peg who has just walked in and notes that he'll be seeing her later for his mid-year evaluation conference.   Marc opens the meeting with an affirmation of the progress he's noted in their work with each other. "Our PLC work really is about using data and talking about best teaching practices to get different results. And as you know, in a strong PLC, trust is a big, big issue. I think …, no, I'm sure I'm seeing a greater level of trust. I know I'm seeing you use our new norms, the ones from our peer observation work, more consistently. You know which ones I'm talking about?

Invest yourselves. We're not really looking for compliance here. Compliance is not going to move our students to where we want them to be. We need you to really invest in that 40 minutes or so you have together so we can grow. And the other new norm, presume positive intent. That's huge for us. I've had good feedback from that one, that it has been powerful for you. I can see that becoming a district-wide PLC norm."

Marc then moves quickly into the day's content, asking the third, fourth, and fifth- grade teams to report progress on their PLC goals. Half the teams report their data for the prior month at each staff meeting; the other half will report at the next meeting in 2 weeks. Teach PLC reviews its PLC goal, the assessments used to track student progress, and the data generated since their last report. Steve goes last for the third-grade team, sharing the pre- and post-tests they used to measure student progress in multiplying fractions and the results. Marc and Gloria, Skyview's assistant principal, add perspective by pointing out the progression of mathematical understanding demonstrated by the goals and their results – how the third-grade results affect fourth-grade Common Core expectations and the implications then for fifth graders. They want the staff to see how their work fits together and how important it is to build the foundations from year to year. Finally, Marc wraps it up. "This is awesome. I've been in all your classrooms and I've seen amazing teaching going on. I know that the next months' data is going to show a lot of growth, even though, as Peg often says to us, there are no perfect lessons." Marc pauses and looks over at Peg, inviting her to jump in if she wants.

Peg takes the bait. "He's right and you've heard me say that a lot. I do strongly believe there are not perfect lessons. There aren't. I know you *want* perfect

lessons. You want to do a good job and I understand that, but they will not be perfect. They're good lessons. So my expectation is, as you've heard before, you learn it, you try it on. And if something's not working, tell us because we will provide support for you." Glancing at the clock, Marc brings the meeting quickly to a close with a final note: "Let's be sure that our assessments are actually measuring conceptual understanding. Something to discuss in your next PLC meeting…. Have a great day everyone!"

Except for her brief comment, Peg has listened quietly noting questions she'll ask Marc during their meeting later that morning. She overhears that the fifth-grade team will be involved in peer observation that day and wonders, not for the first time, how they are linking peer observation to the Charlotte Danielson Instructional Framework (Danielson, 2013) that guides their teachers' formal evaluations. It was the superintendent's decision to offer facilitated peer observation support to his schools, influenced by Cal's own experience as an administrator walking into classrooms and talking about practice. Describing it as "drinking the nectar, going in and talking with people who really knew good instruction," he found the experience so fulfilling and skill-building that he wanted teachers to have that opportunity as well, to "drive it all the way down." Peg did not disagree, although Vista teachers had a lot of opportunities to get feedback on their practice, through principals and their assistants, external consultants, and the literacy instructional coaches housed in each building. There was something different, she realized, about making one's practice public in front of one's peers – and it was good practice just to be able to have honest conversations about what is taking place in classrooms. It was unfortunate, Peg thought, that they had been forced by the teacher's

union to change the instructional framework that would anchor teacher evaluation from the framework they had been using to visualize instructional excellence and orient professional development. But, she mused, good instruction is good instruction, and her job is to keep that vision of good instruction at the forefront of everything that happens in Vista.

Peg was fortunate, she realized, to work with a superintendent who had not wavered on his theory of action since he rolled it out during his first day as Vista's superintendent 11 years earlier – that if you improve classroom instruction, you will increase student achievement. The poster he had made to display his theory all those years ago still hangs in his office, a visible reminder of what their district is all about. Then again, that was the only reason she had consented to move from her home in San Diego to this tiny agricultural community. She believed in the work they were doing and wanted to be a part of it. Cal's consistent sponsorship of the culture and practice they were trying to build was reinforced at every opportunity, she thought, recalling his comments during a recent network superintendent's meeting.

"Our teachers need to know that their practice is public and that it is not about them. It is about the practice and their rooms are wide open for people to be in and visit and look at and they can do the same. So their practice is going to be public and I think we are way past the olden days where people are worried about people coming in their rooms because there may be some anxiety, but really, it is common practice. Kids know it. Teachers know it. You can go anywhere, any time in any room. So they have to be ready for that.

"And they have to be able to work with others in groups around practice too. They cannot just be in their rooms and close the door and do their own thing. Our teachers are held accountable for implementing our units of study. We don't use textbooks in literacy or in math, so our units of study are something that they have to understand, be very familiar with, and then teach. You can't just do something else. You have to do the units so that the kids are exposed or have mastery of certain standards as they progress through the system. So our job, mine and Peg's, is to make sure they have those units, to understand what they're teaching in terms of content, and to provide the supports so that they know it. It is not easy – I don't think anybody in the profession knows the content well enough to teach to the standards we are asking of kids now. But we do expect our teachers to and we continually communicate our expectation that people work together all the time. No one is isolated here." She was lucky, Peg thought to herself again, as she heads back to the central office to prepare for her meeting with Marc.

9:00 a.m.

Skyview's teachers have now scattered to their various classrooms or that day's assigned professional development. Gloria greets the fifth-grade team that has congregated in the conference room for one of their three annual peer observation sessions. Marc sits in a chair near the door, apologizing in advance for missing a portion of the day for his meeting with Peg. He thanks Michelle and Erin for volunteering to be observed and settles in to hear Michelle's description of the lesson she will teach and what data she would find helpful for her colleagues to collect during her lesson.

Michelle is still nervous, although she works hard to hide that fact. This is the second time she's been observed and although she's proud of her classroom and the relationships she's formed with her students, she hates the thought of being judged by her colleagues who may not understand the sense of community that she values so highly. She explains that she's been working on getting some of her quiet students to talk and take the lead in class discussions. She wants data on which of her students are talking and what they are actually saying, especially during the "turn and talks" that she'll use as an engagement strategy. Marc slips out just as Michelle leaves the room to prepare for the observation.

Math Learning

In the old library building, purchased by the district to house the many professional development sessions that no longer fit in Vista's central office facilities or its schools, Sandra and her primary math representative colleagues are reviewing their learning targets and success criteria for the day. Professional development sessions in Vista are expected to follow a similar pattern to the lessons designed for students and each has explicit learning targets and success criteria. This morning they are working on a learning target that asks them to *deepen [their] understanding of how patterns and structures support fluent mental addition and subtraction of numbers to 20 are used to add and subtract 10s and 1s and numbers to 100* (Appendix I). Vista's math consultant leads Sandra and the other primary teachers in Vista through a process to craft strategies that will help their students gain fluency with addition and subtraction. Of particular importance for their students, Deborah explains, are structures that students can use to

help them make sense of problems and persevere in solving them. Sandra, sitting with her first-grade colleagues from across the district gets to work and they talk among themselves about what might work for their particular grade level. Deborah moves between each trio of teachers, asking questions, adding ideas, conferring to make sure the teachers are clear about content. "Math is all content," she says today as she has said often in the past. "The depth of knowledge you need at the elementary level now is amazing. But you do need it."

Marc's Evaluation

Marc arrives for his meeting with Peg at 10. They sit together at the end of her large conference table, surrounded by plants, family photos, framed notes from students, and books. There are books everywhere – piled on the table, leaning together on bookshelves – books on literacy, on instruction, on leadership, on improvement. They launch into a discussion of Marc's professional goals, one of which is to know his students individually and to get his teachers to know their students individually. As Marc explains how he's approaching this, Peg asks to see any evidence he has gathered that suggests he is meeting this goal.

Marc reflects. "I was gratified that the other day, when we were reviewing progress on equalizing student status in group work, really honing in on the aspects of complex instruction with our intermediate teachers, that we were able to discuss individual students by name. The teachers have made a lot of progress in their ability to pick out which students seemed to be shut down by other students during group work, talking about the reasons for that and ways to support more equity among them. For

instance, Erin was completely aware that one of her students, Anna, was going to be isolated during math last week. We both notice that Anna seems deliberate in off-putting behavior, regardless of how her classmates try to include her. We are starting to call this status sabotage. So I'm working with Anna. I invited her to lunch in my office with just a few of her classmates. It didn't go well, but I have some more clues as to her behavior and we are not giving up. But it is an example, evidence I guess, of how I'm working on my goal of knowing students individually – really being able to talk with their teachers about them together to share insights and ideas." Peg nods her head, typing notes on her laptop as he talks.

Marc then zeroes in on his student learning goal. Together he and Peg review the graphic organizer Peg developed for principals to analyze progress toward their student growth goals (Appendix J). Marc's goal is to increase the numeracy fluency from 1-100 for his lowest achieving second graders. Peg again asks about the evidence Marc has gathered and he brings out the pre- and post- test he designed to see if the interventions he is working on with his teachers are having the desired effect with students. Peg reviews the assessment tool and then together they discuss the distribution of student scores, classroom by classroom. Some of the results are surprising, they agree, as they note that the school's strongest math teacher's students show the least amount of gain. Peg asks Marc if there is anything he needs before they move on, noting that gathering evidence on soft goals, such as knowing students individually, is tough and encouraging him to be clear on how he will know he is making progress. "I like what you've shared today, but keep it up. Convince me," she says.

Cal, Vista's superintendent, has joined them, listening attentively as Peg asks what Marc is doing to move his teachers forward with the work – as individuals and in PLCs. Cal chimes in occasionally. "What kind of conversations are you having? Are you walking into classrooms? Looking at data? Which teachers are you worried about? What are you doing to support them?" Peg reminds Marc of her belief that you actually have to have the conversations all the time with teachers about what they're doing for each child in their room, what assessments they are using to move the learning, and that when you see what they cannot do, to consider what you are going to do to support them. "Are you providing coaching? Are you providing professional development? Are you going in and modeling the lesson?" Cal jumps in again with some additional questions related to several PLC meetings he dropped into recently. Marc leans forward in his seat as he energetically responds to the data Cal has gathered, adding questions of his own to the exchange.

Peer Observation

Michelle is in the middle of the lesson that her fifth-grade peers are observing. Her students sit in a literature circle at the front of the room. Her colleagues are spread out behind the students, wedged in between desks that have been shoved toward the back of the room to make way for the circle. One of the observers recorded that it took the students less than 30 seconds to move their chairs and desks into this new configuration and that they did so independently upon some unseen signal from Michelle. Michelle is sitting in the circle, but her body is turned slightly sideways and she is almost slouching away from her students, her face turned slightly downward as if she's trying to hide. She

says nothing. Her students have copies of the text to be discussed in hand and after a

long silence, gradually begin to talk, posing questions of each other and sometimes

building on each other's thinking. Some language appears familiar to the other students

as if they have been taught to use specific questions or sentence stems, which in fact they

have as a district-wide strategy to promote student engagement. "Why do you think

that?" "I agree/disagree with … because…." "Can anyone add to his/her thinking?" The

observing teachers are curious about Michelle's role in the discussion and make notes to

ask her about that during the debrief that will follow.

By 11:30 Marc is back at Skyview and joins the fifth-grade team in the

conference to debrief Michelle's lesson. Because he missed the actual lesson, he will

depend on what others noticed, but wants to make sure that any feedback has a positive

spin to it. Michelle, smiling, seems calm and is happy to have the observation behind her

and to explain why she did what she did during the lesson.   In her opening reflection of

the lesson, she does just that.

"Remember, you guys, that I said I'm trying to get the kids to talk to each other?

I have some students that are just so shy and others that always look to me, like for

approval or something, when they do talk instead of to each other. I think it is because I

have such a strong relationship with each of them. But anyway, today, I tried something

different – to kind of be invisible in the circle, sort of, so that the kids will talk to each

other and learn to forget I'm there. I'm pretty happy with how it worked, but you can go

ahead and tell me what you noticed." Michelle listens, taking a few notes, as Gloria and

the other teachers shared the data they recorded during the lesson.   She's pleased that

some of her younger colleagues, the newer teachers, were able to learn from watching her

classroom and the feedback she receives confirms her feeling that her peers would be

amazed at what they saw.   Michelle believes she's been employing engagement

strategies for years – longer wait times, accountability for student participation. She has

worked hard on that and she says to herself as she and Erin head off on their lunch break,

"Yeah! You know whether you're good or not."

Lunch Hour

Marc runs into Peg and Cal as he joins the other two elementary school

principals for their weekly principal PLC lunch meeting. Peg heads to a table with her

instructional coaches; Cal decides to join the principals. The waitress brings them

lunches without taking orders – this is a small town and they are regulars – as the

principals quickly decide to focus their meeting on calendar. A seemingly trivial issue,

coordinating calendars across this district's professional development system, making

sure they haven't double booked teachers who may be expected to be at conflicting

events and navigating district-mandated sessions with their own building-based needs,

can result in some level of competition for available substitutes. This, on top of testing

dates, leads to complex scheduling and they all express some frustration as they pull up

calendars on their smart phones and compare notes. None of them, however, question

the need for the professional development or for the alignment and consistency between

buildings reflected in the district's instructional mandate.

Peg sits in another section of the same restaurant with Julia, her literacy

consultant, and the elementary and middle school literacy coaches in a working lunch,

debriefing the morning's coach professional development. Each coach had been asked to bring a professional development topic that needed a lesson plan and they agreed that their collaborative work that morning had been useful. Julia explained to Peg that just before lunch she had rolled out the new Coaching Professional Development Planning document (Appendix K) and they were discussing now how to align each school's professional development foci with grade-level PLC goals and available coaching support. The coaches were generally pleased with the planning tool that asked them to map their plans for the next school year but acknowledged they were glad they would have a chance that afternoon to be working on them together. The day would conclude, noted Julia, with the coaches working through a planned professional development session to develop more skillful coaching strategies.

Peg listens to their conversation and then adds her expectation that the coaches become comfortable with teaching in the moment. "So Robert, if you're sitting with Sandra who is conferring with a student, you want to make sure that she knows who that student is as a reader. You expect Sandra to make a decision on a teaching point and then teach that student in that moment. As her coach, you have to do that with Sandra as well. Look for that teaching point in that moment on how she is conferring with that student and work with her around that in whatever way is most appropriate in that moment. I'm not saying it is easy. Far from it, but it is what our students and teachers need from you," she concludes with a smile, "and it is why Julia is here to support you." It is a reminder to them all that their roles as instructional coaches are varied – working with adult learners in whole group, small group formats, team-level PLC meetings, and one-on-one

coaching sessions – on request from the teacher, or when requested by the principal or the data itself. Robert, Skyview's instructional coach, reminded Julia that he would need to leave early enough to cover Steve's class. He explained to the other coaches that this teacher is working with his para-educators so that they can better understand the academic work and instructional strategies the teachers are using to help their students. It is one more way Vista's instructional coaches support the learning system. As they depart, Peg checks with Julia to see when she and the instructional coaches are next scheduled to walk through classrooms together. She wants to join them to see how their instructional calibration is coming along.

Erin's Lesson

Cal and Marc leave the restaurant together, heading back to Skyview for Erin's math lesson. Cal hasn't actually witnessed the peer observation program he is funding and wants to see it in action. And although he has been in Erin's classroom several times, he has never actually seen her deliver a lesson. They quietly enter Erin's classroom shortly after the lesson gets underway. Erin's eyes widen slightly when she sees the superintendent slide into a chair just behind her students who are clustered on the floor near the white board and a flip chart. As she indicated she would do during her observation briefing, Erin has begun with a review of the previous day's math content – double digit division – before moving on to triple digits. It is soon apparent, however, that the students have not mastered yesterday's lesson and Erin spends the entire lesson re-teaching the previous day's content. The lesson ends with no reference to the new content and the teachers head back to the conference room to debrief the lesson.

The teachers are full of data around the students' low conceptual grasp of the content, information Erin had requested they collect, and the kinds of conversations students had with each other during the frequent turn-and-talks Erin utilizes to promote stronger engagement. Several teachers note that the students they observed closely did not both participate during paired conversations. One teacher recorded how many times Erin called on one particular student and noted that some other students with their hands raised didn't get called on at all. Cal sits alongside the other teachers at the table listening to the data. His posture is relaxed as he shares a few of his own observations leaning forward slightly as he talks. "I notice that you kept your body turned to the right while you were teaching. I wonder how you were able to see the students to your left and how you knew they were all engaged in the lesson." Erin takes notes and looks thoughtful. "And," he continued, "I wondered what assessments you used to know whether the kids met the learning target. I didn't notice any today." Erin is quiet, as the protocol demands, and listens to the rest of the data, continuing to take notes. As the teachers depart, Marc leans over to Gloria and whispers, "I'm going to get an hour with her tomorrow. There were a lot of positives in this lesson and none of that data was shared today. She's so new to the classroom – I want to make sure this does not demoralize her. She is so tough on herself anyway." Gloria nods in agreement and makes a mental note to follow up with her as well.

Erin heads to her classroom to check in with her students before they go home and supervise any students whose buses are late. When the last student has left, she goes to her to-do list and determines how much she can get done before the teacher union

meeting at 4:00. She is not thrilled with her lesson and feels a bit chagrined that the superintendent was there to witness it. She knows she should have known the kids weren't ready for the content she had planned, but somehow missed that. Erin also can't wait to tell Michelle about an experience she had with one of her students the day before. Michelle will understand; she's as frustrated with the focus on data and testing as Erin. Erin's not sure she's really frustrated with the testing, but she does think the kids are so much more than the tests. The student yesterday put together some bookshelves Erin had brought into the classroom without even reading the directions. He was so proud of himself and she was amazed at this kid who struggles with almost every academic task he is given. He has this skill she knew nothing about. She laments, not for the first time, about what tough lives so many of her students have and how much she wants to make a difference. Maybe, she thinks, she can find time to bring this up in tomorrow's PLC meeting but she doubts it. The new building-wide PLC accountability structures make their time together very tight, very scripted. It drives Michelle crazy, too, she knows. Erin begins to clean off her desk, leaving behind only her to-do list. She looks at the clock again and heads to her union meeting, hoping it will be short. She wants to get on the road by 5.

Math Tasks

Sandra and the other math representatives have reconvened for the afternoon at one of the other elementary schools in the district. She has spent the first part of the afternoon with the other math representatives working through a math task that is a part of the next unit of study they will be expected to begin the following week. The district

math coach had each of the teacher representatives consider the task through the lenses of learner *and* teacher. Sandra finds that the confusion surrounding her own experiences in actually doing these tasks is helpful in understanding what her students will no doubt experience as well. She feels the familiar frustration and angst in a content area in which she doesn't feel strong and with an instructional approach that in no way matches how she was taught to do math. She has learned to be patient with the process and knows that once she struggles through it to a solution, it will all make sense.

Sandra is ready with specific questions about the lesson when Deborah brings in a group of second graders to model the lesson. She pays attention to the role Deborah plays in the learning process, noting the familiar language as students are asked to do the lion's share of the thinking and how Deborah never bailed the students out when they were stuck, even when it felt painful. The math representatives all watch Deborah as she skillfully navigates the students' confusion. "Wow, let me put this up on the board." She writes the question posed and continues. "We're stuck, guys. Turn to your partner and see if you can figure it out." In 30 minutes Sandra and a partner will be teaching the same lesson to another small group of students, trying it on while Deborah is there to coach them. Sandra makes careful notes about the process and parts that are especially difficult. She will be responsible for teaching this unit to her grade-level team at their PLC meeting later this week. As she waits, she thinks about the students she will be tutoring after school shortly and how she might apply some of what she's learning today to that session.

Joe gets his class ready to leave a bit early so that he can attend his PLC meeting that begins at 2:55 – about 10 minutes before the bell rings. His students join the other fourth graders who will spend the last 10 minutes of this day in the hallway with the para-educators. He's anxious to share with Floramie and his other teammates what happened when he tried supporting his low readers by increasing their group status. Mixed results, he thinks, but definitely something to keep working on. He chats with Floramie as the fourth-grade PLC leader arrives with the note-taking template they are required to complete and turn in for each meeting. They launch into the day's agenda they had agreed on together – to review the math unit they began last week, share what went well and what didn't, and decide which rubric they will use to grade it. As they make adjustments in the unit their assistant principal, Gloria, joins them to share that the district is finalizing a unit assessment sheet. "We want you to have something concrete to turn in at the end of each unit. It will require data on which problems all or most students got wrong, along with planned interventions to help those not meeting proficiency. And," she says, "You'll need to specifically note how you will measure whether or not they are making progress" (Appendix L). The teachers conclude their discussion by agreeing on the next meeting's topic – data and progress toward their PLC goals. They hope to see the growth Marc predicted during that morning's staff meeting.

Administrator Learning

At 4, Marc, Gloria, and the other district administrators gather at the district office for their weekly leadership meeting. Marc and Gloria sit with the other elementary administrators. The high school and middle school administrators are present, as well as

the district's financial officer and Cal, the superintendent. Cal opens the meeting with a brief welcome and commentary on how well he thinks the mid-year evaluations are going and how much he appreciates the constant focus on instruction throughout the district.

"I've said it before, but I can't say it enough. The greatest factor in student achievement is the teacher in the classroom.   I'm not saying that home life doesn't have an effect – or poverty, or language. Of course all of those things affect whether students achieve or not, but the greatest factor is the teacher and the second greatest factor is the leadership – you. So while we know you cannot attend every single professional development session, you also know that you cannot give teachers feedback or support them if you don't know what good teaching should look like. So you have to attend enough to understand the content and pedagogy of the work that we're asking teachers to do. We've spent a lot of time in the last couple of years actually using data. We're not there yet but our PLCs are way better than they ever have been and our teachers are looking at data way more than they ever have, and truly analyzing it."

Cal hands the meeting over to Peg. Working from an agenda that includes learning targets and success criteria (Appendix M), Peg launches into a presentation of the new unit assessment system (Appendix N), noting that their goal today is to actually identify the standards needed to assess each unit and what achievement should look like for each standard. "I want you to consider how you'll monitor student progress and give feedback to teachers during each unit. This goes right along with our emphasis on evidence in your mid-year evaluations and the PLC goals."

The administrators work in leveled groups for 45 minutes until Peg asks for reflection and what they have learned through this process. Marc shares how challenged he is by the content issues in literacy. "One of the things we talked about is how with the reading work – some of this is new. There is no script. You don't just read it and then the kids go do it…. Not even close. Personally, I'm reeling. With Gloria's support I can go into a first-grade literacy lesson and mock my way through it right now. But it is that complex when it really gets down to it. So giving feedback to teachers that is the right feedback is pretty challenging.

"We also talked though, about how this is a safe place and our schools need to be safe places. In order for it to be safe, we've got to be comfortable talking about data together in front of each other, practicing that. And I think just addressing some of our building issues within our culture so that we can do this kind of work is critical. I don't think we could do this if people didn't realize it is okay to be a learner. It is okay to make mistakes and it is okay to definitely make mistakes in front of my bosses. I think we're all trying to model that in our buildings and certainly we practice it here."

There are nods as Peg offers a final thought before closing off this learning portion of the meeting. "I have said several times in the past few days that you can provide the best professional development there is, with the best people out there, but if you don't have strong leadership to make that happen, it is not going to go anywhere. I've been in education for a long time and have seen so many districts that hire and spend thousands and thousands of dollars to bring in these great consultants, but nothing ever

happens because they don't have the strong leadership. They don't have the structure to move the work. This is one of those structures that we're building here."

She turns the meeting over to Doug, their assessment director. He provides some needed information about the new Smarter Balance assessment system that will measure student progress in meeting the new Common Core State Standards. Cal closes the meeting with what he calls his Round Table Discussion, asking if anyone wants to bring up an item for discussion. The room is busy with folks packing up their briefcases and backpacks; attention that evening is elsewhere. The high school principal walks out with Peg and Cal discussing the book he's currently reading, Carol Dweck's *Growth Mindset* and they agree to meet the following day after school to dig more deeply into that content and its implications for their students and teachers.

By 5:30 Marc and Gloria are in Cal's office to finalize plans for that evening's school board meeting. Steve has finished coaching the high school's wrestling team and has joined them to assist in the presentation. It is their turn to share how Skyview is progressing toward their school improvement goals. Marc and Gloria outline the progress they believe they've made, the evidence they'll present, and where they feel their next area of emphasis lies. Peg, who has been debriefing with Julia in her office steps in for the last portion of the discussion. At 6:00 the four of them head to the board room for last-minute preparations for the 6:30 board meeting, their last official function of the day.

Discussion

This discussion presents the first level of analysis of the Vista School System, drawn from this narrative and intended to create an overview of the system.   Recall that a significant component of this research around collective efficacy considers the system in which these teachers practice and how particular systems attributes contribute to the development or regression of efficacy.   The narrative of the Vista School District shown through a hypothetical day paints a realistic portrait of the ways in which leaders behave, the kinds of expectations for leaders and teachers, some of the interactions among teachers and between teachers and principals, and the role of the superintendent and his assistant in leading instructional improvement. This discussion will briefly review aspects of this narrative that illustrate organizational attributes of the school or district that speak to the gaps in the literature outlined in Chapter 2:

- The use of *positional authority* as a leadership practice;

- The intersection of *informal accountability systems with psychological safety;*

- The way *adult learning* is conceived and modeled within the larger system, that is, whether teachers are expected to be *experts;* and

- *Cross-role collaboration* embedded into the peer observation process.

A more complete analysis of the system in response to this dissertation's research questions and that incorporates data gathered through the teacher narratives is presented in Chapter 11.

Positional Authority as a Leadership Practice

The most prominent use of positional authority in this narrative comes through the presence of those in supervisory positions in what might traditionally be considered

private domains. At the school level, Marc refers to his consistent presence in classrooms, his intimate knowledge of how teachers teach, and dropping in on professional learning community meetings, apparently unannounced. Skyview's assistant principal, Gloria, does the same. This practice is true as well for the superintendent and assistant superintendent. Peg spends her day moving between various activities within the district, for example, Skyview's staff meeting and the instructional coach lunch meeting. Cal, the superintendent, dropped into peer observation without advance notice and casually joined the principals for their professional learning community lunch meeting.

What is important to note about their presence is the way in which each of these individuals, in particular Marc and Peg, intersperse authority-driven expectations with offers of support. For example, Peg is specific in what she expects her instructional coaches to do with teachers. She also acknowledges the difficulty of her mandate *and* reminds them that they need only ask if they need help:

> So Robert, if you're sitting with Sandra who is conferring with a student, you want to make sure that she knows who that student is as a reader. You expect Sandra to make a decision on a teaching point and then teach that student in that moment. As her coach, you have to do that with Sandra as well. Look for that teaching point in that moment on how she is conferring with that student and work with her around that in whatever way is most appropriate in that moment. I'm not saying it is easy. Far from it, but it is what our students and teachers need from you and it is why Julia is here to support you.

Along with their presence, each of the district leaders uses authority in stating clear performance expectations from teachers. One of these expectations is the instructional mandate as evidenced by the varied types of professional development and support provided around instructional expectations. Elmore and Forman (2011)

specifically call out an instructional mandate as a key organizational process that leads to collective efficacy. The Vista District developed tools to support and assess their mandate, such as the unit assessment template to report data in math and literacy; these reports are required, another example of how authority is used in this district. These same standards hold true for principals as well. Marc is required to provide evidence of progress toward his goals in his evaluation in the same way that teachers are expected to show evidence of progress toward their student growth goals in their professional learning communities.

Accountability and Psychological Safety

The district's instructional mandate also guides the accountability system. The student learning goals required of each professional learning community, along with a calendar for goal reporting, illustrate a key element of accountability. Notable is the assumption of psychological safety among the teachers in the expectation that they publically report progress toward goals and in the classroom-by-classroom breakdown display of student performance in the staff conference room. Although the teacher narratives will reveal varied responses to this aspect of accountability, nothing significant in the data came through that suggests there is not a high level of psychological safety to influence the accountability expectations. More to the point of this study are the leader behaviors that may have contributed to its presence. Recall in the narrative how Marc sits directly with teachers in their PLC meeting and reviews the data along with them, asking questions and wondering out loud about individual students: "Why do you think your students could do that? Why was this student successful and this one wasn't?" This approach suggests that Marc displays a learning stance, found by Edmonson (2008)

to support psychologically safe organizational climates, although how teachers perceive his questions will greatly influence whether they view these questions in a learning, or threatening, manner. Again, their responses will be revealed in the teacher narratives and discussed in depth in Chapters 10 and 11.

Conceptions of Student and Adult Learning

The narrative illuminates Vista's conceptions of adult learning as we visited the math professional development session in which Sandra was asked to complete the academic tasks she would be giving to a sample group of students later that afternoon. Sandra was immersed in confusion as she confronted the task. She was expected to work her way through the task, just as students were required to when the consultant modeled the lesson with a small group of students. Recall that the consultant responded by writing the area of confusion on the board and had the students problem solve in pairs. This strategy describes an inquiry approach to learning for both students and for the teachers. This example also illustrates alignment of student and adult learning, something Roberts (2012) and Elmore (n.d.) describe as symmetry in learning, where adults and students experience the same expectations. It also describes an approach to adult learning that is more aligned with expectations of experts as defined by Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993).

In fact, this type of symmetry is present throughout the narrative. When Peg explains what she wants her teachers to be doing in the classroom to her literacy consultant, she shows the need for deep levels of pedagogical content knowledge and expert learning in as an example, literacy:

> "Okay Luke, tell me what's going on." And Luke just does the basic retell. So the first thing I notice is that Luke is not inferring. He's not really talking about the character in the book because he's not making inferences. So I would want to hear from the teacher, something like, "Tell me more about this character. What

do you know about him?" And then maybe I would want to see them together go back and reread the section to notice something the character said, with the question, "What does that tell you about the character when she says something like that?"

Marc's comments in their administrator professional development session illustrate how the district's expectations for expert adult learners also show up for principals:

> One of the things we talked about is how with the reading work – some of this is new. There is no script. You don't just read it and then the kids go do it…. Not even close. Personally, I'm reeling. With Gloria's support I can go into a first grade literacy lesson and mock my way through it right now. But it is that complex when it really gets down to it. So giving feedback to teachers that is the right feedback is pretty challenging.

Additional data will be layered onto this initial summary of adult learning expectations and practices, including the presence of self-authorship in the teacher narrative discussions and the final three chapters.

Cross-Role Collaboration

The final organizational and leadership practice drawn from the narrative relates to collaborative practices in the Vista School District, specifically those that bring together different roles, including those in supervisory positions. As noted in Chapter 2, cross-role collaboration is rarely practiced and we cannot know at this point how teachers respond. We do know, however, that in this school system practice is public, a point reiterated by the superintendent:

> Our teachers need to know that their practice is public and that it is not about them. It is about the practice and their rooms are wide open for people to be in and visit and look at and they can do the same. So their practice is going to be public and I think we are way past the olden days where people are worried about people coming in their rooms because there may be some anxiety, but really, it is common practice. Kids know it. Teachers know it. You can go anywhere, any time in any room. So they have to be ready for that.

The narrative also provides numerous examples of how practice is public and how different roles participate in collaborative practices. The superintendent's surprise visit to Erin's classroom during peer observation and his intended participation in a collegial manner is one example. We will learn from Erin's narrative how she felt about his participation. The principal and assistant principal both participate openly in the teachers' professional learning community meetings, as well as the peer observation process. Again, we don't know at this time how their presence is received, but the cross-role collaboration process is so common that it is likely to have become an organizational norm, routine in the Vista School District.

Having established that the use of authority, internal accountability, expert and consistent learning expectations, and cross-role collaboration are established practices in the Vista School District, we now turn to the teacher narratives to learn how, in fact, those practices are received and whether or not the element of psychological safety appears to be present as is hinted in the grand narrative above.

CHAPTER FIVE: MICHELLE

When you come to my classroom, that's my baby. This is me. This is my passion.

(Michelle)

Michelle's classroom is her life's work. It's where she lives out her values of understanding, patience, and kindness. It's where she imparts those values to her students. It's where she teaches them, above all else, to be kind.

"I have taught them that though learning is important, the way you treat people is MORE important."

If Michelle's classroom is her canvas to live out her life, her students are the colors in her portrait. She prides herself on knowing them well, *really* knowing them.

"Years after they leave Skyview Elementary School, when they come and visit me, or I see them at a grocery store or function, they'll ask me, 'Do you know who I am? Remember me?' I know exactly who they are. I just focus in on their eyeballs and say, 'Okay. Everything may change, but the eyes stay the same' and it transports me back to when they were younger. I am still in contact with my first year students here. They are now 32 years old."

That was 22 years ago. Michelle has spent her entire teaching career, including her student teaching, at Skyview Elementary. She's taught under the leadership of four principals, survived a school-wide conversion to dual-language instruction per grade level, and currently keeps her students for 2 years through a system known as *looping* that allows her to build that all-important relationship with her students – the area in

which she feels most successful. Her challenges? Standardization – be it through testing

or an administrative push for uniform instructional practices.

"I feel like sometimes they [administrators] lose sight that I'm the one in the

trenches and that I'm doing the work. There is a moment where I feel like an admin will

come in and ask, 'Where's your learning target?'

"'I don't have it up.'

"'Why not.'

"'Because I'm not teaching that right now. I put it up when I'm teaching it.'

"'Well, you should put it up so I can see it when I come in here.'

"I feel like – I'm a human being – why are you talking like that to me? You talk

more nicely to belligerent and angry, crazy parents than you do to me and I'm the worker.

So then that creates kind of this distrust – I don't trust you. When you come in here – you

don't know me. You stand in the back of my classroom and judge me. You don't sit and

visit with my students. So am I going to put it up? No. Because that's not how I do it.

But if you want me to jump through a hoop, I'll do it. So I don't like that. It's not a good

feeling. I don't feel safe. In my head, I am screaming, 'Get out!!!' That's how I feel."

It's no wonder, then, that Michelle's first reaction when she was "volun-told" to

be observed during the peer observation process was "Ahhhhhh." All the air kind of got

sucked out of the room.

"I always felt that I do wonderful things in my classroom. And I know that. Is it

conventional? Like everybody else? No. And I know that as well.   And one day, a

couple years ago Mr. Elliott approached me about the [peer observation] work. 'I see

great things in your room. I think it needs to be shared.' And I said, 'No. Absolutely

not.' And he said, 'Why not?' And I said, 'It's like a treasure. I have created a treasure in my classroom. And I've tried sharing it before. And people who don't believe in it kind of scoffed at it…., like, they don't have time for that. And so I've learned to just care for it myself.'

"But I'm very open with Mr. Elliott. We were friends before he became my boss. He knows me, and what I like about him is he listens and then he'll say – 'Okay Michelle.' Like, I always have a meeting with my kids every morning. We call it 'checking in.' We're in a circle and it's a time for the kids to get off their chest whatever happened at home that they bring to work. I call school their work. They tend to tell me if they didn't have breakfast or are hungry or tired or there's fighting going on at home. They make a promise that all the bad stuff has to stay outside the door, like luggage at the airport that you check in, you no longer have it with you. When you check in with me you have to do your best to learn. Because I come every day prepared to teach and they need to come to learn. And if it's really that bad, then they have options and I'm not going to be mad at them and they know that.

"Mr. Elliott had noticed that everybody else was teaching [during the time I do check-in] but me. He brought it up in my evaluation and I became really offended. 'Like, really? You're going to take that away from me?' That was how I did my relationships with my students. And he said, 'I didn't say you had to stop. I just want you to consider cutting back a little.' He didn't tell me to stop. That helped.

"And so Mr. Elliott convinced me to become part of this process. I first thought, 'Oh my gosh I'm going to be judged.' Nobody wants to be judged. At the time I did not know what to expect. I just remember being in the room and you were so quiet and I

didn't know you and I remember asking you a lot of questions that had nothing to do with

what we were doing. Like, who are you, where do you live, how many kids do you have?

We got down to personal stuff because I need that. I need to have that connection. If I

get to know you just a little bit….

"I think the first year we didn't know what we were doing. It was so open. I

remember we went into the staff lounge and did some charting. I kind of didn't

understand. What are we charting for? What are we doing? At the time it felt like busy

work. You were so adamant about, 'No parking lot talk.' But that's all we knew [how to

do].

"What was surprising was how you were adamant about not judging. You said,

'Oh, no, we're not going to judge. We're going to go in there as observers, as learners.'

And I was, like, what? You're asking us to do something we're basically not used to.

Because all teachers are control freaks and they want to take over. You were very

demanding, but in a very polite way. You had this air about you, like you didn't care if

someone had been teaching for 30 years or for one year. I liked that. But sometimes, it is

nerve wracking when you're being observed, no matter how confident you are, no matter

how long you've been teaching.

"I didn't volunteer to be observed, but I remember Mr. Elliott saying, 'You should

volunteer.' I was in fourth-grade and there were some teachers in there and I didn't feel

safe. I basically cleaned them out of my head because I have to take care of myself. I

felt like, 'OK. This is it. I'm letting you in. I'm giving you a piece of *me* and if you

judge me, then shame on you, or whatever. I'm going to be the best I can be.'

"I was nervous about one particular teacher. She doesn't ever compliment me. She's very negative towards me. Anything that comes out of her mouth is not nice. Because she's an older teacher and I respect her I don't say anything. She put in her time. If that's how she really feels about me, I don't care. She is a good teacher. I'm here to learn from her. In education we label veteran teachers as dinosaurs. But I really respect old teachers. I think, 'That is me someday.'

"But you were just really good about controlling who could say what in the debrief. I really liked that. You said, 'We're going in there as observers. You have to have a lens [for observing]' and I love how you said [to the teacher being observed], 'What do you want us to look for? Because that's all we're going to focus on.' I liked that. I think when I was observed my focus was air time, to see if was balanced with girls in the way that they talked. And I knew that people who came to observe me would be amazed at what they saw. Because I work really hard on student accountability and building a community – air time, accountability, wait time. I've been doing that for years. So when we debriefed I got to hear what the teachers thought – what they liked.

"I like how you said, 'We're not here to give suggestions on how to make it better.' I was like, 'Yeah!' As a teacher, you know. You know whether you're good or not. But if they did [give a suggestion], your format on how to articulate that to the teacher being observed was really good. Because if I want this teacher to notice that she only calls on boys, I have to think of a way to make it be positive. You were really good about redirecting.

"I try to actually do that with my students. I always tell them when you're giving feedback (I don't use that word but I will now), when you're telling someone what your

thoughts are – you need to think about what you're going to say, that you'll hurt their feelings. You want to get to the point, this is what you're doing wrong. But it comes across really bad. And you don't want to ruin that person to where you're never going to want to teach anymore.

"I enjoyed going to other people's classrooms because I got to see how they were. Our teachers – we're very diverse. We have different personalities. Most of the time I just try to listen. I want the quiet teachers to say something. They're quiet in real life and they're quiet in that situation. And they stay quiet. I want to observe them. I want to know how they are. I think of teachers like my students. There's the odd one, there's the quiet one. There's the one who won't say anything unless you ask, and knows the answer. I think we have so much to learn from everybody, that they [the quiet teachers] get missed. We all know that they don't like to talk. Because you know how they are, you should push, or pull, info out of them. 'What do you think, Trudy?' 'Oh Susan. You haven't said much. What do you think?' Because they're amazing – they have wonderful things to say. And to think that they'd get missed just because they're quiet and low-key.

"The first year we were all very compliant. But the second year I felt like, 'Shut up. Let other people talk.' But they [the quiet teachers] didn't get to talk because we ran out of time. That kind of pissed me off because there's a format we need to follow and you were not following it. And if people go outside the expectation, it kind of irritates me. That's why I was giving you that look. Remember I was looking at you? 'Harriette, tell them to stop [talking].' I like it when you're in charge. I like it when you tell us what to do.

"Now I'm learning to be quiet, because if I'm quiet, then they have to speak up. And that's kind of like trying to encourage the kids to talk. I think everybody wants to be heard but they're not getting a chance. Maybe they just don't know how to say what they want to say. Or maybe they are slower processers; it takes them awhile. This is true even for grownups; maybe it's even worse sometimes for grownups. Because we're dealing with humans, it's evolving. You can't put a timer on it. And I kind of wonder, if I were them, would I think, 'We were in this meeting and I didn't get to talk.' Or, 'How come I haven't been observed?' The quiet ones: They're not ever observed. And then I wonder, 'what is the process? How do they pick who gets observed? Is it a draw? How come we weren't picked?'"

Michelle has not been privy to how people are selected to be observed and the role her principal and vice principal play in that process, but she is clear about whom she wants to hear from during the process – her peers, her fellow teachers.

"I don't want admin to talk. I know it sounds horrible, but I think that in their roles, they're always going to push back regardless of what we do. To me, even if you're an admin, you're an equal with me. I'll cut you off and you should do like I do. But there are teachers where, you bring them [admin] in there and they shut down. Gloria is more vocal than Marc. And I don't know if she realizes this, but when she's questioning, she does it in a way that kind of makes you defensive. Marc is questioning, 'Hey, tell me about that. Why are you doing that?' Gloria is more directive."

Michelle confirms that her principal and vice principal's behaviors during peer observation are consistent with their leadership style outside of peer observation. When

asked about the connection between peer observation and other building processes, such as professional development, however, she was less convinced.

"It doesn't come up. There's no connection until the next time we meet with you. Once in awhile, it's, 'Oh, remember that's the Harriette thing.' And so my frustrating part is, 'Why are we doing this? What is this for?' Because I really feel like the time is valuable. So if we're going to do this, let's do it. I take this stuff seriously. If we're going to do it, we're going to go all the way. I would prefer to see the same teacher again. Because I feel like one time is not enough. It's good to see variety, but there's something rewarding about seeing the same thing again. You're going to see if that behavior is the same. I want things to be genuine. I'm not saying they're not.

"I feel like everyone is really doing the Harriette work – holding accountable talk – the wait time. I think all of us are more in tune with that where before we were more glossed over. I really believe that the things that we brought to the table – people were doing that. There was very good constructive criticism. When I gave my opinion I meant it with 100% certainty – it was coming from a good place. What you do with that? That's up to you.

"When they gave *me* feedback – 'this is what you could do better,' not necessarily what you could do better, but 'this is what my noticings are,' – to me it was a good way for my colleagues to see things – especially the younger ones. We are a young team now. As I said, there's a gap between new hires and the ones who have been here for a long time, the older ones. The group is so diverse – by number of [teaching] years, which I like. There is a difference when you watch someone who's been here for 20 years, 30 years, and watching someone with 2 years experience. So when I watch a younger

colleague, I think to myself, 'I remember when I did that.' They're going through the same emotional duress that I went through. It was nice to see. You felt in check, like 'I get you, you get me.' I was always doing the things that we should be doing but now I've learned to improve on it by the comments and the observations from the other teachers. And so even though I'm not observed, I go back and say, that's how I'm going to do it in my classroom. And then when we get together [in grade-level team meetings] – when we talk about our frustration - 'remember you're not calling on the boys' – we do have those checks. And then sometimes we'll talk about wait time. It's continued outside that conference room."

Michelle is frustrated, though with the directives that seem to increase – consistent with her dislike for standardization.

"I go through all the motions." She pauses before continuing. "Like, I've lost the art of teaching because I'm told *when* to do it, *what* time, *this* moment, and "Oh, you have to be the same with your other grade level because it doesn't matter which teacher you go to. You all are doing the same thing. I think that that's just ridiculous. I feel bad for the students. We test, test, test those kids. Get the data. And then data scores amongst your peers are compared.

"And now they're also telling us what we can talk about in our [grade-level team] meetings and what we can't. We can't talk about anything other than data. I just find that ridiculous. And at every PLC they take role of who's there. We sign – they don't trust us. And I've just learned honestly to just be quiet. Because it doesn't even matter what I say. I don't like to do that because I feel like I'm not being real and sometimes I will eat it and just say what I really really think and then they just say well, 'okay.'" Michelle's

voice goes very quiet here. "I just feel like we're not heard any more. We get 'voluntold' a lot. When you're told to do something it changes everything. I don't feel so much in control anymore. I feel like sometimes I'm a puppet. Maybe that's kind of extreme, but I'm tired, Harriette. I'm tired of jumping, you know – how high do you want me to jump? And I don't want to jump today.

"*I* know what's best for my students. I know because I have a relationship with them and I know their capabilities. It doesn't matter how wonderful and amazing my lesson is, if they don't want to be here because of outside circumstances, they're not going to learn. And I know because they tell me. We get rewards through our students when they come back and they tell you wonderful things. Your rewards are in such small increments. I think everybody likes to be praised. You just don't get that.

"But [in peer observation] I really liked being acknowledged for the things that impressed the teachers. What they liked. What they saw. It's like a compliment. Because, oh man, I need that. We all know what we do is difficult. And sometimes you feel alone. When you're excited about what you're doing in your classroom and it's difficult to share that if they don't get it, if they don't understand you. And then, once in awhile somebody will notice something and you just let that feed you for a long time. In the middle of rainy days, you get that one day of sunshine. You just have to remember that. That's kind of rewarding.

"But it doesn't happen a lot. There's a lot of negativity in teaching. There really is. I think you just have to be a better person and know yourself that when an administrator is coming in, it doesn't mean that they're telling you you're horrible. But I think we're all so psyched in a way to always wonder, 'Oh, am I doing enough?' I have

made a difference in the lives of my students because they are thinkers, doers, and believers. I KNOW my students are prepared because I have taught them to be understanding, patient, and kind to themselves and to others. You would not know I have low status students. They treat each other with respect in the classroom and out. I am consistent and persistent in my rules and kids know where they stand. I hold them accountable. In all my teaching years I've had maybe two discipline problems. The middle school teachers tell me, 'I know which kids are from your classroom. The way they behave, work, talk, carry themselves….'

"Tests scores and data are important but all that means nothing if you grow up mean and unkind. It's a cliché I know, but oh so true: They will forget what I've taught them but they will never forget how I treated them."

Discussion

The final sentence of Michelle's narrative, "they will forget what I've taught them but they will never forget how I treated them," suggests that Michelle places relationships with her students ahead of the content she is required to teach. She expresses pride in knowing each of her students well, and in that context, a high level of confidence as a teacher. She states clearly that she knows what is best for her students and asserts that they are prepared, regardless of any other indicators.

Michelle also displays little regard for authority or administrator input into her practice to the point of admitting that she silently screams "Get out" when an administrator is in her classroom. Consistent with her focus on relationship is the distinction she makes between what she terms "admin" and the role her principal plays in her professional life. She seems to trust Mr. Elliott, noting that they were friends before

he became her boss, yet remains frustrated with administrator intrusion into her practice or the functioning of her professional learning community.   Her relationship with her colleagues appears to be fraught with fear of judgment and a concern that they would not understand her value system or what she tries to accomplish in her classroom. All of this is an important backdrop for examining how the peer observation process may have contributed to efficacy development, personally or collectively.

Sources of Efficacy

There are a number of elements in Michelle's story that suggest the peer observation process contributed to efficacy development. These are listed in Appendix O.   Most pronounced among the data are indicators of **verbal persuasion**, as she sought out and experienced affirmation from her peers, wanting to feel "acknowledged for the things that impress the teachers."   She does not note outright any success she might have experienced in a lesson that would contribute to her feelings of **mastery**, although she does acknowledge that she was able to use feedback to improve her practice. It is not clear from her interview, however, that she was able to access the detail beneath any feedback she received that might contribute substance to her sense of mastery. In one instance when she suggested an impact on her practice, one could infer that she was able to draw more depth than superficial affirmation, yet even this is tempered by a prior assertion of competence.

While these data do speak to her feelings of **mastery,** they also raise questions about the influence of peer observation developing efficacy. Michelle's response to

feedback suggests that it became, to her, a format for other teachers to learn from her, rather than as an avenue for her own learning.

> When they gave *me* feedback – "this is what you could do better" … not necessarily what you could do better, but "this is what my noticings are," – to me it was a good way for my colleagues to see things – especially the younger ones.

Despite this general trend of affirmation-seeking, Michelle's comments suggest that she was able to learn through seeing the successes of her peers and inferring her own capability. As an efficacy source, **vicarious experience** relies heavily on the concept of modeling (Bandura, 1994). More than using the experience of observing others as a way to verify or fortify her own skill set, her comments suggest interest to be more of a personal than professional curiosity. Here is the full quote from her reference to seeing other teachers.

> I enjoyed going to other people's classrooms because I got to see how they were. Our teachers – we're very diverse. We have different personalities. … I want to know how they are. I think of teachers like my students. There's the odd one, there's the quiet one. There's the one who won't say anything unless you ask, and knows the answer. I think we have so much to learn from everybody, that they [the quiet teachers] get missed. We all know that they don't like to talk. Because you know how they are, you should push, or pull, info out of them. "What do you think, Trudy?" "Oh Sydney. You haven't said much. What do you think?" Because they're amazing – they have wonderful things to say. And to think that they'd get missed just because they're quiet and low-key.

Note how she ends this thought, inferring concern for how they might feel – orienting to relationships and feelings, as she does with her students. Her orientation to relationships is consistent with her students, her peers, and with her principal and may be a tempering force to actual efficacy development, unless the efficacy she seeks relates to prowess in establishing relationships.

Also significant in Michelle's interview was her trepidation about being observed and a consistent concern throughout her interview that she would be judged negatively. The negative **emotions** she expressed about the process far outweighed the positive; even those categorized as positive were expressions of need for affirmation or ways in which she protected herself against any potential negativity, "cleaning them out in my head because I have to take care of myself." Michelle's fearful emotions about being observed cast doubt upon whether the heightened emotions caused by being observed served as a positive or negative influence on her feelings of efficacy. It could be inferred through this data that her emotional response to being observed was a destructive contribution to efficacy development.

The final component in an examination of efficacy sources moves to the arena of collective efficacy to determine whether or not this process caused Michelle to consider the competency of her peers in relation to the teaching task (Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2004). Here the evidence that Michelle came to any efficacious decisions about her colleagues' capacity is slim. She notes that everyone is "doing the Harriette work – holding accountable talk, the wait time" and that seeing her colleagues has helped her to realize that they are all in this together. What is more pronounced in her interview, however, is that the process provided the opportunity to "see how [other teachers] are" and suggestions as to how the process could be adapted to better enable that type of assessment.

Indications of Michelle's Developmental Stage

The analysis of Michelle's story to determine her level of development provided some evidence of self-authorship, but with more indications of a socialized mind form

and many uncertainties.   What is not noted in Michelle's story are questions asked during the interview to determine if she was "on the right track" and if she was doing everything correctly in the interview itself. This focus on me, the interviewer, points to her desire for affirmation from an external authority (the interviewer) in the process, symptomatic of a socialized adult. Michelle's reliance on the protocol provided and her angst when the protocol was not followed is an indication that there are rules to be followed, suggesting that she was unable to hold the process as object, yet at the same time she makes suggestions for its revision. Her remarks that challenge authority and an external standard for her teaching practices could be considered to be self-authored. What we do not know from the interview, however, is whether the standard she is favoring (i.e., relationships over content, freedom from standardized teaching practices, etc.) is also an externally derived value, albeit distinct from the norm of the district in which she teaches, or is one she has developed and now owns for herself.   Finally, her focus on safety and fear of judgment suggests that she may not be as confident as she wants to come across. Our final analysis was that Michelle is primarily socialized, but that she has some aspects of self-authorship developing into her world.

CHAPTER SIX: JOE

It's where I learn.
(Joe)

"This process is stressful. It's stressful all the way through. But it's like a football game. It's stressful before you start. And then you get into the game and forget about the stress. But with this, the aftermath is also stressful because you don't really know the game's score even though you're done and you're debriefing the game. The debriefing is nerve wracking but it's also my favorite part of the process. It's where I learn."

If there is one thing that seems to characterize Joe's brief tenure at Skyview Elementary School, it is his interest in learning and his desire to grow as a teacher. The opportunities for growth were a huge draw to working in the Vista School District, where he has time to go through the units he is required to teach and "ask other teachers questions. I feel like that's really beneficial for being a young teacher."   And Joe's interest in his own development clearly contributed to his being hired at Skyview during a time when jobs were hard to come by. As a student teacher in a nearby district visiting Skyview classrooms, Joe's curiosity and questioning capacity were noted by Skyview's principal, Marc, who brought him on staff the following year.

Now a second year fourth-grade teacher, Joe's memories of his first day on the job are still vivid. "I was *so* nervous. It was my first time being in a class all by myself and I thought I kind of had to set a tone. The first day you do. But looking back at it, I had no idea what I was doing my first day. No idea if I was setting the right tone or what the

right tone looked like. This year gave me a better picture and next year will be a better picture." He has come to feel most successful in teaching math, of which he "conceptually has a good grasp" and writing, that he is able to make fun "because I enjoy it." Joe is less confident with literacy, because "I don't enjoy it as much. It was something I struggled with growing up too. I never was a great reader. But it's easier to make math exciting, because I know it and I'm excited about it."

Joe gets his curriculum units once a month from the school's math and literacy leaders who then present it to other teachers. As a new teacher, Joe also received targeted support from Gloria, at that time serving as the school's instructional coach. "Before I even started, Gloria sat down with me and went through the first unit. Even though I wasn't an expert on it, that made me more comfortable. Now every year, every cycle we go through, I get a little more comfortable. And we sit together as a grade-level team and go through the units together. Now that I'm not a first-year teacher, I'm adding little things to it and taking out little things each time."

Joe works closely with two other fourth-grade teachers, but "it seems like I can go talk to anyone at any time. Whether it's someone from the SPED room or the office or the principal or the coaches or other teachers, they're always available. Sometimes I'll ask about strategies for engagement, sometimes it's where they are in a unit, sometimes it's for resources and materials, sometimes it's something I notice or is challenging about a kid. 'What have you done in the past?' or 'what do you know about this kid, this student?'" He meets with his fellow fourth-grade peers twice a week as a professional learning community (PLC) where they'll either "look at data, look at a unit, figure out challenges or successes in the unit, what worked well, what didn't…. We might look at

how we're going to grade, which rubric we're going to use. The topic that we choose

depends on the week and the agenda prepared by the PLC leader."

Every other week or so Joe's PLC is joined by Marc or Gloria. "It's almost like

having another teacher there. Yesterday Marc was looking at our assessments, kind of

going through the results, looking at student work…. He graded a couple, focusing on a

student's understanding of the work we've been doing. And then Marc will talk to us

about our PLC goals, making sure that we have them, how we're doing, what we're going

to be working towards next, setting up processes that allow us to – real quick, with, like,

two questions – check our students' work towards that goal that we have."

Joe describes his PLC as the first level of accountability for student growth and

for himself as a professional, "showing up on time, being responsible, making it to

meetings, being a participant. I remember last year I was late a couple of times and

[someone] came and talked to me." After that, accountability comes from Marc and

Gloria. They are constantly relating what's happening in our classrooms back to our PLC

goal and once a month we share our student data on whatever we're working on – math

or literacy – at a staff meeting. We'll report on what percentage of the students were

successful, or it could be pre and post tests for kids that show growth. Marc and Gloria's

role is to connect any of the strands of learning that go through the grade levels. Like, at

the beginning of the year, they focused on how multiplication facts in third grade would

affect partial product in fourth-grade and the standard algorithms in fifth-grade and how

it's all connected. They also get in to observe my teaching, usually with the literacy

coach, during the year and follow up with feedback and support."

Joe was observed in the peer observation process as a first-year teacher and again in his second year. "Both times I taught and was observed I found out the day before or the week before. It felt – as much as we say we're not judging – any time you get observed it feels, not judgmental, but you want to do well….be successful.

"I felt pressure to be observed. It was kind of portrayed like there was something going on my classroom that was good, that other people should (pause) see? And I mean, I was still nervous, even though that's a good thing, I was still nervous. I was still worried. Because I was new, I didn't want to say no.

"About 5 minutes into the lesson the nervousness starts to go away and I start focusing on the students more than the people who are there to observe. The students are definitely focused on the people in there as well.

"The first time, I remember that there was a lot of [teacher] modeling at the beginning of the lesson and we didn't really get to the engagement until the end and I know that the engagement is where we get the most data. So it didn't seem very remarkable, I guess. But this last time I did like the data that I got. There were some things about status that I had no clue were happening in my classroom, but because there were so many more eyes and ears, I could become aware of it. There were things, like, students weren't having a voice at times. And so now sometimes when I'm teaching I'm not as focused on the content in the groups but in how the groups are working together and making sure everyone has a voice.

"The first time I observed other teachers, I was looking for things I could use in my classroom and things that teacher did well. I don't really think the observation changed much about how I think of them as a teacher, mostly because it was only one

little lesson, 30 minutes. But then I can go talk to them about things they do in their

classroom.

"And then, I was also taking notes to help that teacher with their students.

Sometimes I feel like we would come up with data that would help the teacher, help the

group and that was specific to teaching practices…pulling out little things that anyone

could use any time. That was awesome. But sometimes I feel like it was just data for

data's sake. For example, 'Someone called on 17 boys and 15 girls' – something like

that. It's almost just data because we have it. I don't feel like that's something I could

use unless I was calling on, like, 19 boys and 2 girls.

"The second time [I went through the peer observation process], it was not so

much what I could do to help the teacher – well, it kind of was, but also what kind of

patterns we were seeing throughout classrooms. Because I noticed that there were things

happening in my classroom that were happening in a second class we observed. So it

occurred to me that the things that were happening, they were not just for that teacher but

could be for the whole building."

Joe sees Marc's role in the peer observation process as a "supporter of teachers. It

seems like when we share out he's making sure the teacher that was observed was

supported. I think he tries to keep us focused on what we can use from what we

observed. I think he tries to encourage us because there are times when we share out

criticism even though it's meant to be constructive. His voice helps put it into

perspective. Gloria's voice, though, is more of another teacher's voice instead of the

perspective voice."

As Joe compared the professional development he receives to the peer observation process, he noted that his professional development is "more theoretical whereas the [peer] observations are more how to put it into practice or actually finding things we *can* put in practice. Honestly, in PD there are times I walk away and say, 'I don't know how I'm going to use anything.' Whereas, when we do peer observation, there's always something I can walk away with. The data I got [from my peers] directly affected how I could change my classroom or change what I do to help my classroom. Getting criticism was difficult at first and then it was, 'How can I keep my mind open? How can I use that to be constructive?' That's my favorite part. How I can use it."

Joe finds the note-taking to be the most challenging part of the process for him. "I think sometimes I'm not sure what I'm looking for. I know that the people we're observing tell us what they want us to look for – but when I try to watch what students are doing and keep track of who's saying what and the time and keeping track of what the teacher wants us to keep track of, I feel like I fill up a page of things that are not important before anything important happens. I don't know. Maybe that's just the process of it. But then, I like seeing what other teachers are doing that I will use in my classroom."

As Joe reflects on his routine as a teacher, it is clear that collegial support is a big part of his day. "If I have questions I can pop in and out – real quick. At the end of the day I go down to the office if I have any questions…maybe meet with Marc a bit, bounce some ideas off him." And just as he readily grabs opportunities for support, to learn what he needs to know to help his students be successful, he also is acutely aware of how much support his students need.

"Language is a problem so I give them lots of opportunity for dialogue and support. And I keep food in the room. We have blankets available at Christmas time. There are no questions asked. I do feel like students can come to me. I give them an opportunity to come to me, an open invitation. I am a listener for them, with no judging. I will not give them an opinion unless I'm asked. No judgment.

"But honestly? I think success will vary from kid to kid, and it begins with their independence. I try to move all of them toward being more independent. There are ones that still rely on me, though, and I think those kids may not be as successful.

"If I use the analogy I used earlier, about peer observation being like a football game, with the stress of anticipation, the focus in the middle of the process, and then the stress of the not knowing the game score, it's similar with my students. I don't really know the end score for them. We won't know that for a long time, but that [student success] is what I have to work towards. It's why I have to grow."

Discussion

Joe's story suggests a strong desire for learning and shows curiosity about the learning process. As a new teacher, Joe recognizes that his effectiveness is grounded in the supports available to him and he draws on all of them, informally through casual interactions with his peers and his principals, and through the system's required structures: his grade-level professional learning community, required sessions with an instructional coach, and district-mandated professional development sessions, although he claims to find the latter to be the least useful to his practice. One might say he is hungry for concrete information that responds to his need-to-know moments as a teacher. His story shows evidence, too, that Joe is seeking to improve his practice beyond the

reactive challenges of a specific teaching situation. His response to data regarding student status in his classroom is evidence to that effect. Also notable was the principal's request that Joe be observed by his peers during his first teaching year. Marc told me that 6 months into the school year he had been in Joe's class as many as 50 times – and that he would evaluate him as exemplary in the area of student engagement.

Sources of Efficacy

There is evidence in Joe's story, detailed in Appendix P, that the peer observation process provided opportunity for him to experience all of the efficacy sources, some more than others. Notable is the absence of evidence that Joe was seeking affirmation of mastery during this process. He references experiences that could have been construed as negatively impacting his sense of **mastery**, instead asserting that the critical data received from others, in fact, make him a more successful teacher. He was not particularly interested in data that did not lead to improvement. Because of this, data that might not be considered to be an affirmation of mastery at the time of his lesson were considered to be mastery-related because it impacted his beliefs about his ability to successfully deliver content to his students. Joe responded to what might be considered negative feedback in ways that suggest the feedback served as a source of efficacy through future feelings of **mastery**, which he indicates did take place.

Joe expressed confidence that the peer observation process could and did provide opportunity to experience mastery **vicariously,** where he's looking for "things that teacher did well" and that "there's always something [he] can walk away with." And even though he believes he was asked to host a lesson because of something he was doing well, he clearly experienced heightened **emotion** as a result of being asked to host an

observation, describing it as "nerve-wracking" and "stressful." It is not clear, however, whether his stress over being observed proved to be destructive. Rather, there is some evidence that he was energized by the experience as he compared his anxiety to the exhilaration of participating in an athletic competition.

> But it's like a game. It's stressful before you start. And then you get into the game and forget it. But the aftermath is stressful because you don't really know the game score even though you're done and the game is over and you're debriefing the game. It's nerve wracking but it's also my favorite part of the process. It's where I learn.

Joe's desire to pick up things his colleagues do well is evidence that even as a new teacher he was assessing their ability to successfully teach their students, although he discounts the potential of the process to draw conclusions about **peer competence**. More important for him, perhaps, was the way in which the process enabled Joe to relate his own experiences as a teacher to those of his colleagues, as he was able to extrapolate patterns of practices across the building.

> I noticed that there were things happening in my classroom that were happening in a second class we observed. So it occurred to me that the things that were happening, they were not just for that teacher but could be for the whole building.

This is strong evidence of a collective outcome of the process. Joe is using this experience to consider the prevailing practices across the faculty, pointing to the potential that the peer observation process might lead to collective efficacy.

Indications of Joe's Developmental Stage

One of the notable aspects of Joe's interview was his calm demeanor and the absence of any conflict or sign of transition between stages. I had a sense that he knows how to create a safe world for himself. He is very comfortable in the role of learner and does not seem to be at the mercy of external authority. The research team analyzing this

interview noted the potential of mistaking his love of learning for self-authorship. In reality, Joe could be subject to the need to learn, rather than taking his learning stance as object. At the same time, his ability to look at the patterns of practice, holding them as object, felt self-authored, and possibly beyond.

These types of wonderings surfaced throughout our analysis of Joe's developmental level. One of the analysts noted a seeming lack of attachment to a bigger picture and believes that a more self-authored individual would not be as accepting of the status quo when asked about his confidence that his students will be successful:

> I think success will vary from kid to kid, and it begins with their independence. I try to move all of them toward being more independent. There are ones that still rely on me, though, and I think those kids may not be as successful.

Joe's ability to apply independent judgment in the classroom, even at this early stage of his teaching career, veer away from the scripted lessons, and his ability to look critically at his practice lent the appearance of self-authorship. It is also true that the teaching practices and his focus on learning and self-reflection are the norms in the Vista School District and are practiced routinely at Skyview. And as a new teacher, Joe may be subject to the norms of teaching and reflective learning behavior. In other words, the system in which Joe has learned to teach has a prevailing theory. We cannot know if Joe is subject to this prevailing theory or if he holds it as object. If that theory is external to Joe, it is likely that he is operating at a socialized level, accepting of the way teaching and learning happens at Skyview Elementary.

We were unable to come to consensus about Joe's developmental stage. What was clear to us is that he is not in transition between socialized mind-form and self-authorship and that more information would be required to finalize a collective

impression. Ultimately, I concluded that Joe is more centered in a self-authoring mind

and used this indication as a base for further analysis.

CHAPTER SEVEN: STEVE

> I don't care so much about the things I do well and get praise for. I like when I get negative feedback more, but maybe that's just because I like to learn.
>
> *(Steve)*

He feels like he's been teaching his whole life, always knew he wanted to teach. From driver's education, to coaching all ages in wrestling, to the middle school students he taught on the Yakama Reservation that launched his career in public education, Steve thinks he connects well with students because he understands them. "My parents think I belong in third grade," he jokes, referring to a self-proclaimed immaturity. "Maybe that's why I gravitated to teaching. I'm not sure, but I do think my relationship with students is one of my strongest suits. That and math. I love teaching math."

What comes across most strongly about Steve, however, the heart of everything he does, is his quest to understand *why*. Why his students struggle and why they succeed. Why they understand certain concepts and not others. Steve's approach to his profession is curiosity and he seems curious about every aspect for which he feels responsible as a third-grade teacher.

"That question of responsibility – what I'm responsible for as a teacher, is a long one: Assessing and understanding my students' knowledge…planning lessons to meet their needs, either confronting misconceptions or to further their understanding … assessing that they've learned and that my teaching actually helps them learn those things. I feel responsible for their safety. And I feel responsible for their motivation – motivating my students.

"I'm not talking about academic ability. The thing is, if they're not a motivated learner they are usually a lower achieving student. I'm talking about them wanting to

come here and be excited to do things, to be a part of what's happening, to be a part of the learning community, and not just be the wallflower. You know, actively participate. But how do I motivate a student when I just can't put my finger on what gets them to tick?"

With the breadth of responsibilities he feels for his students and the innate curiosity he has about the learning process, it's no surprise that Steve was eager "to get a chance to do [peer observation], to see how other people work in the building" and that it would be facilitated "with a purpose. Not just, let's go in and watch a teacher and then leave. I liked the idea of coming in with a purpose and having some of the protocols in place so that we all were kind of looking at the same thing in the same way, or at least if we didn't see it the same way we had a way to discuss what was going on. With the shifts in education we need to work with our teams, but if I have no idea of what my teammates are doing, then how do I trust that they're even doing their part, being a good team member, and things like that? Not that I think we don't. We have a pretty good staff. We always have that feeling of, 'Yeah, we are working hard' and we can see that we all work hard. But seeing each other's strengths – that part was all exciting at the beginning.

"It was also scary, opening up our practice. Everyone was really nervous about who would teach and who would observe. We were apprehensive and it felt like it would be more work to be observed. At the beginning I was willing to step up and teach quite a bit and be observed. Being the observed [teacher] was really awesome because I got to hear people's ideas and feedback from different perspectives. It let me think about my practice a little bit more. You could rethink what you did, 'Oh yeah, I could do this and this and this….' because when you're teaching you don't see the whole, or sometimes

things that come up, like misconceptions from students that I didn't plan for. I liked that.

And I got a perspective on how [other staff members] think about teaching and learning.

"I think as we went through the first year people started relaxing a little bit more

and realized, 'No it's not more work [for me as a teacher]. I don't have to be perfect for

the observation.' That's not what it's about. You don't have to be perfect. It's just

getting everybody in and thinking about instruction and learning, and talking about what

went well, what could go better. Why did they do that? What actually happened? What

was the outcome?

"And so people started opening up and then I got to be the observer more, which I

found to be difficult at times. We had to learn to be more analytical, more observational,

and in the beginning that was the hard part. We didn't think about *how* to observe before.

We had to learn to think about 'What kind of things are we looking for and why are we

looking for them?' versus 'I'm just going in to look for stuff I like.' I was looking for that

deeper 'Why are we doing what we're doing?' Then as we got better at it, I think, we all

started to have a better conversation. In the debrief time in the beginning it was a lot of

'Well, I liked that strategy,' or 'I liked that chart' versus 'Why did you make the chart,

what was the purpose of it?' 'What was the outcome?' 'Did it actually help the student

learn?' We moved more into the depth of the lesson, 'How did you do this and why did

you do this?' rather than a retelling of the lesson.

"As we proceeded we got more trusting and understanding of each other's work

because we actually got to see each other doing our jobs rather than listening to them tell

each other 'I did that.'   We would go back to our PLC and we would say, well did you

guys try this strategy or did you do this lesson? We would take it at face value because

we do talk to each other as professionals, but if people are actually getting in, [to each other's classrooms] and you've watched them do a lesson, you can know that they've done that kind of work when they say 'teaching' versus, 'I pulled the lesson plan out and I followed the steps.' That's kind of what I mean by trusting the work. It wasn't that I *didn't* trust my colleagues. I fully believe that everyone here wants to do the best for students. But now I can say, 'Oh I really know that you're doing this' instead of just being told that you're doing that.

"Maybe where I'm coming from with the trust is that we became more willing to be open with our practice and so maybe it was not more that I trust them, but they learned to trust us to come in, that they're willing to trust us to come in and look at their practice and look at it in a way that it's not 'We're trying to get you.' It's 'Come in and look at what I'm doing well and help me with the areas where I can improve.' And so having that openness from the knowledge that I'm really not here just to catch you doing something wrong may be a better way to say what I mean about trust.

"Marc [our principal] talked for years in this building about how we need to open our doors more, to come in and see what each other is doing. Before we started peer observation he wanted us to do it on our own. He's vocalized that since he's been here and if we wanted to have coverage to go watch another teacher, he'd find a way so we could go do that. He's even covered for me before so I can go teach lessons in other classrooms. He believes that the best way for us to grow is to work together on what we do well and use each other as a support system. 'If I do well on this and you do well on this, well how can we help each other do well on both those things.' So he was super

supportive of [this process]. And he did play an active role, coming to our debriefs and trying to be a part of as many observations as possible.

"Marc's pretty hands-on and motivated himself. He's curious about the same sort of things I am – how to get a kid to make movement and want to make that movement on their own. Often they want to make movement, but maybe just don't know how. He's always talking about our kids, not necessarily about numbers. He's using our data to talk about them, yeah, but he's not talking about them as a number. He talks about them as a student and then he wants to know why they are able to do what they are able to do. He's always asking those types of questions. 'Why do you think they can do that and why were they successful?' Or 'Why wasn't this student successful?' He sets high goals for himself and then in turn, obviously because he has high goals for himself, it carries down. We have high goals for our building, for each of our teachers, and for our students. In a way I guess he says, 'This is where we're going to go. You can go there. I am going to do what I can to get us there. I know we have constraints of reality, but we can control the things we can control and we're going to work on the things that we can do to make our building and our school and our community successful.'

"But I can also see Marc if I need to go talk to him about an issue of family life or whatever else. He's got an open door; he's willing to listen. That's not necessarily the professional side of a leader, but it's a huge part of it. I think that's one of the things he's good at – understanding the people in our building, putting us in places where we can help each other and where we can do our best. He's very good at identifying that.

"We have other supports build into our building and our district. My PLC is probably one of the main supports as far as discussing students and teaching strategies

and things like that. We get ideas from each other. Otherwise you just get out there on your own and look for answers on your own. At least I assume we all do that. Gloria, our assistant principal is quite a supportive person. If I'm stuck for ideas or maybe if there's one particular kid I'm having trouble with, she's a good person to brainstorm with and think about how I'm approaching a lesson or a student. Gloria's always really enthusiastic and she does know what she's talking about, although I know some people think, 'Oh, she's only taught in the classroom for this many years.' But I think her knowledge is pretty strong because of the effort she puts in. And she has a professional personality, focusing on the things that students know and understand.

"We have our coaches too. Most of our coaches want to be hands-on and helpful but I think there is a little bit of a breakdown. Sometimes our coaches are more of a glorified secretary doing the busy work for our teams that needs to happen. They're not always doing the coaching that we might envision them to be doing. Our building coach is new to the position, very energetic and willing to do whatever he can to help out. For example, right now he's covering either my class or another third-grade teacher so we can work with our paraprofessionals to help them better understand the academic work instead of just, 'Here's the book. Go work with those kids.'

"We only have one math coach for whole district for elementary who at the moment is more of a secretary. She does lead some of our meetings, but it just seems like she's more a liaison between our consultant and us. Our [district] professional development is mostly about the content, standards, and about our meeting them. We either get together with our building-level PLC or we get together with our district-level PLC – which would be still working in grade levels (or subjects within the higher grade

levels) and learn about our units that we're teaching. In our district we have been

writing and revising our own units over the last 2 years to address the Common Core

standards. We're a little ahead in this district, I feel.

"One thing I've found with our professional development is that we do talk about

the units and the content, but don't really observe each other teaching those units. We

talk about some of the lessons that we think are going to be a little more difficult and

challenging to teach, but hardly ever do we get to see someone try on those lessons and

see how they manage the materials, the students, the content. You know, actually see it in

process and have that chance to say, 'Oh. I get why we're doing all those pieces and why

the students respond that way. It's not contextualized, I guess, is what I'm trying to say.

Getting in there and seeing it in motion could be added to our PD schedule a little bit

more. I think it would help out. So when somebody says, 'I didn't teach it that well, but

I'm not sure what went wrong' and then another teacher says the same thing and then

another teacher says that, we may need to see the lesson happen, to identify why it's not

going well versus just having the lesson on paper. Because it's hard to really say if it was

the way it was delivered, or student misconceptions. Maybe they didn't have the

background knowledge to access that knowledge.'

"If I have a lesson that doesn't go well, I think about what it was that didn't go

well. Did I just do something and they missed the understanding to be able to access the

next part? Do I need to go back and readdress that prior knowledge that they're using?

Or was it that I delivered it completely wrong? Or was my class asleep that day? Was it

the day after a holiday or something, you know? I think about all those things that might

have gone wrong and then I have to think about how I address the support that the kids need and that I'll be able to give them. Maybe *I* didn't understand the content.

"And so I go back to our PLC time where we might share how we taught [a lesson], but we weren't actually doing it. Actually getting in and seeing that difficult lesson, actually seeing the words we're using and what's coming from our students could be pretty powerful for some of our teachers. But we don't really have that observation part connected with our professional development. I wish it intersected more with peer observation, to tell you the truth. I wish it was a bigger part of it.

"With peer observation, it seems a little selfish, but I really like learning about myself and the things that I could do better. I don't care so much about the things I do well and get praise for. If I have an issue or a problem area I need help in, I like to hear that feedback so that I can consider it – because sometimes we don't even know that we've done something, either good or bad. I like when I get negative feedback more, but maybe that's just because I like to learn.

"Even being on the observer side – I still can grow because I can say, 'Wow, I've never thought about it that way' and so I can think about other people's ways of thinking. At the same time, it's not as meaningful when I'm not being observed in interaction with my students. And I hate missing any time with my students because I don't know what's happening when I'm not there. I want to make sure that the things they're doing are meaningful and not just busy work to keep them occupied while I'm not in the room. Or that they're not taught misconceptions. That's the worst one, because you've got to undo the misconceptions and that takes way more time than doing it correctly the first time. So

that part [of peer observation] is difficult for me. It's more of an annoyance I think than a difficulty.

"Really difficult for me is *not* talking and listening to everybody's ideas. That is actually hard for me, to take the time and sit back and wait for everybody else to have their voice. Maybe my synapses fire too quickly. I don't know. I just kind of pick up on things pretty quickly I feel. I think that's why I like working with [one of my colleagues] a lot. I think she's a lot like me. We can have five conversations going on together at the same time about different topics. Not being able to do that is a difficult thing for me as a person. I do sometimes talk over people and I probably don't even know when I'm doing that. But I know I would not have chosen this profession if I didn't want to challenge myself to a high standard. I hold myself accountable to that.

"I think we also hold each other accountable, for example, as colleagues in our PLC, but I think we could probably hold each other a little bit more accountable at times. We can get on a slippery slope. Marc holds us accountable too. 'Where are you guys at with your data? What have you been working on? Where are you with your PLC goals?' We have some of those checks and balances. Our PLC goals become a mandatory check of accountability.

"And I think my students hold me accountable. I actually think they do that and maybe that's the most important of all. When they say, 'Hey, you said we were going to do this.' Or, 'Follow through [teacher] on what you said we were going to do.' Some kids are asking for more basically. 'I want to do more of this or do more of that.' And that, I think, holds us accountable. But they're not going to do that unless they're motivated and it can still be a game to make that happen. So I think that's one of the

things that's hardest – figuring out how to motivate one of those students that doesn't seem to be a self-motivator.   But I will."

Discussion

As an experienced teacher, Steve is relaxed and confident in the classroom. He appeared equally comfortable in the interview. His expressed interest in peer observation was the ability to explore teaching practices in more depth, particularly his own, including and especially to uncover the reasons behind successes and failures. His curiosity seems rooted in his desire to reach all students, searching for ways to motivate the unmotivated child when "I just can't put my finger on what gets them to tick."

Steve seems equally relaxed interacting with those in positions of authority and has analyzed where they can best support him as a teacher. An example of this is his decision to utilize the school's instructional coach to cover his classroom so that he can develop his para-educators to better serve his students. He admits to some impatience with colleagues who may take longer to contribute their thoughts. "Really difficult for me is *not* talking and listening to everybody's ideas. Maybe my synapses fire too quickly." He believes that he has set high standards for himself as an educator and that he holds himself accountable to those standards.

Sources of Efficacy

Steve's interest in learning and improving himself is reflected in the efficacy source data, Appendix Q, where **mastery** experiences are expressed as an opportunity to improve his practice through data on the lesson, rather than seeking data that affirmed the lesson's success.   Granted, when Steve says he wants his peers to "come in and look

at what I'm doing well and help me with the areas where can I improve," I infer that he is

applying that data to his practice and feels more efficacious as a result. There is other

data to back up that conclusion, however. His consistently stated desire to improve *and*

his confident demeanor suggest authenticity and that he will apply the data gathered to his

practice. To wit,

> I don't care so much about the things I do well and getting the praise for. I'd
> rather know what, if I have an issue or a problem area I need help in, I like to hear
> that feedback so that I can consider it – because sometimes we don't even know
> that we've done something.

The data related to **vicarious experiences** are less convincing that, for Steve, the

process of observing his colleagues provided a model of success. Steve approached

practices presented by his peers more as a curiosity than exemplar practice: "Wow, I've

never thought about it that way before." Too, his response to **verbal persuasion**

appeared to contradict any affirming aspects of this efficacy source. Steve's goal in these

sessions was to move beyond affirmation to more in-depth analyses that could improve

everyone's practices. While these types of discussions may ultimately improve

instructional practices and thus cause higher levels of collective efficacy across the

building, the peer observation process as an immediate source of efficacy persuasion was,

for this teacher, questionable given his goal of more in-depth learning.

Steve did express an awareness that being observed could provoke anxiety or

discomfort, but does so in a way that led me to conclude that his recollections of stress

are ones of compassion toward others, not specifically directed to his own emotional

state. The data indicate that his overall **emotional response** to the process was

productive for him personally, a finding strengthened by his observation that others'

reactions to the process became more comfortable over time.

Most notable in Steve's data is the balance of personal efficacy source data with

the evidence that he uses the peer observation process to **assess the competency** of his

peers. Steve was very specific that this process allowed him to understand what his

colleagues are able to do:

> If I have no idea of what my team mates are doing, then how do I trust that
> they're even doing their part, a good team member, and things like that?

> If people are actually getting in, and they've done that, and you've watched them
> do a lesson, you can that they've done that kind of work when they say "teaching"
> versus, "I pulled the lesson plan out and I followed the steps."

Steve's interview also produced evidence that the debriefing process itself served

as a forum for further assessment:

> Then as we got better at it, I think, we all started to have a better conversation. In
> the debrief time, in the beginning, it was a lot of "Well, I liked that strategy," or "I
> liked that chart" versus "Why did you make the chart, what was the purpose of
> it?" "What was the outcome?" "Did it actually help the student learn?"

and that the sessions resulted in a positive sense of peer competence:

> Now I can say, "oh I really know that you're doing this then" instead of just being
> told that you're doing that.

Indications of Steve's Developmental Stage

Steve's interview suggests that he is well centered in self-authorship with possibly

a few remnants of socialized perspective. Our analysis found a distinct absence of any

conflict or transition between stages. He is clearly self-reflective, recognizing when he is

making assumptions and able to hold others' perspectives as object. For example, when

asked about accountability during the interview, Steve responded with a clarifying

question on which perspective I was seeking: procedural, personal, or external. Too, he

holds the process of peer observation as object, attaching to it his own determination of purpose and criteria for success. When he says, for example, "I'm looking for that deeper of what and why and how," he appears to be seeking his own truth, using the peer observation process to ferret out what he needs.

The efficacy data confirm that he holds his peers against an internal standard, one he claims he has set for himself. The questions he asked in reflection during the interview, seeking purposes behind actions, are those one would expect to see from someone who is self-authored. It should be noted, however, that those questions, and others like it, could be learned questions, as they fall within the norms of the school and surrounding district. Even though the possibility exists that Steve could be reflecting an external set of values rather than those he holds internally, our confidence level that Steve operates from a self-authored perspective is high.

CHAPTER EIGHT: SANDRA

As a teacher that's really your goal, to teach them to be lifelong learners.

(Sandra)

Sandra's goal for her students is that they become lifelong learners. One might surmise it's also a goal she set for herself. Notable in Sandra's 15 years of teaching preschool and primary-age children are the challenges she has sought that require her to be a learner and navigate challenging content. Her willingness to serve as the first-grade math representative even though she feels more successful as a teacher of reading is but one example.

"I actually took math on purpose. I was the reading representative, but because math is uncomfortable for me, I really wanted that challenge. I feel I'm getting stronger in math, however there are some gray areas in math for me. Not that I don't know the content – it's in how to reach those students and what strategies I can use to make the learning accessible to all the students and finding the time also to target those students. Because during reading I can do my conferring and cause students to be correcting themselves when they read a word wrong. But in math – it's probably not more complex, but it's more complex for me, as a learner of teaching math, especially now that we're teaching math conceptually. We're not teaching kids to do things automatically but we include the reasoning behind it, so it's not just, 'Oh you got it right.' It's more, 'How did you arrive at that answer?' That opens a whole new piece of it because they need to really go into that mental cognition piece where they can think about their thinking. Sometime they can do something but they don't know how to verbalize it.

"The piece that has been the most difficult is that I learned math a different way and it's been very hard to rewire my brain to think differently and to teach differently. I have had to learn to do math, even for myself, a different way and as a learner, the highest level of knowing something is when you can teach it. It has been a struggle but it's gotten a lot better. I'm 70% more confident than when I began, but there's still that 30% that's not as comfortable as I would like it to be. I don't have to constantly stop and read my manual – have the kids turn and talk so I can gather my thoughts."

Sandra's attitude as a learner may be nurtured by a system that seems to promote what she calls struggle in her learning. "Our district's math consultant will give us a math problem [in professional development] that just does not make sense. And her rationale does not make sense in the beginning, but once you struggle through it, once we arrive at the solution to the problem, it all makes sense. We are encouraged to use our tools as mathematicians. We have developed our own units according to the new standards, the Common Core. Struggling with these units has really helped us as learners and to become patient with the process. And for me, of course," she laughs, "being the go-to person for math, has pushed me a lot. But it helps all of us to be more comfortable and understand our students' struggle also as they go through the process of learning."

As a learner, Sandra spends a good portion of her day reflecting on her teaching practice – what happened, how students responded, and what to do next, whether it be in math or reading, the two major content areas required of teachers, although she attempts to integrate science with math when she can. "A typical day is very intense because we have a lot of components to get through and a lot of content to get through. If it happens to be a very intensive lesson, it could be spread out over 2-3 days, so when the kids leave

I might be looking at the next part of the lesson, where we left off or how I want to chunk it for the next day. I might be mentally or jotting down some notes as to next steps that I need to take with students that I learn from conferring with them, where we have a conference and I compliment them on something they do well. I use that [conferring process] to push them forward in their reading. I spend time after school looking over my notes from the day and who I will be conferring with the next day, or the next couple of days.

"Reflecting as a teacher on my practice is really important for my students because as I see the data, I can see where I can meet my students' needs. If it had been a reading lesson and I really wanted the kids to engage with the text, and I found that five of my students were not involved with the text, they were not engaged, it would help me to evaluate why weren't they engaged. Is it behavior first of all? Is it that they didn't have the correct strategies? Did I not check for understanding when I released them to do their work? So, it benefits my students and it benefits my practice overall.

Sandra says the peer observation process provides data that help with that reflection, although she was never observed. "When I first heard about it, I thought it was going to be observing someone but when you came in and you stated that our focus was going to be away from the teacher and on the student learning, then I realized it was a different type of observation. Usually when we do observations here we're looking a lot at the teacher moves and what the teacher says and where the teacher rotates, the questions that the teacher poses. We do look at student engagement but it has never been 100% on student engagement. And it was very, very different for me to do that. It was very, very difficult at first. I remember on my second cycle it was easier. We went to

observe a math lesson. And it really helped that before we even went to observe, [the host teacher] stated his purpose and what he wanted his students to be doing so it was easier for me to just focus on what the students were doing that day. Then we were able to give [the teacher] feedback, the raw data, the noticings, without any judgment: 'This is what we saw.' I'm assuming that [the host teachers] were able to look at that data and look for either disconnects between the focus and the data or good connects between their data and their focus.

"I think if I were to put myself in [the host teacher's] shoes there would be that nervousness at first but then I would be excited to know what I'm doing. I would be excited to get that feedback from my colleagues. Even though I didn't get to be observed, it really helped me as a teacher to observe another teacher and reflect back on my teaching because a lot of time was focusing on the student engagement part. That was what the big piece was. It's hard because [student engagement] kind of gets messed into everything, but when you truly isolate it and you truly just use that lens you start to notice things that you need to work on or things that aren't working. It helped me to think about my own areas of growth to see where student weren't engaged and not on task and where they were engaged and were on task. It prompted a lot of questions I could be reflecting on, about my teaching. I also notice that as a teacher it has helped me notice what my students are doing more and what I'm doing more. It helped me be more purposeful in my teaching. Also, when we are asked to go observe other people now or I have to do observations of my student teachers, it has really helped me choose the correct lens to observe them. And it has helped me with the documenting what I see.

"I have student teachers and I believe that it did change my perspective about observing. We have done observations but not with the student lens. Because I remember one time that we were debriefing.… I can't remember a lot of the specifics as to the procedure that you gave us for debriefing, but I do remember your stating, 'when you give feedback and you say something and then use the word *but*, it denies everything else you said.' That really stuck with me because I've noticed that I have used that a lot giving feedback. I had done it prior to that, with my student teachers, so I decided, 'Huh. I really want to try that because it really does help on the receiving end.' It helps it focus more in a very positive way when I'm giving feedback to my student teachers.

"In my PLC, it has helped us build a community where we can give each other honest feedback that's very specific, that's very factual, that's very, I guess, more precise from the way we had learned before. You pushed us to really see the purpose of the observation. It's not about the person that's teaching. It's not even about seeing the teacher. It's about the data that you're going to get as a teacher, and as teachers that's what we want. We want our data. We want to look at our data and we want to make decisions based on that data.

"I will also say that the process was uncomfortable. Because when you're teaching, you know what's going on. But it was uncomfortable because I had never isolated skills and it felt like we were splitting hairs. It felt very microscopic, just isolating a skill or a strategy that a teacher was using. I wanted to do it well. My first cycle was a little bit difficult. I don't remember the process, but I do remember that you gave us a protocol to follow and some vocabulary with some tips for giving feedback,

which made a lot of sense but just trying it on was a little uncomfortable at first. I can say that at the end of the second cycle I understood.

"But I think not knowing what to expect, not knowing the process of it, was hard. And like anything you need to experience it in order to understand the rationale sometimes behind it. We go through that every day as learners in our classroom and struggle… You know, it's not really about getting the right answer, it's really about a lot of times justifying your answer, explaining the process of how you got there. Being on that side of being the learner, although we're there all the time, it's sometimes uncomfortable. It's like our high achieving students. Their thinking is rarely challenged, so when it *is* challenged, it's very uncomfortable for them. So it was kind of like that. For me it wasn't uncomfortable. But I would have been nervous because being observed is always uncomfortable. It's just different, because you have eyes on you and you're not as natural as you are when you teach a regular lesson but you do gain a lot of insights. I don't mind being observed. I have asked people to come and observe me because I sometimes want feedback on me."

Although Sandra does not remember much about her administrators' role in the peer observation process, she is clear about their role in her professional learning. "The thing is, I have very supporting administrators. I feel very supported by Robert, our reading coach. We go through him first. So is our principal, Mr. Elliott [very supportive]. I know that when I have wanted feedback on a lesson or a strategy I'm trying out or any question I have, I feel very supported in what I'm doing in the classroom. In my professional life he has challenged me and all the other staff members to really focus on the three things we want to work on with all students this year. So he

has really motivated us to really look at our practice, to reflect on our practice. That's what we're accountable for, our yearly goals, and also to our PLC. We are responsible to bring current data and talk about our current data and how it's going to guide our instruction. But for my own professional goals I turned in a form that I filled out for Marc that details what my goals are, how I am going to reach those goals, and how often I'm going to gather data around those goals.

"I'm focusing on two. I am very intentional but I knew I could be *more* intentional in getting the students to transition perhaps quicker to the rug. It saves a lot of time, having materials prepared as best as I can, so that kids know that we are working. Sometimes we do get off task. And then I say, 'OK guys, make every minute count!'

"And we are also working on helping all kids feel accountable for their learning and giving them the status that they deserve. Whether it is a high achieving student or a low achieving student, we want to give everyone the same access to the learning, the same access to the conversation, equitable status across the board. Everybody knows they are being held accountable for their thinking, for their learning. They're being held accountable either by their partners, they're held accountable by the person who's teaching, so it could be as simple as my asking someone, 'What do you think?' if someone is a little off task. Just hearing their name can make that difference. Those are small examples of being held accountable.

"Another example of being held accountable is when we do a partner talk and everyone is expected to share their thinking, whether it's correct or incorrect. We have really tried to work on not giving cues with voice or expression when someone is right so everybody will share their thinking. We just want them to share their thinking because

the more thinking our students share, the more I'm able to figure out where they're at and know what's going in on their brain."

Always reflective, Sandra considers the peer observation process and its link to the rest of her learning world. "It intersects a lot because we are still developing our new units in math and reading so as we are writing our units we are also trying them out. We write a lesson or a unit and it comes to life when we teach it. So obviously observation is one of the tools that we are going to use. How does a teacher deal with their new materials in the delivery of the lesson? How did the students interact with the lesson? So we're constantly in the cycle of observing. If I have already taught a lesson and my co-worker hasn't, there are opportunities to observe each other and give each other feedback and collaborate on what components were in the lesson, what didn't go well. And it's important to know, because I need to know what needs [my students] have so I can help meet them, so I can understand where they are, meet them where they are, and help them progress. And also when I meet them exactly where they're at I'm able to celebrate what they're doing well, and I am able to help them align a little bit to the next phase. As a teacher I can say, 'Well okay. Let's work on this strategy.' I know that that's going to push them to the next [reading] level if they get the right tools and the right strategies from me.

"Making sure students are engaged in a lesson is very important to that because it's affecting their progress as a learner. It can affect their self-esteem if they feel, 'I don't have the right tools. I don't understand what I'm supposed to do.' There are kids that you will feel very confident about because they show a trend of learning. So usually if I

get a student that shows a trend of advancing several [reading] levels every 2 months then

I am confident that that trend will continue and that usually is correct.

"And for some kids, it's just slower. Some students learn at a different rate.

Those are the students I do get concerned about and those are the students I really zone in

on and try to find out what is going on. Sometimes it's support at home. Sometimes it's

vocabulary. In our district, for 80% of our kids there is a language barrier. All kids are so

different. Sometimes I will have a child that is not reading and in January, bam. They

just take off. But then you do have students who learn at a different rate and some kids

might get stuck.

"As a teacher, that's what I'm responsible for – for their safety of course, but then

for their learning so they will be successful in life as citizens. I talk to them about it. I

hope that as they continue their learning career, that they continue to have that

encouragement from their parents or their teachers that are in there just encouraging them

to be lifelong learners. As a teacher that's really your goal, to teach them to be lifelong

learners."

Discussion

A mid-career teacher who has always taught in an era of reform, Sandra

recognizes the need for teachers to learn continuously, keeping up with changing

expectations for students and the resulting implications for teaching practices. Sandra

has embraced the notion that to be an effective teacher, she, too, must be a learner.

Notable in her story is her willingness to step into the role of math representative,

knowing that she considers this to be a weak content area for her. She expressly states

that this responsibility will enable her to grow her capacity to teach math conceptually

and to, as she puts it, "rewire her brain." As a supervisor of student teachers, Sandra has responsibilities that extend beyond many of her peers and has applied some of what she has learned through the peer observation process to that aspect of her job.

Her demeanor during our interview was friendly and polite and she provided a lot of detail about the school day and the curriculum she is required to teach. Sandra appears to exercise independent judgment in her classroom with her students, but within an expected framework of district-determined practices as she moves through the literacy components. There was no sign of angst with district or school mandates. She seems comfortable with the role of authority in her life as a teacher and feels supported as a teacher by her administrators and the school's instructional coach.

Sources of Efficacy

Sandra is the only teacher interviewed for this study who was not observed teaching as a part of the particular peer observation process and significantly fewer indicators of efficacy sources emerged through her interview. This outcome in and of itself could suggest that simply observing others may not contribute sufficiently to make the peer observation process a reliable developer of personal or collective efficacy. She could not benefit, for example, from **verbal persuasion**, as there is none in the role of observer. Similarly, no data surfaced related to **mastery** experiences, those found to most contribute to efficacy (Bandura, 1994). Taking a deeper look, however, there is evidence that the **vicarious experience** of peer observation enabled Sandra to increase her skill, and by extension her sense of efficacy as a teacher (see Appendix R). Sandra indicated also that the ability to isolate and focus on discrete components of teaching and learning caused her to consider certain aspects more deeply, such as student engagement.

Sandra's descriptions of **heightened emotions** were themselves vicarious, as she imagined what her peers might be feeling as the observed teacher. She believes she would be excited to receive feedback, yet also acknowledges imagined nervousness and the uncomfortable aspects of being observed. She does note that she has requested peer observations outside of this specific process. Sandra's account raises the question of whether being uncomfortable is a positive or negative emotion when she describes the actual process of debriefing as being difficult in its strangeness:

> It was uncomfortable because I had never isolated skills and it felt like we were splitting hairs and it felt very microscopic and really just isolating a skill or a strategy that a teacher was using.

Perhaps most notable about Sandra's interview was the complete absence of peer assessment data, something that does not seem tied to her particular role in the process, that of a participant observer. In fact, Sandra's interpretation of the peer observation process, where "our focus was going to be away from the teacher," suggests just the opposite – a deliberate neutrality on the role of the teacher in the learning process. While this neutrality in no way implies that Sandra does not see the relationship between teaching and student learning, I do infer that she did not use this process to assess peer competency. Sandra indicates that she used the process to look at student learning, however. If she determined that students were performing well in particular classrooms, it might be construed that she inferred competency by the presence of student learning. There is no direct data, however, to suggest that she formed any conclusions about her peers through this process.

Indications of Sandra's Developmental Stage

Sandra's interview included a significant amount of data that suggests she is centered in a socialized mind form, deriving her authority externally through the norms and values with which she is associated. Her recounting of the expectations of her as a teacher is most often couched in "we" language, implying that she is following rules and professional social norms for teachers at Skyview. She spoke confidently and articulately about these norms, defining instructional terms and pedagogical rationale, such as why she is often confused initially when presented with a conceptual math task. The language she uses in these explanations suggests that her perspectives are the result of the learning system in which she works, that she has learned the vocabulary and the expectations. There is no evidence, however, that she holds these norms as object; only that she uses them as expected with the implication that she is subject to them.

Sandra's explanations of her actions oriented to her doing things correctly and this held true when she talked about the peer observation process. This was, in fact, the only place in her interview where she showed any sign of internal conflict as she described the difficulty she had with the process itself. This was also the only interview that suggested that the peer observation process could promote development, which can happen as people experience dissonance with the norms to which they are subject (Helsing, Kegan, & Lahey, 2013). The process, highly structured for psychological safety and including deliberately ambiguous content, where there are no correct answers to land upon, acted as a challenge to Sandra's otherwise well defined world.

CHAPTER NINE: ERIN

I always feel I could do better.
(Erin)

"In order to stay in this career, you have to feel like you are making a difference. Sometimes on a given day you don't feel that. If I let myself come in and have a bad day and I let the day not mean anything, that's one day that they've lost and these kids cannot afford to lose a single day. I can't ever just say, 'Let's put our books away and just have fun today.' They can't afford it. I'm sure they do not have that sense of urgency that I have. But some of these kids are so far behind from where they need to be. Every day if they don't get something, that's one more day they fall behind. I feel like I'm trying to be the best I could ever be and I haven't got there yet. I always feel I could do better."

Erin's heart is with her students and her drive to make a difference in their lives. Her career shift into teaching to try to make that difference has been punctuated by self-doubt and determination. "Four years ago, as a first-year teacher, I don't think there was ever a day when I didn't go home and just cry my eyes out. When I thought, 'I just can't do this anymore.' These children, they're having horrible home lives and some days I have to make the kids work harder than they have in them that day. And I have to make students care. It's hard to make students care. It's emotionally draining and you need to feel like it's not all for nothing. The kids *are* making progress. They *are* getting better. You *are* doing good things for them. But sometimes on the day-to-day you don't feel that. Sometimes I don't feel like I make a difference, the difference I was hoping to make. Some days I feel, 'I'm working my butt off and I just can't.'"

Erin laughs. "I did get what I wanted [by going into teaching]. I wanted a challenge. I wanted something I could feel good about. In my old job, I knew I was excellent. I could do it in my sleep. It didn't stress me out. I did not have to bring home any work. I always got very, very positive evaluations from my supervisor. But here – you don't always have a great day. It's very, very challenging. And I don't get that feeling of 'You're awesome' that I used to get."

Erin, along with the other three fifth-grade teachers at Skyview have a calendar that prescribes which 2-week unit they should be teaching and where they should be in that unit. "The amount of material kids have to learn and master in one day is phenomenal. And the fact that they can actually achieve it is amazing. Of course there are a lot of them who don't. And because of that you cannot slack for one day because that's one day of the unit that kids are not going to get. If you fall even one day behind that means that some kid will be behind in something because after 2 weeks we're on to the next unit. And it's not fair for them. They deserve the absolute best."

Erin's drive to meet her students' needs causes her to "tweak procedures and routines to match the current group [of students] I have. I've never had a group of kids who are the same." It also causes her to use her organizational skills to navigate the myriad of tasks and decisions that fall to her daily as a teacher. "One of the reasons I think I'm more time efficient now is that I have a to-do list. I mean, if I get 2 minutes to myself, I go check that list. What can I get done in 2 minutes? I have to use every minute of every day and with that list I always know exactly what I have to get done for the day so I'm not saying, 'What is it I have to do now?'

"The list does not go home. It stays on my desk. But if I think of something at home it goes on a sticky note and then in my bag, and I'll add it to the list the next day. Over time you find out what is routine and then your list stays the same for each week. I need to make copies for my unit. I need to have entry tasks. Those are constant and for the most part it doesn't really change. And I have also learned where I can save myself time. Instead of going every day to make the copies I need, at the beginning of the unit I'll just take an hour after school and make all the copies I'll need for that unit. It takes time to walk to the copy machine and back. So I find if I do things in bulk I save myself a lot of time in the long run. And I kind of have a personal rule. My work area has to be clean before I leave. Because it seems to be a very common teacher habit to leave stuff there but I can't work if it's messy. So it has to be done before I leave."

Erin's professional life does not end when the students are released at 3:05. "The buses are not always here right after school so I have kids that hang around until 3:25. My contract time ends at 3:35, but I usually stay much later than that. That's my planning time for the next day – making copies, grading. And then on Thursday afternoons I have a PLC meeting and sometimes a VEA (Vista Education Association) meeting – I'm the building rep for my union. I'm also on the literacy team; sometimes there's an after school literacy meeting. If I don't have any meetings then I just treat it like my planning time. I try to leave around 4 but 5 is my absolute cut off. If I let myself I'll keep staying and staying."

Although Erin believes she's "really good about building relationships with her students" and that every year her "content knowledge is a little bit better," she is acutely aware of where she thinks she needs to grow as a teacher. "I'm sure there are people out

there who come into the profession and know exactly how to handle every situation but I don't feel like I'm one of those people. I think a lot of nonteachers don't realize that times have changed. It's a lot more complex than what they learned, more complex than what I learned. So I would say that there will always be room for improvement on my delivery of content. There will be a lot of times when I'm thinking, 'It would have been better if I had done this differently.'

"And questioning strategies…. I feel that questioning strategies are the most important skills a teacher can have. I don't always know the right question to ask. Like, when you're trying to help a student, you should not be explaining how to do it but asking them questions. That's something that I myself am working on still. And content wise, there's still so much that I want to know.

"I think my classroom management is good but I think it could always be better. Some of our students, their home lives are so horrible and when you find out what they go home to, it's hard to be tough on them in class because they've already got it so tough at home. But if I'm tough on them in class, it will pay off later. I still have to work on being much more consistent on classroom management, on managing poor behavior."

In a school where "our learning communities are important to us," Erin considers herself to be a "really supportive teammate. I know some teams in the building have had difficulty, but I've never been on a team like that. We support each other and help out. Michelle probably has the best classroom management I have ever seen. I am not exaggerating. She could leave her kids alone all day and teach by phone and they would be angels. So I can go to her and she tells me what she would do. There's something I can take from her experience. There are a lot of great teachers in the building. The

people who have been teaching longer are a really valuable source and so I can't even tell you how many times a week I'm going to other people's classrooms. Not during school, because I have the kids, but after school, I can ask, 'I have this going on, what do you think?'"

Even as a new teacher, Erin was one of the first teachers to be observed [in the peer observation process]. "I was in my second year of teaching. At the time I was so hungry for feedback because I was a brand new teacher and I realized that I play a very important role with my students. If I am not doing everything I can for them, then I am letting them down. And that's unacceptable to me. So from day one I've always wanted to learn more and more and more. I wanted to be the best right away, the best that I can be.

"The first lesson I was observed teaching I felt went really well. That class was an amazing class – they did everything that I had told them to do. They didn't need me. It was a beautiful lesson. I just remember that there was no disappointment from me. There were no changes I would make. It went very smoothly. And the feedback that I got, I would say, was mostly positive feedback, which is always nice to hear. But it was not very helpful. I like when I hear something you didn't realize you were doing. I felt like people were interested in my class, but it just went so well there really wasn't much to say about it.

"My second lesson I felt went much rougher. I had prepared a lesson for that day. It was something we had gone over. It was math, the last lesson of the unit. When I went in to prep the kids I knew there was no way they were ready for this lesson and that if I continued with what I had planned, we were going to be a sinking ship. So at the last

minute, I decided to change my plans and do something else. So I was kind of, going off the cuff, flying by the seat of my pants. The kids were great, their behavior was fine but they were not getting what I wanted them to get.

"Reflecting back on the lesson later, there were a lot of things I would have changed and I think because I had only 5 minutes to make a change in the plan and I knew you guys were coming, I was nervous. It probably was not my finest moment. But I got more helpful feedback from that time. So it's kind of like, that lesson was a failure but as far as being observed, it was helpful. Nobody said anything about how I stubbed my toe or anything like that, but I did learn a lot of things. Like, somebody noticed that I always teach to the right. I am right-handed and I do turn my body to the right side of the room. Also, somebody was counting how many times I called on certain people. And I had a student in my class who was very outgoing and it was hard to keep him quiet. I think because he always wanted to talk so bad I called on him multiple times and some kids didn't get called on at all. So that was really helpful. And people were kind of questioning why I had made the choices that I made. I think I had good reasons to make the decisions that I did but in reflection I think I could have delivered [the lesson] in a better way. The feedback I got that time was more constructive.

"From there I was able to make changes in my classroom. Since that day, I think, I really don't call on raised hands anymore. I use sticks [to determine who to call on] now 95% of the time. Somebody had said that I called on slightly more boys than girls. I try to always keep that in mind. And then of course I try to remember to turn my body towards the left as well. It was helpful. Just little things like that, things that I never would have noticed before. Only because somebody else saw it was I able to fix it. They

never said, 'Oh this is a problem,' but in my mind, it was. It *is* a problem if you call on more boys than girls. It *is* a problem if you call on this kid five times and this kid zero. And so it was nice to get that feedback, because you won't be able to change unless someone gives you feedback.

"At first I was so hungry to get that personal feedback that I wanted to be observed more. Now I have found that I like observing a little bit more than being observed, because the last couple of times I've always come back with at least one thing that I could take back to my class. When we watched Joe a couple of months ago, I saw the kids were so much stronger in using their group roles than mine. So I went back to my classroom to make sure that my kids are using the group roles properly. And when my students have questions or a problem or are struggling, in my class they have tended to come to me before they go to any other student. If you have 26 students and they're all coming to you with a problem…. When I saw Joe's class in action I knew I had to put my foot down on that. Now I say, 'Have you talked to … about that yet?' Then they get the help they need. My time is saved up for the kids who really need it.

"I've never been in an observation that I didn't take something away from. Everybody has something. Sometimes it's a first-year teacher, sometimes it's someone with three times the experience. Now I love observing more than I love being observed. I kind of personally feel that I can learn more when I observe somebody else than when I'm observed. When you're observed people are telling you *their* takeaways – I mean, you can get valuable information but it's through their perspective, not necessarily mine, and what I would want. But when I get to observe, I get to pick and choose as to what I see as valuable.

"I also think that it's nice to observe because sometimes teaching can be kind of lonely – you're in there all day with your 20+ students, and you may be having a bad day and struggling with your lesson, or you're having behavior problems, or there are constant interruptions due to assemblies and fire drills or whatever. Or you didn't have enough time. There's never enough time. And though every day starts out the same way, every day is never the same. I am only one person and I have 26 other little people depending on me. As a teacher there's only so much I can do. But it does make me sometimes feel guilty that I'm not doing everything, that I couldn't possibly manage everything.   It kind of drives you nuts when you hear about this teacher who is able to confer with every student every week and I only got to confer with every student in this one month. And you think 'How is that teacher doing all these things that I can't manage to do?' But when you get to observe, you realize, 'Actually, I'm doing as much or more as everybody else and I'm not the only one having this struggle. I'm not the only one who will take 2 days to complete a lesson.' And you feel better because you can feel guilty when you want time for yourself, but you go home every single night feeling like you should be doing more and more and more. And so seeing other people's imperfections makes me feel better about mine.

"After that really rough lesson I had Marc, our principal, came to me and wanted to talk about the feedback because he felt like all the feedback I got were things I needed to work on but he wanted to give me feedback about things he thought went really great about the lesson. He wanted to make it so I didn't feel like," Erin pauses, "a failure. It's nice. It's nice to have a principal who wants to lift you up like that and wants you to be confident. One thing about Marc is I feel he always tries to be really positive. And so

sometimes I feel it might be a little difficult for him to give constructive feedback in some things. Like, for instance, if I started calling on more boys than girls, there's a problem. But he might not point that out. He wants to lift everybody up.

"Your principal is someone hopefully you have a lot of faith in. My feeling is he only wants the best for you and for your students. That's part of his job. As a teacher when the principal gives feedback, that perks your ears up a little bit more than when a teacher does. I want him to tell me what can I do better. There has to be something that I can be doing better. I want to hear about it. I want to know. That's not to say that I won't pay attention to teachers and their feedback because some of them have more experience and may be better than Marc might, but as the person who evaluates you and whether you have a job or not – you definitely want to pay attention to what he's saying. He's more experienced than me. I know he's a good teacher.

"And in my last lesson, Cal Younger, the superintendent, was there. He was the one that noticed that I taught to the right and also asked me about what assessment was connected to the lesson. It was a bad day for me and for my students. It was not a great lesson. He'd never watched me teach [before]. He'd come into my classroom to work with my kids, but I don't think he'd ever actually seen me deliver a lesson. So even though that lesson was well over a year ago, I still wonder, 'Is that what he thinks of my teaching – that one day?' I guess I don't want my boss to think that I'm a bad teacher, that I'm not skilled.

"I do get nervous when I'm being observed because they're going to watch you and sometimes judge you even though they won't say it out loud. They might think it and then they would internalize that. 'Hmm. I just saw her teach and that kind of

stinks.' I mean, it's really only one day and one time. Maybe that one thing you saw, it's

the only bad thing, but it's the one thing they're going to think about. You know, like that

day that Cal Younger saw me.

"Awhile ago we took a survey and one of the questions was 'Do you feel like

your colleagues are good teachers? Do you feel like they're working as hard as you are?'

And one of the things the survey showed is we have a lot of faith in ourselves, that we

thought we were working hard doing everything we needed to do, but that we didn't think

our colleagues were doing the same thing. And so through these observations I think we

were able to see that no, our colleagues are working just as hard as we are, they're doing

the same things, having the same struggles. I felt reassured by the things I was seeing in

other classrooms, both for my own skill level as a teacher, and for theirs too."

Outside of the peer observation sessions (which happen several times a year), Erin

finds the expectations for collaborative learning time to be extensive and that some are

more effective than others. District-run professional development sessions where they

often "do the lessons together before we teach to the kids are really very helpful,

especially with math. We run it like we expect the kids to do, like we're the students.

We actually do the work ourselves and then we might have one person come up and show

how they solved it – to see different solutions. And then once we've looked at our

different solutions, we decide, 'Okay, which of these is most effective and what do we

want our kids to get from them?' And then we might decide, 'Okay, what's the strategy

to teach them?' The struggles that our kids have, we have them too. Looking at [an

academic task] as a student helps you figure out what the misconceptions might be right

from the start. If you know where the misconceptions are going to come up, you also know how to head those off."

Less helpful to Erin are decisions her administrators make that "affect my day-to-day classroom," such as mandates related to her professional learning community. For instance, "[Marc and Gloria] decided we were not meeting enough as a fifth-grade team so they *required* us to have a second day where we're meeting as a team. Now we're meeting twice a week. One of them needs to focus on the content you're teaching and the goal of the lesson and one of them will be analyzing data. So now even in our meetings we're being told what we can and cannot discuss and our meetings feel even less efficient than they ever were, because it's not meeting *our* needs. The whole point of the PLC (professional learning community) is to be able to meet as a group and work toward common goals and develop things that are necessary to us. And now we're not getting the opportunity to say, 'This is what we need this week.' As you can imagine [finding the time for another meeting] is pretty tough and I don't feel that that's going to be beneficial.

"Everything's kind of scripted, I guess, especially because they want to make sure that we're all using data and that we're going over content. Those are important, but there are certain things that have been on the table that we need to discuss and we can't do it – even though we meet twice a week. I notice that if Marc and Gloria find something they think is really valuable, they make everybody do it. The latest thing was a note-taking system with the second-grade team. Well, something that works for one team isn't necessarily going to work for another team and for my team – it's not been valuable. It's just been extra paper work that we're filling out at our meetings instead of

using our meeting time doing something meaningful. I feel like my PLC is less efficient and less effective than ever before. Maybe they are getting the benefit as admin, but as a teacher I'm not and you can't help but be a little resentful. My plate is already full and I think, 'If I get one more thing added to my day, I will never be able to go home again. I'll just have to set up a cot in the corner.' Even though Marc and Gloria are great, and most of the people in the building are really appreciative who work for them, there's always going to be a little bit of resentment when you're told you have to have two PLC meetings a week.

Even with those mandates, Erin notes that at Skyview teachers "are lucky that our principals do not breathe down our necks like some other principals" as she recounts what she is held accountable for and the role of test scores in her life as a teacher. "None of our admin have directly come out and said, 'Well, whatever the scores are, you're responsible.' Nobody in this district has said, 'It's your fault.' I think we all know as educators that there are thousands of tiny little things that can affect a student's performance, day-to-day, week-to-week, month-to-month. And they come to you with all sorts of holes. Like, if you're teaching a student to multiply and they haven't even learned how to subtract yet…. They have gaps. I can't control all those things. I only control the content I give them and how I give that content to the students. But as a teacher I feel responsible. This student needs help here and this student needs help here, and if I haven't done that, I haven't achieved my objective.

"But even though nobody has said that to me, there's a kind of unspoken pressure because we do take our test scores very, very seriously. That is our first meeting of the school year. As soon as we come back together, our very first meeting is looking at the

previous year's data. What percentages did you make? How did each grade level do? What kids passed and what kids didn't pass? If you go into our conference room, it's four walls of data. They want to know how are you doing. And there's immense pressure on the kids to make those scores happen. And so even though no one's come right out and said, 'You're responsible for the scores, and if they don't do well, it's on you,' it's unspoken. It's there. And it can be competitive. People can look at other people's data and say, 'I did better than so and so.' And the bottom line is those are the kids that passed and there are assumptions made about teaching based on test scores. It's unspoken but it's there. And there have been many times when I've been disappointed with my personal data. And Marc will say, 'Oh well, there's this and this and this.' But I know he's also disappointed.

"We were reading an article the other day about a little girl saying that test scores are all that grown-ups care about. Well, some grown-ups in this business, that *is* all they think about. They will cancel school parties. They will cancel any fun activity to increase academic time because all they care about is the score. We forget that these are kids. Their scores are the farthest thing from their mind – most of the time. I think that one of the most damaging things of the tests is not that they take up all the time that they do, not that we can't teach art, social studies, science, but because we're telling kids they aren't good enough. I have had fifth graders already assume that they will never be academically successful; they do not anticipate a high school diploma. It's sad because I've never met a kid who wasn't capable. I honestly believe they are all capable. But it's the way of the world – there are those who are going to be better at that other thing.

"Here's the thing that the tests don't get. These kids are so much more than those test scores. I never have a day when I don't have one kid in my class blow me out of the water. Last year I had a kid who was not academically gifted. Any success he had, he had to work really, really hard for and he wasn't always willing to put in that work. He was one of my lowest achieving students. One day I brought some bookshelves into the class that I was going to assemble and he asked, 'Can I put these together?' I'll be darned if that kid didn't whip out those shelves in half an hour. He didn't even read the directions. He said, 'This is what I'm good at. I like to do things with my hands. I help my dad fix cars. I help my mom fix furniture. This is what I'm good at.' I would have never known that. The tests will never show this. His goal in life is to be a mechanic and it's something I think he'll be suited for.

"When I was a fifth-grade student I stunk at math. I was one of the lowest in my class but I had a few good teachers who didn't give up on me. When I got to seventh grade I was one of the higher achievers in my math class. I've always been a slow developer – always been behind the curve for other people in my age groups. A lot of my students are being asked to handle topics they're not ready to learn. It's very damaging if they hear over and over and over that they're a failure. If these tests are constantly telling them they're not good enough, they won't have the motivation and energy to put in that effort. One thing I've talked to my kids about is the growth mind set. 'This much is given but with this much work you can be very successful.' I have also told them that, 'Success will not be easy.'

The kids I worry about are the kids who won't put the effort in, who not only have lower abilities but have no desire to put in the effort. I don't blame them for feeling they

want to quit, not putting in the effort. I remember being terrible at flute and basketball. You can only be terrible at something for long before you say, 'This is not worth my time.' But I tell my kids to keep working on it and eventually it will be easier on them. I'm sure there are kids who at some point had trouble identifying shapes – now every single one of them can do that now. I know that despite what the tests tell me, if they keep working on it they're going to get there. That's one of the reasons I do push them hard.

"Every day of teaching is different, it's always a challenge. You never get bored with it. But I feel like teaching is one of those jobs where sometimes as a teacher you can feel underappreciated because people who are outside the profession – they don't understand what it's like. It's one of those things where you work for the public and the public is not always nice to you. There's no applause for teaching. Sometimes I think, 'Why do I do this? If nobody notices, then why do I do this? Nobody even appreciates what I do.' That's not true; it just feels as if that's true. Especially on those days when I'm trying to make every minute count for my kids, where I'm working as hard as I can, I want to be appreciated. I want people to say, 'Hey yeah, that's a great thing you're doing. Keep it up.'"

Discussion

As a relatively new teacher, Erin seems to be searching for signs of competence and her impressions of her environment, including her support system, are still evolving. She describes her principal as "someone hopefully you have a lot of faith in" and sees his caring attributes as part of his role as her supervisor. "My feeling is he only wants the best for you and for your students. That's part of his job." Erin is tough on herself as she

figures out what teaching entails, concentrating on efficiency to get everything done in

the day as she begins to get a handle on classroom management. As a second career, she

entered teaching to make a difference with students and she seems thrown that teaching is

as difficult as it is.

Because this is her first teaching position, Erin is no doubt being formed by the

norms of Skyview and Vista. She appears to accept curricular expectations, even to some

extent the testing, explaining without objecting, what they are required to do.   She does,

however, question assumptions others might make around student capacity as seen by her

story about her student who is "good with his hands." And while she does not challenge

curricular expectations, she does object to ways in which she is told to do her job,

acknowledging resentment of administrative intrusion into her professional learning

community meetings.

Most pronounced in her interview was Erin's repeated reference to her students,

how they struggle, and her desire to help them be successful and to be successful herself.

This sets the stage for her response to peer observation.

Sources of Efficacy

Erin's story shows a great deal of evidence that, for her, the peer observation

process held opportunity for her to become more efficacious (Appendix S).   She

describes her feelings of **mastery** during a successful lesson in which she was observed.

> I felt it went really well. It was, that class was an amazing class – they did
> everything that I had told them to do. They didn't need me. It was a beautiful
> lesson. I just remember that there was no disappointment from me. There were no
> changes I would make. It went very smoothly. And the feedback that I got, I
> would say was mostly positive feedback, which is always nice to hear.

Erin is very deliberate about applying what she sees in other classrooms to her own. In this way, she also exhibits signs of mastery through this process, even though that experience took place subsequent to the actual observation.

> And the other thing is when someone notices something that you didn't know before. Something constructive that maybe you didn't notice before. Like the fact that you called on one student five times. It's nice when somebody notices something and you can say, "Here's a problem right now, something that you can fix easily that you do." It will improve the efficiency in my classroom. Nice when you can go home that day.

> So I went back to my classroom to make sure that the kids are using the group roles properly. Now I say, "have you talked to … about that yet?" Then they get the help they need. My time is saved up for the kids who really need it.

And Erin seems reassured by observing others, using those observations to enhance her own sense of mastery a she notices others struggling with similar issues.

> It kind of drives you nuts when you hear about this teacher who is able to confer with every student every week and I only got to confer with every student in this one month. And you think "How is that teacher doing all these things that I can't manage to do?" But when you get to observe, you realize, "Actually, I'm doing as much or more as everybody else." And I don't feel so bad.

> At the same time, Erin's story shows signs that the process could work against her feelings of mastery. She says succinctly, "I always feel I could do better." She acknowledges that her second lesson did not go well and recalls her consternation that the superintendent was present in that observation when she says, "It was a bad day for me and for my students" and "I guess I don't want my boss to think that I'm a bad teacher, that I'm not skilled." With her predisposition to be successful, she could just as easily walk away from those sessions feeling inadequate, even when everything goes according to plan. Bandura warns against this, admonishing that failures can undermine efficacy if it is not already firmly established (Bandura, 1994, para 4).

The data related to Erin's mastery experiences are tempered by my recollections of the lesson she described in her interview as being successful during her first observation. My notes, corroborated by those taken by the principal, show that Erin planned a leaderless discussion, one in which she stood outside the discussion circle to promote greater responsibility among her students for leading and contributing to class discussions. Her goal was to let the discussion run its course with little or no intervention from her, as the teacher. Her goal was not met; a few students dominated the discussion and Erin stepped into the discussion to orchestrate more even engagement among the students. When she came back into the room for the debriefing session, Erin sat down, rolled her eyes slightly, and said, "Well….*that* went well." This is the lesson she recalls having gone perfectly: "They didn't need me. It was a beautiful lesson. I just remember that there was no disappointment from me." It is also true that the feedback she received that day *was*, in fact, mostly positive because her peers did not share any data related to the strategy she had attempted.

The inconsistencies between Erin's recounting of that lesson and our notes from that same lesson raise questions, however, as to why she recalls that lesson so differently and whether there might be an emotional aspect in play. There was no indication during the interview that she was attempting to position herself and her teaching in a more positive light, and she was frank about the challenges of her second observation. Erin acknowledges nervousness around being observed the second time, contrasting her positive attitude approaching the first observation. There is a noticeable decline in productive **emotions**, as she goes from being "hungry for feedback" to nervousness that

"you guys were coming" raising the question of whether this process might have contributed to an overall decline in Erin's sense of personal efficacy.

Erin indicates that over the course of her experiences with peer observation, those that were **vicarious** became more valuable to her as a teacher. She said she now prefers to pick and choose among the specifics of others' classrooms which to incorporate into her own. Erin specifically mentions that she does **assess her peers** through this process, discerning which practices she believes are worthy of replication:

> And so through these observations I think we were able to see that no, our colleagues are working just as hard as we are, they're doing the same things, having the same struggles. I was thinking, I felt reassured by the things I was seeing in other classrooms, both for my own skill level as a teacher, and for theirs too

and gaining reassurance that she is not alone in her daily challenges.

> Being in other people's classrooms makes me feel a little better because I realize that I'm not the only one having this struggle. I'm not the only one who will take two days to complete a lesson. And so kind of seeing other people's imperfections makes me feel better about mine.

Erin was aware that she was also being assessed by others in the debriefing processes when she was questioned about particular teaching decisions, yet seemed to feel overall that people responded positively to her classroom, indicating that she received **verbal** affirmation of her teaching skills. And as is noted frequently in her story, she feels that assessment feedback, positive and negative, contributes directly to her effectiveness, and by extension, sense of mastery as a teacher.

> And so it was nice to get that feedback. Because you won't be able to change unless someone gives you feedback.

Indications of Erin's Developmental Stage

Erin left a profession in which she excelled to embark in a new career as a teacher, one that would give her a sense of purpose. As we analyzed her interview, we kept that front and center, wondering if this drive signified self-authorship or if the impetus for that need came from external sources. Erin does seem to be working toward a larger purpose in her new role as a teacher. Her interview was punctuated with many references to her students and wanting what was best for them.

We saw signs that Erin is able to exercise independent judgment, when, for example, she reported making decisions about how to organize students for optimal learning or adjusting some of the mandated time blocks when her students needed particular skill reinforcement. We also noted engagement in expert learning and clarity on *what* she needs to be learning, although we could not tell if her desire to learn is coming from her, or from the social norms of the organization in which she teaches.

As a new teacher, Erin is particularly subject to her environment. She is learning how to deliver instruction, how to manage student behavior, and how to make sense of a very foreign community of poverty. We wondered how much of any appearances of socialized mind-form were due to needing to learn the work at hand or whether she was truly subject to external authority. This question cropped up in many of the interviews and will be discussed later in Chapter 10.

In the end we classified Erin as centered in a socialized mind form, but with some elements of self-authorship emerging. We found her ultimate desire for affirmation from others to be telling:

> The best thing about being observed is when someone says something and you say you know that, that was great. And you feel good about yourself.

We also thought her alignment to a more senior teacher, Michelle to be a significant clue, particularly in the ways she mirrored Michelle as she talked about frustrations with administrator presence and mandates. While it is entirely possible that Erin holds these beliefs independently of Michelle, or that Erin influenced Michelle's ideas, the interviews suggest the opposite and that Erin's opinions were very much fused with Michelle as an external authority.

And finally, Erin's recounting of the first lesson in which she was observed, the one that she remembers going well when, in fact, our notes show that it did not, suggests that she is significantly influenced by what others think. She may, in fact, have reconstructed this event in memory, suggesting some level of emotional distress. Or, she may be retelling it in ways that shine a brighter light on her competence. Both explanations, and there may be others, suggest a strong attachment to external authority.

CHAPTER TEN: WHAT THE STORIES REVEAL

> The work of schools is complex and, at times, can seem dehumanizing. Yet it is the
> most human of all enterprises as educators strive to reach into the hearts and minds of
> their students. Nowhere is the need for honesty, transparency, and trust more critical.
> (Martin, Hoyos, & Rasmussen, 2014, p. 7)

Introduction

A few months ago I had the opportunity to lead the fourth and fifth grade teachers

at Skyview Elementary through another peer observation process. Three of the teachers I

interviewed for this research were present, my first interaction with them since the

interviews took place. Joe was one of the teachers observed. I watched him differently

this time, recalling his expression of nerves before the event, trying to determine if he

appeared to relax as the lesson got underway and then viewed his demeanor during the

debrief with an expanded lens.

The topic of the session was student status during group work, examining how

students see each other as competent, or not, in any given content area – a mini version

perhaps of how teachers assess their colleagues' proficiency as teachers – and the role the

status designation might play in what a student actually learns during that lesson. As the

teachers described how each student had interacted with another, they were able to

consider how these students were in other situations. They spoke of them by name and

with personal knowledge that went beyond their individual classrooms. Marc chimed in

on each student, discussing things he had tried to resolve, for example, a student's

propensity toward what Marc termed status sabotage.

My point here is that each and every teacher at Skyview takes the success of each and every student seriously – personally and professionally. The heart present in that room, drawn from each teacher's energy toward the question at hand, was earnest, visible, and sincere. These are dedicated professionals who have chosen to undertake what I have come to believe is the most complex profession and with a body of students who have many strikes against them – as students and as young citizens of an impoverished community – that they will carry with them into their futures.

What was absent from the conversation was blame, or even frustration that, for example, Miguel's parents take him to Mexico each winter for 2 months, causing him to miss critical content and be significantly behind academically when he returns to the classroom. Joe quietly ensures that he has extra blankets in his classroom during the sub-freezing winter months, no questions asked. Michelle asks her students to "check the baggage" that takes place in their often traumatic home lives at the door so that they are ready to learn, acknowledging that there are some days that some students simply cannot engage in anything other than what they may have witnessed that morning. Sandra volunteers her time every afternoon, tutoring students who need extra support in becoming literate. Steve tries to wrap his brain around what motivates the students that he just cannot figure out, knowing that they have to want to learn before they will. And Erin cried each night during her first teaching year as she realized how important she might be to their futures and confronted, for the first time, her own feelings of inadequacy. *These people care*. And they work in a system that is relentless in its efforts to make sure the students in Vista are not shortchanged by learning targets that will not prepare them for the world they will enter. The leaders of this district have decided what

they believe will drive student success and they are bound and determined to deliver. It seems that if ever a group of people has needed that assurance that "they can," this is it.

It was difficult, therefore, to analyze each of these dedicated professionals without feeling as if the analysis is somehow an exposure, and thus a betrayal, of their vulnerabilities. The confidences that they gave so freely, the permission to analyze their comments in such detail, to apply my interpretation and that of the literature to their experiences around something so personal as to make a dramatic difference in the life of a child feels almost inhumane. This analysis, therefore, is presented with an abundance of humility, knowing that I could not, for a single day, even attempt to accomplish what these amazing individuals have devoted their lives toward. I could never "walk in their shoes." I, and society, ought to be grateful for those who do.

The purpose of this study was to learn how one particular process, that of peer observation, might promote a greater sense of "we can" among teachers, specifically the five studied teachers at Skyview Elementary School. Working within the construct of efficacy as developed by Bandura (1977, 1982, 1986, 1994), the study considered the opportunity for these teachers to become more efficacious by accessing four known sources of efficacy: mastery and vicarious experiences, where teachers experience or witness success in the classroom; verbal persuasion, where teachers receive verbal affirmation of competence; and emotional states that have a productive impact on efficacy. Collective efficacy development also requires the opportunity for teachers to assess the competency of their colleagues in light of the tasks they are asking students to master (Goddard, 2001; Goddard & Goddard, 2001; Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy,

2004; Tschannen-Moran, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001; Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, &

Hoy, 1998).

This chapter analyzes data related to collective efficacy development through

these sources as they are detailed across the teachers' stories. It begins with findings

related to the peer observation protocol that oriented this study and how teachers

responded to particular aspects of that process. It then considers ways in which

participation in peer observation may have contributed to efficacy by examining the

presence of efficacy sources as the teachers described their experiences. I conclude the

chapter with a discussion of the patterns and intersections noted around the teachers'

presumed developmental stages.

Response to the Peer Observation Protocol

As noted previously in Chapters 1 and 3, peer observation in this study is defined

by one particular protocol (Appendix A), derived from a process known as Instructional

Rounds (City et al., 2009; Roberts, 2012; Teitel, 2013). The process is deliberately

structured with tight protocols for psychological safety and designed to help participants

construct collective understandings through collaborative inquiry and dialogue. The peer

observation protocol and the way in which learning is theorized and practiced in the Vista

School District were found to be tightly aligned and are discussed further in Chapter 11.

Several aspects of the protocol surfaced in the teachers' stories that suggested its

structure had an impact on collective efficacy development, although their reactions were

varied. The most consistent finding was the protocol's ability to establish psychological

safety, argued by Elmore and Forman (2011) to be foundational to collective efficacy.

Michelle's recollections revealed the importance of tight facilitation, "I was nervous but

then I was relieved. You actually controlled that." She described what that looked like to

her:

> You were very adamant. "Oh, no, that's not what we're talking about. We're not going to judge. We're going to go in there as observers, as learners." And I was, like, what? You're asking us to do something we're basically not used to. You were very demanding, but in a very polite way. You had this air about you. "I don't care if you've been teaching for 30 years or for 1 year." I liked that.

Other teachers found the structure to be useful in setting parameters for comfortably

observing and analyzing their data:

> I think as we went through first year people started relaxing a little bit more and realized, "no it's not more work. I don't have to be perfect for the observation. That's not what it's about. It just getting everybody in and thinking about instruction and learning, and talking about what went well, what could go better. (Steve)

Michelle also noted her frustration when the facilitation shifted, a move toward releasing

the group to independence, for which she was not ready:

> I like it when you're in charge. But the second year I felt like, you know, "Shut up. Let other people talk." But they didn't get to talk because we ran out of time. That kind of pissed me off. Because I feel like, there's a format we need to follow and you're not following it. And if people go outside that, like outside the expectation, it kind of irritates me.

Not all emotions associated with the process were positive, with several teachers

reporting that the required skills and inquiry-orientation to the data analysis component

were difficult. Negative emotions can contribute to efficacy regression (Bandura, 1994).

Sandra found the protocol's expectations to be challenging "because I had never isolated

skills and it felt like we were splitting hairs … very microscopic … isolating a skill or a

strategy that a teacher was using." She acknowledged, however, that having a protocol

to follow with "some vocabulary and tips for giving feedback" was helpful. Joe found

parts of the process to be confusing:

> I think sometimes I'm not sure what I'm looking for. I know that the people we're observing tell us what they want us to look for – but when I try to do what other people are doing and keep track of who's saying what and the time and keeping track of what the teacher wants us to keep track of, I feel like I fill up a page of things that are not important before anything important happens. I don't know. Maybe that's just the process of it.

And, at times, irrelevant:

> Sometimes I feel like [the data we collected] was just data for data's sake. For example, "someone called on 17 boys and 15 girls" – something like that. It's almost just data because we have it. I don't feel like that something I could use unless it was, "I was calling on, like 19 boys and 2 girls."

> Here Joe also suggests how, for him, purpose served as a filter for the value he

associated with the process. Purpose can establish a predisposition to what is gleaned

from the experience and thus could be an important backdrop to efficacy development.

Steve connected the protocol to one of the desired outcomes of peer observation, a more

calibrated understanding of student engagement:

> I liked the idea of coming in with a purpose and having some of the protocols in place so we all were kind of looking at the same thing in the same way, or at least if we didn't see it the same way we had a way to discuss about what was going on.

and related that to the importance of the routines for recording and communicating

observations:

> We didn't think about how to observe before. What kind of things are we looking for and why are we looking for them versus – well I'm just going in to look for stuff I like. I'm looking for that deeper of what and why and how.

Michelle's story illustrated some contradictions in the way she thought about process,

suggesting that its purpose may not have been clear or shared for all of the participants.

She expressed relief that they would not be allowed to judge each other, yet at the same

time claimed that the best thing about the peer observation process was

being acknowledged for the things that impress the teachers. What they liked. Like, "I like how you did this!" What they saw. It's like a compliment. It is nice.

Michelle spent more of her interview discussing the protocol itself than any growth she may have experienced because of it and is the only teacher interviewed who referred to peer observation as the "Harriette work." This label was in fact, how Marc described the work and he used this term when notifying teachers of planned sessions, verbally and in writing. None of the other teachers interviewed used this term, however, additional evidence of Michelle's focus on the structure of the process, rather than, perhaps, its function. In fact, she stated such directly: "This is about the program. This is how it works." Michelle's comments suggest that she may not own the ultimate purpose for which peer observation was put into place, that of improving instructional practices. Her statements may relate to her beliefs that she is not in need of instructional improvement and her feelings about the district's instructional mandates – "if you want me to jump through a hoop, I'll do it, [but] *I* know what's best for my students." Recall also that Michelle's story illuminated conflicts around what she feels her students need – strong relationships – versus what she is being asked to prioritize in her classroom. All of this may have contributed to her focus on the protocol and perhaps her reaction to being "voluntold."

Teachers were unaware as to how decisions were made regarding who was to be observed, why certain teachers were selected and others not, and Marc's method of letting teachers know they were to be observed may have caused some confusion among teachers about the purpose of the process. Joe and Michelle described Marc's specific request for them to serve as host teachers in ways that suggested they were seen as

exemplars in their classroom, yet the protocol facilitates a process that is value-neutral.

Marc and Gloria's explanations of who was chosen to be observed suggest that in some

cases exemplary practice did drive that decision; in others, not.

> It depended on the focus. Which classrooms can we go into where everyone can be seeing the same things, so we can share those practices, in a very safe, neutral setting. (Gloria)

> [Sometimes] we chose first-year teachers. They're very open to feedback. Are they absolutely intimidated to be in front of veteran teachers? Yeah, but they are hungry to know. And some of our new teachers who haven't been in our building do sometimes come in with a little bit more teacher-led at times. It was a great opportunity for first year teachers to teach the way they do and help them in a non-judgmental way to say this is the result you're getting as far as your engagement in your classroom. (Marc)

There was consistency in how the teachers described Marc's role during the

observation process, similar to how he behaves in their professional learning community

meetings. Marc was reported as behaving like "just another teacher," "hands on,"

"motivated and motivating," "supportive," and "challenging" in PLC meetings. During

peer observation, Marc is described as participating, but in more supportive terms,

suggesting a deliberate promotion of psychological safety through affirmation and, in

some cases, protection.

> Marc's role is as a supporter of teachers. It seems like when we share out he's making sure the teacher that was observed was supported. I think he tries to keep us focused on what we can use from this from what we observed. I think he tries to encourage because I think there are times when we share out constructive criticism. (Joe)

> Marc did play an active role, coming to our debriefs, and trying to be a part of as many observations as possible. He believes that the best way for us to grow is to work together on what we do well and use each other as a support system. (Steve)

> Marc is more, "Hey, tell me about that. Why are you doing that?" He's more questioning. (Michelle)

Michelle was adamant that she did not want to hear administrator voice during these sessions, while Marc was deliberate in follow up to make sure the observed teachers felt positive about the experience. Erin discussed the aftermath of her second observation that she feels went so badly:

> After that really rough lesson I had – He came to me and wanted to talk about the feedback issue because he felt like all the feedback were things I needed to work on but he wanted to give me feedback that he thought went really great about the lesson.

These actions may have reversed any negative feelings, and efficacy regression, related to being observed.

Summary

The findings in this section confirm the importance of structure as an important element of successful collaboration (Bellman & Ryan, 2009; City et al., 2009; DuFour, Eaker, & DuFour, 2005; Rasmussen, 2012; Rasmussen, 2014a; Roberts, 2012; Teitel, 2013; Tisdell & Eisen, 2000). A shared purpose revealed itself to be important to how teachers dealt with their fears about being judged by their peers; the one teacher who explicitly did not own or understand the purpose focused primarily on the structure, rather than the instructional growth it intended to foster.

Despite initial difficulties for some, the structures and facilitated protocols provided skill development and necessary supports for completing the expected tasks. One teacher, Sandra, says she now observes and follows up with her student teachers in ways that mirror the protocol. The nonjudgmental nature of the observation notes and adherence to the norms that required structured participation through facilitation all lent themselves to most participants' ability to navigate the emotional aspects of the process. This context establishes a platform for understanding the role of the protocol within

evidence that the teachers experienced efficacy development during peer observation.

What stands out in the teacher stories, however, are ways in which authority was present in cross-role collaboration. The presence of positional authority in the process was repeatedly warned against in the literature, with repercussions related to trust and psychological safety, even though some research indicated that without that presence, the depth of discussion was lacking with little impact on classroom practice (Murray & Xin Ma, 2009). These findings suggest that Marc's presence in peer observation actually contributed to psychological safety and enhanced the value of the process itself. This will be discussed at length in Chapter 11.

Individual Efficacy Development

This section considers where the peer observation process provided opportunity for teachers to experience any or all of the efficacy sources and the reflective processing relevant to efficacy formation. My analysis of the data reveals that peer observation did, indeed, provide opportunity for teachers to experience various sources of efficacy. Each of these sources and accompanying evidence are discussed below.

Mastery Experiences

Mastery experiences are reported to be the most powerful of the sources, causing a belief in one's capabilities through personal successes (Bandura, 1994). The experiences of teachers in this study with peer observation revealed scant evidence that being observed while teaching *directly* contributed to their sense of mastery when serving in the role of host teacher. Although Michelle inferred experiencing mastery of others by stating that others had been able to learn by watching her, only Joe and Erin talked

directly about feeling successful in delivering an observed lesson. Erin's recollection suggests feelings of mastery:

> I felt it went really well. It was, that class was an amazing class – they did everything that I had told them to do. They didn't need me. It was a beautiful lesson. I just remember that there was no disappointment from me. There were no changes I would make. It went very smoothly.

This piece of evidence is complicated, however, by the differences in recollection between Erin, who remembers that the lesson went well, and several observers (myself and the principal) whose notes suggest that the goals she set for the lesson were not at all met, an awareness she expressed at that time. This contradiction was reviewed in the discussion section of Chapter 9. Without delving into the reason for these differences, it calls into question whether or not that lesson actually served as a productive source of efficacy for Erin, at least at that time. Her memory of that experience now certainly suggests feelings of mastery related to that lesson: "It just went so well, there really wasn't much to say about it." Her recounting raises the question of whether feelings that produce mastery about a particular experience can surface later and act as a valid underpinning to overall efficacy, even if they are produced through reconstructed memories. This idea of delayed feelings of mastery surfaced in other ways as well, something I have termed indirect mastery and which is discussed below.

Steve and Michelle both reported hosting a successful lesson during the peer observation process, but did not suggest that these successes were later considered in a way that caused feelings of mastery to emerge from that particular lesson. This aspect of efficacy development is key; making sense of the experience is what ultimately results in an individual's assessment of one's personal teaching competency (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). One conclusion that might be drawn from these data, then,

is that peer observation is not an especially powerful process to produce mastery as a source of efficacy.

Indirect Mastery. An interesting phenomenon surfaced across the teachers, however, who taught a lesson and received data that later changed how they worked with their students. The successes they noted with these changes in practice suggest that the data they received from the hosted lesson did eventually result in feelings of mastery. Erin and Joe stated specifically that that data had made them more effective in the classroom:

> Since that day, I think, I really don't call on raised hands anymore. I use sticks now 95% of the time. (Erin)

> The data I got as a teacher. … directly affected how I can change my classroom or change what I do to help my classroom. (Joe)

So while there is little evidence that mastery occurred during peer observation, the teacher narratives do suggest that the data received during the collective analysis spurred reflection and action that led to feeling more masterful. There was also evidence that Steve and Joe actually preferred critical feedback that would help them improve their practice, for example, "Come in and look at what I'm doing well and help me with the areas where I can improve" (Steve).

Vicarious Experiences

Three of the five teachers reported that they experienced **vicarious** sources, feeling efficacious as a result of observing others who faced comparable teaching challenges (Bandura, 1994). Similar to ways in which the observation data spurred changes in practices, observing others also appears to have contributed to changes in practice and subsequent success – and efficacy.

When we do this observation, there's always something I can walk away with. (Joe)

And so even though I'm not observed, I go back and say, that's how I'm going to do it in my classroom. Oh, I like that. So I find, all those noticings. I apply them to my teaching. (Michelle)

When I saw Joe's class in action I knew I had to put my foot down on that. Now I say, "have you talked to … about that yet?" Then they get the help they need. My time is saved up for the kids who really need it. (Erin)

Sandra, in the role of observer participant, gave less convincing data that observing others served as a source for efficacy through vicarious experiences. While she acknowledges it helped her as a teacher to reflect on her own practice, she does not say directly that she has changed anything in her classroom as a result, or that she felt more confident in her teaching as a result of observing others. Even when she talks specifically about her classroom practice, it is in an imagined state, that *if* she had this data, this is how it might help her as a teacher. She was never observed so never received the data she indicates would benefit her students and her practice as a teacher.

[My students] benefit because as I see the data I can see where I can meet my students needs and where I can, for example, if it had been a reading lesson and I really wanted the kids to engage with the text, and I found that five of my students were not involved with the text, they were not engaged, it would help me to evaluate why weren't they engaged. Is it behavior first of all? Is it that they didn't have the correct strategies? Did I not check for understanding when I released them to do their work? So, the data benefits my students and it benefits my practice overall.

Steve had the least to report about vicarious experience. As noted in Chapter 7, Steve approached practices presented by his peers more as a curiosity than exemplar practice. Bandura (1994) is specific about this point.

Modeling influences do more than provide a social standard against which to judge one's own capabilities. *People seek proficient models who possess the competencies to which they aspire* [emphasis added]. Through their behavior and expressed ways of thinking, competent models transmit knowledge and teach

observers effective skills and strategies for managing environmental demands. Acquisition of better means raises perceived self-efficacy. (para. 7)

There are indications in Steve's narrative that, as a confident and seemingly efficacious teacher, he is specific about how and where he gets the support he feels he needs. Note how Steve used the literacy coach to cover his classroom so that he, Steve, can develop his para-educators, rather than asking the coach to work with them directly. And he is open about his need to go into more depth about teaching and learning, more, sometimes, than his peers are willing or able to do:

> Really difficult for me is *not* talking and listening to everybody's ideas. That is actually hard for me, to take the time and sit back and wait for everybody else to have their voice. Maybe my synapses fire too quickly. I don't know. I just kind of pick up on things pretty quickly I feel.

Verbal Persuasion

Steve's discerning attitude toward his peers suggests that he might be less receptive to verbal persuasion as an efficacy source and indeed, there is little in his narrative to suggest that he accessed that efficacy source during the process. His interest was around data that would give him information to interpret what was going with his students, to examine the underlying purposes for teaching moves, and evidence that they impacted how students were learning. Given that verbal persuasion as an efficacy source relies on external validation (Bandura, 1994), Steve, as someone we considered to be self-authored, would be less likely to be impacted by this source than an individual who derives his or her authority from others.

These data suggest an important intersection between adult development and the role of peer observation on efficacy development. Three of the five teachers interviewed are believed to be centered in a socialized mind-form, in which they appear fused to an

external set of norms, adopted as their own. The exceptions are Steve, believed to be self-authored, and possibly Joe. One might assume that the three teachers we suggest are socialized would show a high level of openness to verbal persuasion, at least the two who were observed teaching. Michelle and Erin expressed outright how important that affirmation was to them:

> Being acknowledged for the things that impress the teachers. What they liked. Like, I like how you did this! What they saw. It's like a compliment. It is nice. (Michelle)

> The best thing about being observed is when someone says something and you say you know that, that was great. And you feel good about yourself. (Erin)

Like Steve, Joe seemed immune to the opinions of others in the way he talked about the process and made little reference to verbal persuasion or any sign that he desired positive feedback. Challenges to a lesson were construed as opportunities to increase mastery and an inference that critical feedback would be applied to his practice. Joe's entire focus on the process was to get data that would help him to improve his practice: "That's my favorite part: How I can use constructive criticism?" and showed little patience for data that he considered to be irrelevant to improvement.

Emotions

But where the data were scattered in experiences that promoted efficacy through mastery, vicarious experiences, or verbal persuasion, all teachers noted significant emotions related to the peer observation process. Emotions are the fourth efficacy source noted by Bandura (1994), who differentiates between positive emotions as "energizing" and negative emotions as "debilitating" (para. 11). He notes the interpretation of "stress reactions and tension as signs of vulnerability to poor performance" in "judging [one's]

capabilities" and that

> Mood also affects people's judgments of their personal efficacy. Positive mood enhances perceived self-efficacy, despondent mood diminishes it. (para. 10)

As the most decidedly self-authored teacher in this study, it was interesting to note that Steve expressed no negative emotions associated with the process, except in recognition that others were "real worried" and "apprehensive" about being observed. On the other hand, Michelle, Erin, and Joe had emotional responses to being observed that fit within Bandura's (1994) definition of debilitating emotion and which he claimed work against efficacy development. Each was concerned about being judged by their peers:

> I thought. NO. Oh my gosh I'm going to be judged. Nobody wants to be judged. And I don't want any of that. This is not the way it's supposed to be. I don't want any of that stuff. (Michelle)

> I remember both times I taught and was observed I found out the day before or the week before. It felt – as much as we say, we're not judging – any time you get observe it feels, not judgmental, but you want to do well. (laughs lightly) Be successful. (Joe)

> Probably it's nerves. Like being nervous because they're going to watch you and sometimes to judge you even though they won't say it out loud, Oh, that was a bad lesson, they might think it and then they would internalize that, Hmm. I just saw her teach and that kind of stinks. Maybe that one thing you saw, it's the only bad thing, but it's the one thing they're going to think about. You know, like that day that Cal Case saw me. It was a bad day for me and my students. It was not a great lesson. He'd never watched me teach. He'd come into my classroom to work with my kids, but I don't think he'd ever actually seen me deliver a lesson. So even though that was, that lesson was well over a year ago, is that what he thinks of my teaching – that one day? (Erin)

Erin is the only teacher who expressed feelings that she had cause to be judged negatively, as she notes her sense of failure with the lesson. As already noted in Chapter 9, Bandura (1994) argued that "failures undermine [efficacy], especially if failures occur before a sense of efficacy is firmly established." (para. 4) As a new teacher, Erin would

have been particularly vulnerable to efficacy regression and she is clear that her preference shifted from being "hungry for feedback" to observing others over the course of the experience. Her experiences raise questions about whether peer observation is a productive process for new teachers as it relates to developing mastery.

Joe and Michelle both added signs of productive emotions to their recounting of feelings associated with the process. Joe is clear in his reflection that the stress of the process has paid off for him:

> This process is stressful. It's stressful all the way through the process. But it's like a game. It's stressful before you start. And then you get into the game and forget it. But the aftermath is stressful because you don't really know the game score even though you're done and the game is over and you're debriefing the game. It's nerve wracking but it's also my favorite part of the process. It's where I learn.

Michelle, while not acknowledging receipt of data that were useful to her teaching practice did acknowledge positive emotional aspects to the process:

> Once in awhile somebody will notice something and you just let that feed you for a long time. In the middle of rainy days, you get that one day of sunshine. You just have to remember that. That's kind of rewarding.

Her narrative also suggests that she was able to draw upon internal reserves to shield herself emotionally from fears that her peers might judge her harshly, that they would not understand or appreciate the ways in which she ran her classroom.

> I basically cleaned them out in my head because I have to take care of myself. I felt like, "OK. This is it. I'm letting you in. I'm giving you a piece of me and if you judge me, then shame on you," or whatever. I'm going to be the best I can be.

Understanding the impact of peer observation on Michelle and her emotional state requires the additional perspective of her principal in his recollection of changes he noted in Michelle after peer observation, changes he attributes to the process. Marc asserts that prior to participating in this process, Michelle was not well regarded by her peers; she

was not one to whom they would go for advice. He also notes that Michelle's students had not performed well academically as compared to the students taught by her teammates, stating that Michelle's students did "not contribute positively to the overall performance of that grade level." After being observed, however, Marc noted positive changes in her students' performance on standardized measures and more inclusive relationships between Michelle and her colleagues. Michelle's peers began to include her in professional conversations about teaching and learning. Teachers also started to go to her for perspective on their own teaching challenges. Erin confirms positive regard toward Michelle, although we cannot know whether Erin's opinion changed as a result of that observation or whether she held this opinion prior to participating in peer observation:

> [Michelle] probably has the best classroom management I have ever seen. I am not exaggerating. She could leave her kids alone all day and teach by phone and they would be angels. So I have her to help me out. I can go to her and she tells me what she would do.

With the bulk of the data collected through the narratives showing participants' emotional responses to be negative, highlighting stress and nervousness, the question arises as to why the process itself was overall construed to be positive and of high value. None of the participants expressed a desire to not be involved and the perception reality cards were all marked as positive. Erin was clear, however, that after hosting two observations, she preferred observing others.

Collective Efficacy Development

The final aspect to be examined specific to efficacy development among the studied teachers relates to evidence that the peer observation process that orients this study was used as an occasion for the teachers to consider the competency of their peers.

This element distinguishes individual efficacy from collective efficacy: the determination of group-level competence that occurs through a cognitive process where teachers assess their colleagues' competence in relation to the teaching task at hand (Goddard et al., 2000; Goddard, 2001; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

Assigning Competence

There is clear evidence that the four teachers who were observed teaching engaged in significant reflection around their colleagues' competency. Michelle, Erin, Steve, and Joe all indicated that they used the process to form an opinion about the colleagues whose teaching they observed or were aware that others were assessing them. Michelle, in addition to confirming that she wanted to see how people "were" in their classroom, offered that they would have a more accurate assessment if they were to visit that teacher's classroom a second time.

> I would prefer to see that same teacher again. Because I feel like one time is not enough. It's good to see variety, but there's something rewarding about the same thing. You're going to see if that behavior is the same. I want things to be genuine – I'm not saying they're not.

Erin recalled her feelings that people were assessing her when, during the debriefing, she was questioned about teaching decisions. And Joe's assertion that he is looking for things "the teacher did well" so that he could use those in his classroom suggests he is applying value to what he observed.

Notable in the data is the absence of any evidence that Sandra, the one teacher who was not observed in this process, took the occasion through direct observation or during the collective analysis process to assess her peers. She does indicate that watching others caused her to reflect back on her own teaching, perhaps contributing positively to her own practice.

It really helped me as a teacher to observe another teacher and reflect back on my teaching even though I didn't get to be observed because a lot of time focusing on the student engagement part was what the big piece was. It's hard because it kind of get messed into everything but when you're truly isolate it and you truly just use that lens you start to notice things that you need to work on or things that aren't working or what will help me – and areas of growth – it helped me in areas where student weren't engaged and not on task and where they were engaged and were on task.

There is a slight inference that peer assessment took place when she says, "it helped me in areas where students weren't engaged and not on task. " Here she intimates that she observed something that she could use, suggesting a favorable impression. On the other hand, she is also talking specifically about isolating student engagement as an observation lens and does not actually state that it was what she saw that was useful, but instead that the idea of an isolated lens around engagement was valuable to her as a teacher. Sandra's recollections raise an important question, one that has surfaced throughout this discussion, of whether one must participate in the process as an observed teacher to affect efficacy.

Steve, our decidedly self-authored teacher, spent the most time discussing this aspect of the process, arguing, in fact, for his need to confirm what his team mates do in their classrooms. He equated that opportunity with his ability to trust, and verify, "that they're even doing their part, [as] a good team member."

We actually got to see each other doing our jobs rather than listening to them tell each other "I did that." You know, we would go back to our PLC, we could say, well did you guys try this strategy or did you do this lesson? We actually did that. We take it at face value because we do talk to each other as professionals but it's nice to have a process for people trying things on even when they're not comfortable with them, fully trying it and saying "I did that a little different," and sometimes "I had the lesson instructions for the lesson in front of me and I did it step by step but I didn't fully get into the why and how and thinking about students and all those other little pieces."

Steve's narrative brings in the element of trust. Bandura (1986) claimed trust to be a key element in the effectiveness of verbal persuasion, but Steve suggests that trust might actually be an outcome of the process, in turn making verbal persuasion more credible and effective as an efficacy source. Bryk and Schneider's findings on trust, detailed in Chapter 2, included elements of respectful listening, alignment of actions to claims, and the assignment of competence, all of which are present in Steve's recounting of his experience with peer observation.

> Maybe that's where I'm coming from with the trust. We became more willing to be open with our practice and so maybe it was not more that I trust them, but they learned to trust us to come in, that they're willing to trust us to come in and look at their practice and look at it in a way that it's not "we're trying to get you, top down, dinged." It's "come in and look at what I'm doing well and help me with the areas where can I improve." And so having that openness from the knowledge that I'm really not here just to catch you doing something wrong.

In addition to trust development, Steve's description illustrates the evolution of competence in the debriefing process, as well as the ability to listen deeply to each other around areas that matter to Steve.

> Then as we got better at it, I think, we all started to have a better conversation. In the debrief time, in the beginning, it was a lot of "Well, I liked that strategy," or "I liked that chart" versus "Why did you make the chart, what was the purpose of it?" "What was the outcome?" "Did it actually help the student learn?"

In this explanation, Steve also makes it clear that assigning competence, even of the process itself, is based on personally held values about what he and others need to improve their practice for students.

Declarations of Peer Competence

The data on peer assessment as a process, whether peer observation caused this type of reflection to take place, were coded separately from any data that suggested teachers had actually assigned competence of some sort to their peers in the process.

There is evidence that opinions were formed. Steve notes that they have "a pretty good staff" and that they are "seeing each other's strengths." Erin's story, too, suggests that she has formed opinions about her colleagues through this process, noting that "there are a lot of great teachers in the building" and that everyone has something of value to contribute to her own teaching. She has also used her assessment of others as a way to increase her own sense of efficacy:

> Being in other people's classrooms makes me feel a little better because I realize that I'm not the only one having this struggle. I'm not the only one who will take two days to complete a lesson. And so kind of seeing other people's imperfections makes me feel better about mine.

Joe, while asserting that the process had not changed much about how he thinks of his colleagues as teachers given that a single lesson provides only a snapshot of practices, nonetheless recognized patterns of practice across the building through peer observation. As noted earlier, his statement is a strong indicator of a collective, "we," orientation as a result of the process, even if not necessarily one that articulates confidence in peer competence:

> I guess moving to the second time I was observed, what changed since then, is that it's not so much what I can do to help the teacher – well, it kind of is. What kind of patterns are we seeing throughout classrooms? Because I noticed when I was being observed there were things happening in my classroom that were happening in a second class we observed. And so it occurred to me that the things that were happening, they were not just for that teacher but could be for the whole building.

Erin also spoke to a collective element in referencing a survey taken several years ago by Skyview teachers. She reported findings of teachers' faith in themselves, but less confidence in their colleagues, that they did not see their peers working at the same level. She stated her belief that the peer observation process has caused a shift in their thinking:

> Through these observations I think we were able to see that no, our colleagues are working just as hard as we are, they're doing the same things, having the same struggles. I was thinking, I felt reassured by the things I was seeing in other classrooms, both for my own skill level as a teacher, and for theirs too.

The survey to which Erin refers, administered by the Center for Educational Effectiveness, provides additional evidence of the reassurance she claims to be a result of peer observation. This survey was administered twice, once in October 2012 just prior to beginning the peer observation process and again in June 2014, providing some measurement for the period this study intended to examine. The results of one component of the survey, shown in Table 2 below, show dramatic increases in the level of alignment teachers saw between teaching practices and the district's instructional mandate. As an example, in 2012 only 38% of the staff observed student tasks that require higher level thinking skills. Two years later 81% reported observing those types of tasks in classrooms. What is significant about this data point is that this is specific to observed classrooms, classrooms where teachers have observed others.

Table 2

Teacher-Observed Changes in Classroom Practices
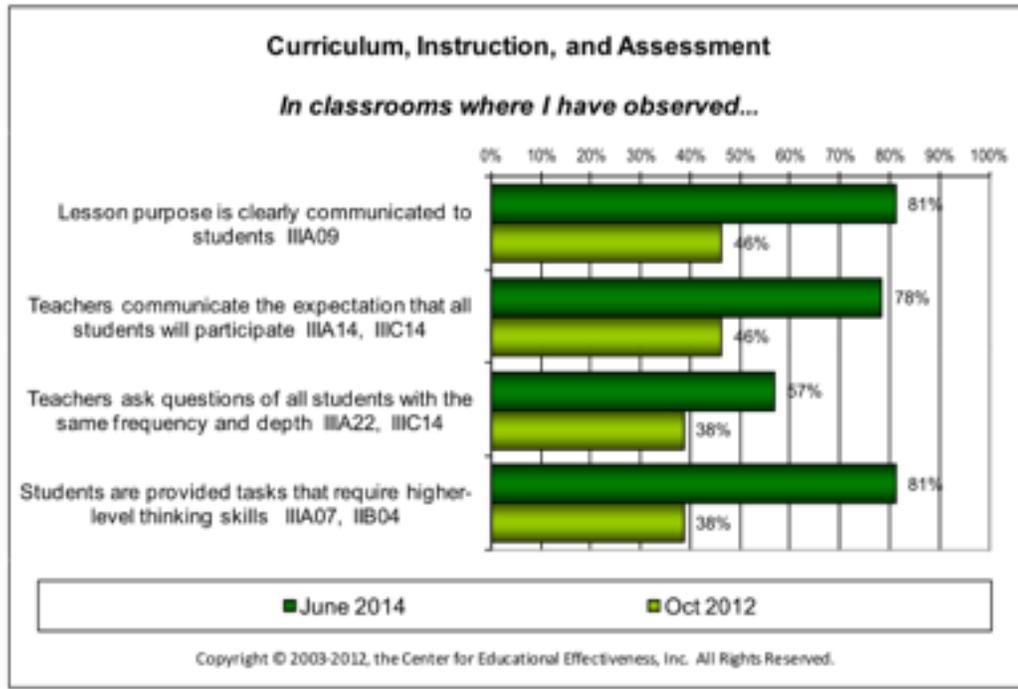
Another set of questions in that same survey showed little, if any, increase in how

teachers positively view instructional practices and in some cases, a decrease. There are

several possible explanations for this. In some instances, the questions asked may not

align with the kind of instructional mandates required in the Vista School District, such as

the use of interdisciplinary concepts. Others (e.g., assessment and alignment to state

standards) were already high, with little change across the 2 years. Assessment and

alignment, for example, represent areas in which the Vista School District has an ongoing

investment of resources. Overall this survey suggests that actually observing peers

enabled a recognition and reassurance of what others were doing in their classrooms and

increase in the level of collective efficacy.

Summary

The discussion above describes the variations in how each teacher experienced efficacy sources through peer observation. Taken together, however, there is significant evidence that involvement in peer observation provided the opportunity for these five teachers to experience multiple sources claimed by Bandura to produce efficacy (1977, 1982, 1986, 1994). It also appears from the data that three of the teachers experienced all four sources of efficacy, and there is evidence that all five teachers experienced two sources, heightened productive emotions and vicarious experiences. Table 3, below, outlines these findings. Although Joe and Sandra did not directly state positive emotions around this experience, each teacher ultimately claimed peer observation to be a valuable use of their time and this was factored into the table below. This classification was labeled as productive emotions, recognizing that Joe and Sandra's stories referenced the opportunity to learn, even though at some point there was discomfort in the process itself. These are noted as interpreted.

Table 3

Teacher Efficacy Source Acquisition

Teacher/Source	Mastery Experiences	Indirect Mastery Experiences	Vicarious Experiences	Verbal Persuasion	Heightened Productive Emotions
Michelle	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Erin	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Joe	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes*
Steve	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Sandra	No	No	Yes	Not Applicable	Yes*

*Interpreted

There was also strong evidence that the majority of teachers engaged in the process of assessing their colleagues' competence and that some positive conclusions were made regarding that competence. Sandra was the one teacher whose story did not suggest she assessed her peers. She is also the one teacher in this study who was not observed teaching during this process. Her experiences also accessed the fewest efficacy sources, suggesting that the role teachers play in this process (i.e., hosting a lesson versus only observing) strongly influences whether or not their participation contributes to collective efficacy development. The implications of this finding will be discussed further in Chapter 12.

Adult Development and Efficacy

The teacher stories confirm how their professional identities and backgrounds influenced how they experienced peer observation, one that justified using narrative inquiry as the study's methodology for this study to capture these idiosyncrasies and implications for peer observation as an avenue to collective efficacy. One factor called out for specific examination relates to each teacher's developmental level as claimed by Kegan (1983, 1998) to influence perspective-taking and orientation to authority. Recall my position that teachers need to be self-authored to successfully teach high standards to at-risk students and experience mastery, a source Bandura (1977, 1982, 1986, 1994) claimed to be most significant to efficacy development. A related thought was that the process of peer observation itself might develop teachers from a more common socializing mind form, where sources of authority are drawn externally, to self-authorship, where the locus of authority lies within the individual. Helsing, Kegan, and Lahey (2013) suggested that adults move from socialized to self-authorizing minds

through dissonance and experiences that cause "enough frustration and disorientation that we feel the limits of our current ways of thinking" (p. 4). While this topic was initially considered as a component of the overall learning system, some interesting intersections emerged around each teacher's presumed adult development level and the way in which they described their experiences. Thus it is presented here as a final discussion related to the teacher stories.

It should be reiterated that the technical aspects of determining an individual's adult development stage call for high levels of expertise. There are rigorous protocols for interviewing and for scoring transcripts. As the interviewer, I found that I had neither the skill nor the time allotted to dig deeply into what each teacher held as object and to what he or she was subject in recounting experiences with peer observation and the Vista School System. Further as was noted earlier in Chapter 3, the narrative interview protocol was not as compatible with a formal subject-object interview as hoped, where particular questions must be asked to understand the structure beneath the story being told. All of this is to say that our impressions are just that: impressions, and tentative at best. Still, there were enough interesting intersections with efficacy source acquisition to include these data in the study's findings.

Intersections of Adult Development with Efficacy Sources

As a group of analysts collaboratively considering each interview transcript, we were able to form tentative but consensus impressions around four of the teachers, the exception being Joe, about whom we were undecided. When there was not total agreement, I made the final determination. The results of this analysis are noted below as Table 4, set alongside the results around teacher efficacy source acquisition, viewed earlier in this chapter.

Table 4

Teacher Efficacy Source Acquisition with Corresponding Adult Development Levels

Teacher/ Source	Mastery Experiences	Indirect Mastery Experiences	Vicarious Experiences	Verbal Persuasion	Heightened Productive Emotions	Adult Development Level
Michelle	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Socialized
Erin	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Socialized
Joe	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes*	Socialized or Self-Authored
Steve	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Self-Authored
Sandra	No	No	Yes	Not Applicable	Yes*	Socialized

*Interpreted

Most notable in these data is the relationship of efficacy source acquisition to each teacher's developmental level in the area of verbal persuasion. Assuming that Joe is self-authored, these data suggest that those who draw their authority internally are less likely to draw on the perspectives of others as an efficacy source. Self-authorship might also influence how a teacher experiences mastery. Joe and Steve's stories showed no hints that teaching a successful lesson in front of their peers contributed to any sense of mastery; they only wanted constructive comments that they might apply later to their practice, what I have termed indirect mastery. Both teachers displayed a drive to learn from peer observation and very few indications that they cared about how their successes were viewed by their peers, although Joe acknowledged nervousness.

Erin, who may be moving toward self-authorship, drew mastery directly and indirectly. Michelle, someone we determined to be socialized and draw authority externally, expressed a tendency to be far more influenced by her peers and thus most likely to benefit from peer observation as an efficacy source. At the same time, recall from earlier in this chapter that Michelle seemed to struggle with a clear sense of purpose

for the process itself, compromising its contributions to her feelings of efficacy. All of the teachers indicated engagement in peer assessment, seemingly a nonfactor in developmental levels.

Adult development and emotional efficacy sources. Another consideration of adult development comes when examining the impact of adult emotions on teachers' emotional states during peer observation.   Steve, our decidedly self-authored teacher, was excited. His positive approach to the process was consistent, unless one counts any frustration with having to leave his class with a substitute or impatience with the debriefing dialogue. There was no suggestion of nervousness in being observed although he did express awareness that his colleagues were apprehensive about the peer observation process. As an observer participant only, Sandra also expressed assumptions about how others might feel in the role of observed teacher, that they would feel nervous and then excited.   She also acknowledged her own nervousness when observed during other processes. Her personal emotions related to this particular process were more pronounced when asked to engage in the unfamiliar and relatively ambiguous process of recording and debriefing the data. Sandra is also someone we classified as socialized. Her discomfort with an unfamiliar process and the direction she was seeking from the protocol would be consistent with someone who is socialized. She is the only teacher the data suggest may have experienced sufficient discomfort with the process to have the process itself cause any movement toward self-authorship, although none was actually noted.

These associations might have been predicted; in retrospect they are logical. Perhaps one of the biggest surprises came in trying to relate a teacher's developmental

level to their capacity to meet the complex learning needs of today's students. I had argued that the critical need to exercise independent judgment in the classroom, to move beyond any scripted lesson, and to successfully navigate inquiry-based instruction required some level of self-authorship. There is every indication that the teachers interviewed are, for the most part, successful in carrying out the kinds of pedagogy required by the district. This came through their stories as they talked about the ways in which they adjusted lessons for students, how they observed others' successes in the classroom, and my confidence as a researcher that the ideas they were discussing were common and related to the district's instructional mandate. At the same time, we considered only two of these teachers to be self-authored.

One explanation might be that we are wrong about our assignment of level and/or the competency these teachers have in the classroom. More relevant to this study, however, is the possibility that the instructional mandate itself encompasses the necessary skills to determine what students need and when, and eschews pacing that is not in the best interest of students. If socialized adults are tightly fused to such a comprehensive instructional mandate with such significant supports as are present in the Vista School District, the ability to carry out that mandate may have nothing to do with a teacher's developmental stage. If the external expectations of the system itself include the type of independent, adaptive actions teachers claimed to practice, might it be possible for a socialized individual to behave in ways that appear to be self-authored? Maybe the learning system has shaped the instructional norms and developed skills in such a way that the socialized teachers still draw their expert behaviors from an external source, making question of self-authorship irrelevant to the teachers in this system.

Summary

A teacher's developmental level appears to influence how they experienced peer observation and the potential that they would draw on efficacy sources during the process itself. Figure 8 below shows the types of sources teachers may acquire during peer observation that relate to their developmental level. The size of the circle relative to the others represents the degree of importance of each source to efficacy development (i.e., the larger circles represent sources that were more influential).
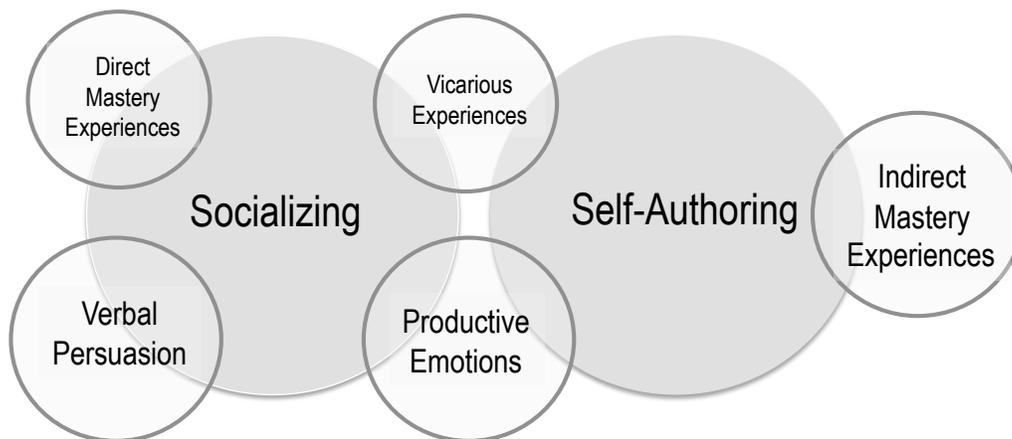
Figure 8. Access to efficacy sources through peer observation by developmental level.

In this study, the self-authored teachers drew mastery indirectly and were immune to verbal persuasion from others as an efficacy source. Socialized teachers drew their sources of mastery directly and relied on verbal persuasion to produce efficacy. Both socialized and self-authored adults drew efficacy from vicarious experiences and experienced emotions that ultimately could result in increased efficacy. There was no

evidence that the process itself caused any of the five teachers in this study to advance their level of development, however. There was also no evidence among the teachers' stories that a self-authoring mind-set was directly related to their skill level in navigating an inquiry-based pedagogical model.

Having established that peer observation can serve as a process from which teachers may draw sources of efficacy and assess the competency of their peers, we turn now to the underlying system in which this study took place. This next chapter considers how the particular leadership and organizational processes of Skyview Elementary School and the Vista School System contributed to collective efficacy development, the second research question that oriented this study.

CHAPTER 11: THE LEARNING SYSTEM

> The gap between successful and unsuccessful strategies is in what people know
> how to do and what they have to do in order to get results. It's a learning
> challenge, requiring not just a cultural shift, but also a shift in knowledge. It
> requires the heart and head of everybody in the organization, without exception.
> <div align="right">(R. Elmore, personal communication, April 20, 2012)</div>

The Vista School District is a tight system. It embodies characteristics that are

often described as aligned, or coherent (Childress, Elmore, & Grossman, 2006; Childress,

Elmore, Grossman, & King, 2006; Honig, Copland, Rainey, Lorton, & Newton, 2010).

Every committed resource points toward the superintendent's theory of action that

student achievement occurs directly as a result of instructional practice. Cal Younger, in

the role of Vista's superintendent for 11 years, has kept his vision front and center from

his first day on the job:

> My role is to always make sure that our focus is on improving instruction in the
> classroom because I think that that's what's going to make a difference in
> academic performance.
>
> So resource allocation, keeping the focus there, voicing it, being the sponsor of
> the work, making sure I'm visible and a participant in it so that people understand
> that this is the work and why it's important. If you don't continue to push it, then I
> think it could disappear. So really my role is making sure we stay on point, find
> the best people to do it and then make sure that the system continuous to feed it.

One of those "best" people Cal references is Peg Koenig, his assistant superintendent.

Peg sees her role as chief developer of teaching and leadership:

> I have a vision of what good instruction should look like, could look like and so I
> lead and guide the professional development. I don't provide it, although there are
> times that I think I do in smaller ways by modeling lessons. I work with our
> coaches and consultants to plan [professional development] and I plan weekly
> [professional development] for the administrators.   But [providing it] is not my
> general role.

>My role is to provide the guidance and the leadership. I have said several times in the past few days that you can provide the best professional development there is, with the best people out there, but if you don't have strong leadership to make that happen, it's not going to go anywhere.

These two individuals, their beliefs and their actions, have shaped the Vista School District's learning system, described in Chapter 4 as a grand narrative. The narrative's hypothetic, but realistic, day shows ways in which the school and district leaders carry out the system's organizational processes while introducing us to the five studied teachers. It also illustrates the degree of coherence present in the system and how the majority of the district's organizational aspects act to reinforce each other.

This chapter adds interpretation to the grand narrative and the ways in which the broader system contributed to collective efficacy among the studied teachers. It discusses aspects that were highlighted most strongly in the data around the key organizational processes summarized at the conclusion of Chapter 4 and how they impacted the teachers' experiences with peer observation.

My study sought to understand how certain under-studied areas in the education literature may have contributed to the development or regression of collective efficacy through peer observation: the use of strategic authority as a leadership practice, the intersections of accountability and psychological safety, and systems of adult learning with a lens on expert, versus novice, learners. The graphic depiction of these elements and their hypothesized route to collective efficacy was shown as Figure 6.

As might be expected, the data did not present in the neat categories suggested in this figure. First described in the discussion of Chapter 4, all of the themes were illuminated through the teacher and administrator interviews, but many of the lines between categories were blurred, revealing some unexpected intersections of leadership

practices and organizational processes. The discussion below is thus organized in these emergent categories. Even then, categorization in some ways becomes an artificial construct; some themes are so prevalent that they might be applied to every area. These will be highlighted in a concluding summary.

Authority, Psychological Safety, and Accountability

The strategic use of authority is an understudied area in the literature, particularly in education, a finding that argued for an examination of authority as it relates to psychological safety through two central questions: Did the psychological safety required to learn collectivity occur spontaneously or was the careful orchestration of strategic authority a necessary element? How did the presence of authority develop or regress feelings of psychological safety in the peer observation process? In Chapter 2 I presented Edmonson's (2008) graphic depiction of the relationship between accountability and psychological safety (Figure 5), equating high levels of both with strong performance. The interview data illuminated these significant intersections of psychological safety and accountability, but almost always included the element of authority– so much so that the presence of one element can hardly be discussed without referencing the two others. This discussion expands on the summary in Chapter 4, detailing how these elements played out in the lives of the studied teachers and specific areas in which they present, often simultaneously, in the data.

Authority through Instructional Mandates

The teacher stories and administrator interviews revealed a number of ways in which Marc, the primary positional leader at Skyview, exerts authority in his role as principal, one of which is to instill and support the district's instructional mandate as

noted in Chapter 4. Here we see alignment with district leadership when Marc describes

his role and that of his assistant principal, Gloria, in much the same manner as Cal and

Peg, the district's superintendents:

> As leaders, our role in teaching and learning is being the instructional leaders of the building. It really is about instruction because our belief is that improving instruction and providing high quality instruction is going to have the biggest impact on our kids.

Marc and Gloria also note that their highest leverage point in instructional improvement

is by supporting teachers and that in order to do that, they have to be in classrooms:

> We have to give feedback. We give feedback from noticing across grade level and then sometimes we have some uncomfortable conversations one on one with teachers or we might have to go back and say, we saw this in your classroom. Can you give us some more information? Is this something that's happening all the time? We're not quite sure about what this practice I was seeing. And then we'll get clarification and sometimes we notice trends that we weren't expecting whatsoever.

As instructional leaders, Marc and Gloria communicate two distinct behaviors and

ways in which they use positional authority. First, they see it as a way in which they can

support teachers, promoting teachers' capacity to reflect on their instructional practice

adopting what Heiftez and Linsky (2002) called "a balcony" view.   For example, when

they ask, "Is this something that's happening all the time?" they help teachers avoid what

Sargut and McGrath (2011) termed "inattentional blindness," where one's concentration

precludes the system that goes on around them.   The reflection their questions promote

might relate to teaching and learning patterns within an individual teacher's classroom or,

alternatively, trends across classrooms or grade levels to promote consistency and

curriculum articulation. Joe spoke directly to that as he described their staff meetings

when each grade level reports progress toward their student learning goals, one of the

school's accountability structures:

Marc and Gloria's role is to kind of conduct the grade level strands – any strands of learning that go through grade levels.

Marc and Gloria also used positional authority to establish a clear vision for an instructional mandate by providing expectations for what they want to see in the classroom and around which their feedback is organized. This mandate begins at the district level with district-authored curriculum written in response to Common Core State Standards. Peg also carefully matched the selection of external consultants to a stated instructional philosophy and supervises professional development for all employees in curricular content and their desired instructional approach. Teachers are expected to deliver content within guidelines that are believed to result in conceptual understanding.

These mandates present certain challenges that were noted by teachers involved in this study. Sandra explains why the instructional approach is difficult for her and the impact of the district's support:

> It has been a struggle because I learned [math] a different way and it's been very hard to rewire my brain to think differently and to teach differently. It's gotten better. It's gotten a lot better. I'm 70% more confident than when I began, but there's still that 30% that's not as comfortable as I would like it to be. I understand it a lot better. I feel like I've conquered a lot. I don't have to constantly stop and ready my manual – have the kids turn and talk so I can gather my thoughts.

The district's instructional mandate also required the use of pacing guides. Erin describes her struggle with this when students are not always prepared to learn at the rate expected by the guides:

> We have a calendar. And our calendar has on it what you're supposed to be teaching that week. And most units are about two weeks long and you have two weeks exactly to teach it and then you're on to the next unit. And if you fall even one day behind that means that this kid will be behind in something. That means that one day of the unit that kid's not going to get. And it's not fair for them. They deserve the absolute best. If I let myself come in and have a bad day and I

let the day not mean anything, that's one day that they've lost and they can't afford it.

Despite these expressed difficulties, four of the five teachers interviewed did not question the presence of an instructional mandate as established by the district and reinforced by school leadership. The exception was Michelle. Her narrative referenced her reaction to administrators in her classroom and her frustration with the ways in which they are asking her to teach:

> There is a moment where I feel like an admin will come in and say, "Where's your learning target?" "I don't have it up." "Why not." "Because I'm not teaching that right now. I put it up when I'm teaching it." "Well, you should put it up so I can see it when I come in here." I feel like – I'm a human being – why are you talking like that to me? You talk more nicely to belligerent and angry crazy parents than you do to me and I'm the worker.

While it is not clear from her story whether she is referencing visits by school or district-level administrators, Michelle's response to the instructional mandate that tells her what and how to teach suggests that her values do not align with those of the district in terms of the presence of an instructional mandate, which impacts her autonomy as a teacher. Recall also from her narrative that she prioritizes relationships over academic content; Michelle does not appear to agree with what is included in that mandate as well. We cannot know if her reaction is more heavily weighted toward being told how to teach or if agreement with the mandate itself would cause her to be more welcoming of administrator presence in her classroom.

The role of an instructional mandate informs this study in several ways and may be critical to the development of collective efficacy through peer observation. Michelle's reaction to the instructional mandate is significant as the evidence suggests she is the one teacher in the study who approached peer observation without a personal purpose that

linked her involvement in the process to improving her classroom practice. The district's instructional mandate oriented the overall purpose of peer observation and integrated the ways in which Skyview's administrators provided support and held teachers accountable. Peer observation is another avenue of support toward that mandate, reinforcing the values espoused by leaders and pushing ownership of that value, or mandate, to the teachers.

Through the narratives, we can see the difference in how Michelle and her colleagues who were observed responded to collegial feedback. Michelle primarily sought affirmation. The others desired data that could improve their practice. Both can lead to individual efficacy development but may not result in collective efficacy if teachers are assessing competence against a different standard. An instructional mandate provides that common, or collective, standard for determining peer competency. During Skyview's peer observation the topic of student engagement – a component of the district's instructional mandate – provided clarity around what to look for while observing. It guided the collective analysis that followed, and became a standard against which teachers assessed their colleagues and determined where they, as individuals, needed to grow.

Authority and Psychological Safety

Recall that trust is a key element to the effectiveness of verbal persuasion in developing efficacy (Bandura, 1986) and prominent in the data are ways in which Marc used his authority to promote trust. These indicators of trust become especially vivid when considering the elements that, along with respect, Bryk and Schneider (2002) claimed produce trust in schools: integrity, personal regard, and credibility. Joe and Steve discussed Marc's constant focus on students and support for teachers; Steve noted

feeling supported personally by Marc; Erin assumes him to be competent; and Sandra

finds him to be consistent with his actions – he does what he says is important. With this

type of evidence emerging around the impact of Marc's actions on trust, it is worth

reviewing Edmonson's (2008) discussion of the need for trust in psychologically safe

environments, first cited in Chapter 2:

> Psychological safety is not about being nice—or about lowering performance standards. Quite the opposite: It's about recognizing that high performance *requires* the openness, flexibility, and interdependence that can develop only in a psychologically safe environment, especially when the situation is changing or complex. Psychological safety makes it possible to give tough feedback and have difficult conversations—which demand trust and respect—without the need to tiptoe around the truth. (p. 6)

In their stories the teachers in this study referenced the elements to which Edmonson

refers: trust and respect, consistent high performance standards, and the provision of

tough feedback, although not necessarily during peer observation sessions, which will be

discussed below. Steve summarized Marc's standards and how they played out at

Skyview:

> He sets high goals for himself. And then in turn obviously because he has high goals for himself it carries down. We have high goals for our building, for each of our teachers, and for our students. In a way I guess he always said, "This is where we're going to go. You can go there. I am going to do what I can to get us there. I know we have constraints of reality, but we can control the things we can control and we're going to work on the things that we can do to make our building and our school and our community successful."

Even Michelle, who admits that she does not always feel safe in administrator presence

and concludes that administrators do not trust her, suggests that she felt safe enough with

Marc to question his expectations during a performance evaluation. Recall how Michelle

described Marc's response:

> He was not unreasonable and because he approached it that way…. He didn't tell me to stop. That helped. And I think he's more understanding of when I don't have charts.

Bryk and Schneider (2002) related the importance of supporting work that entails risk-taking to furthering levels of trust among peers:

> Teachers demonstrate such integrity to their colleagues when they willingly experiment with new forms of instruction to improve student learning, even though this entails additional work and the risk of failure can be high. (p. 26)

There are many examples of teachers stepping out of their comfort zones, with an implied risk of failure, in the teacher narratives. Prominent is the data in Chapter 10 detailing the challenging emotions teachers reported experiencing as they prepared to be observed by their colleagues. Despite the levels of anxiety reported all teachers acknowledged the process itself to be of value. It is a curious phenomenon. Bandura (1994) discussed a negative correlation of stressful emotional states to efficacy, yet the element of risk-taking inherent in how teachers describe their emotions, coupled with their positive attitudes about the experience suggest high levels of psychological safety. This coupling raises the question of whether these levels of psychological safety were in place prior to the peer observation process, or whether that process produced, or contributed to, an environment in which teachers were willing to take these risks. This was a key question raised by Higgins et al. (2011) in their study of the relationship between psychological safety, leadership, and organizational learning where they lacked definitive answers on whether psychological safety, experimentation, and leadership were a precondition to organizational learning or whether they were derived through its presence. These data suggest both.

Sandra and Erin described their experiences with district-led professional development that requires them to struggle through math tasks for which, in Sandra's case, even the rationale is unclear. Their experiences suggest an organizational norm around adult learning that incorporates dissonance and requires risk-taking. Both teachers talk about struggle in ways that suggest struggle is part of a learning journey. This expectation of dissonance in district professional development establishes a backdrop for peer observation and the discomfort Joe and Michelle noted when asked to host a lesson; both agree to do so. It is significant that neither appeared to feel permission to decline the request, evidence that Marc's position and authority placed them in a potentially vulnerable role in front of their peers, one in which they were admittedly nervous:

> It kind of felt like I couldn't say no. No, that's not true. I could have said no, but…. (Joe)

> And so Mr. Elliott convinced me to become part of this process. I thought. "NO. Oh my gosh I'm going to be judged." Nobody wants to be judged. And I don't want any of that. This is not the way it's supposed to be. I don't want any of that stuff. Finally I said, "fine." (Michelle)

Marc was well aware that he used his authority to place teachers in a position that created anxiety: "I would think that all of our teachers went in saying, 'I'm here because they told me I'm going to be here.'"

He goes on to acknowledge

> I think we're anxious no matter how many times we do this, especially our teachers who are modeling and opening up their classroom. No matter how safe it is and they've tried this out and they realize it's safe and they realize that portion of this 45 minutes in the classroom is not even going to be about me. It's about how kids react or interact, based off of what teacher moves I made and now it's the focus is on them. But there's a certain anxiety level that comes with this process. I feel it and I definitely would feel it if I opened up my classroom. We've never had anybody say no and when we've asked them to open up their

classrooms, they say okay. And then we immediately start brainstorming ideas and they're the ones who usually start shooting all these ideas out.

Marc also discussed the impact of the process on teachers, which may explain the apparent contradiction noted above and suggests that the process itself helped to develop psychological safety:

> They left with, "Whoa, that was a deeper learning." Kids were provided an opportunity to have a deeper understanding, misconceptions arose and the teacher wasn't saying as much. They truly, I think, saw what facilitation of teaching is all about. And that's the thing we started seeing. We started seeing teachers moving to the back of the room. That was the first big shift from that first year.

Marc seems to be describing Bryk and Schneider's (2002) assertion that "in the context of schooling, when all is said and done, actions must be understood as about advancing the best interests of children" (p. 26) in action, where teachers, initially reluctant to place themselves in a vulnerable position, gain so much from the experience that they replace their anxiety with the knowledge that they now have information about actions they believe advance student learning. The energy shifts from a negative place, detrimental to efficacy, to a more positive place, portending the possibility of increased efficacy. Although not noted by all teachers, Joe's comparison of his nerves during an observation to a sporting competition suggests that this mental shift might take place during the observation and then revert back and forth.

The role of psychological safety in peer observation and the potential of collective efficacy development may be self-evident. Psychological safety, including the risk-taking it infers, is a prerequisite to collaborative capacity (Edmonson, 2008). Several other factors appear to be in place as well, perhaps tentative conclusions to be drawn. As referenced earlier, Higgins et al.'s (2011) question about the sequenced relationship of psychological safety to organizational learning might be answered as a yes, and. Yes,

there were facets of psychological safety and its undergirding element of trust present

prior to peer observation, evidenced by the ways in which teachers discussed certain

facets of professional development. And, it seems equally clear that the peer observation

process itself promoted psychological safety, supported by the structures that surrounded

the process protocol. Marc intimates that the trust present in the building after 2 years of

peer observation has increased and believes that process to have been productive to that

end:

> I think there is a greater level of trust from this work. If we [had peer observation] six times last year [instead of three], I think we would be in a different place right now because I think they see with their own eyes.

Instrumental to the process even taking place, however, was the role of positional

authority. Two of the observed teachers reported not feeling the option to opt out, yet

expressed feelings of professional growth as a result of their participation. With the

exception of Steve, one has to wonder whether or not the observed teachers would have

consented to being observed without being, or at least feeling, required to do so.

Significant to the presence of psychological safety, however, were Marc's specific

behaviors during the observation process, detailed in Chapter 10 and consistently

reflected throughout the teacher stories. It may be that exercising positional authority

was a prerequisite organizational process to collective efficacy, but how that authority

was exercised seems foundational to how Marc used his authority to build psychological

safety and collaborative capacity at Skyview.

Accountability and Symmetry

Recall that the establishment of vertical and lateral accountability systems is a key

organizational contributor to collective efficacy development (Elmore & Forman, 2011).

The system described by the studied teachers and administrators shows accountability in action that seems to flow in every direction at Skyview Elementary: through vertical relationships that reflect line-authority, laterally, suggesting the presence of peer-based accountability, and in one description, from the students themselves:

> I think my students hold me accountable. I actually think they hold me accountable. They do that. "Mr. _____, you said we were going to do this." "Follow through Mr. _____, on what you said we were going to do." Some kids are asking for more basically. "I want to do more of this or do more of that." That, I think, holds us accountable. (Steve)

Teachers and administrators described deliberate organizational processes to support accountability that related directly or indirectly to collective efficacy development. These went beyond what one might expect to see in terms of individual teacher goals that are assessed annually through administrator evaluation. Notable in each of these systems is the presence of psychological safety, suggesting an upper right quadrant position of high performance on Edmondson's (2008) depiction of the impact of psychological safety and accountability, shown in Chapter 2 as Figure 5. This section begins with a discussion of findings in authority-based and peer-based accountability, beginning with authority-based, most prevalent among the data. How does Marc present his authority and where does it fit in the context of how school happens in the Vista School District?

Authority-based accountability. One of the accountability systems most noted in the interviews is the way in which Skyview's professional learning communities (PLCs) are responsible for collecting, analyzing, and publicly reporting progress around the performance of students in their grade level. Each PLC is required to develop student learning goals in at least one content area, develop and agree on how they will assess

progress, and report that progress out monthly to their colleagues. Marc explains the

origins of this structure:

> We are a data heavy school, or learning how to be one actually. Our goal this year is to do something with the data. We love looking at it and we share it all the time. It's been pretty much, "Math went up a little bit, that went down a little bit, that stayed about the same and it's pretty good for a title-wide school," but we want to be better.

> We have bi-monthly vertical data meetings as the staff, but our goal this year, and we don't mandate a whole lot, but that was one of our mandates … do we want to be 50% again, which is what we are. We're kind of a 50% school for state assessment and if we're okay with that, then let's not change anything.

> So our deal is we are committed to doing something collaboratively with data. We are and that means we gave [each PLC] their template for meeting minutes that they turn in every time, twice a week to us. One of those [PLC] meetings is going to be a decision made together about data.

Three of the five teachers discussed being held accountable for their PLC goals by

the administration; two specifically note the use of authority:

> When they [Marc and Gloria] come [to our PLC meetings] they're constantly relating our stuff back to our PLC goal.   (Joe)

> Marc holds us accountable. Where are you guys at with your data? What have you been working on? Where are you with your PLC goals? We have some of those checks and balances. Our PLC goals – that's like a mandatory check of accountability. (Steve)

Michelle and Erin took exception to the mandated PLC structure, but did not necessarily

challenge the goals associated with that accountability system, although when asked

about areas for which she is held accountable as a teacher Michelle's first response was

"Well, test scores. Data. Grades. Test, test, test those kids. Data. That's how I feel."

When they recounted details of PLC-based accountability, however, their responses

focused more on the structural mandate than on the goals they are expected to work

toward:

At every PLC they take role of who's there. We sign – they don't trust us. We have to sign. They want to know who is present. And then data scores amongst your peers are compared. I mean, we even have a have a special PLC just for data. (Michelle)

In our [PLC] meetings we're being told what we can and cannot discuss and now our meetings feel even less efficient than they ever were. The whole point of the PLC is to be able to meet as a group and work toward common goals and develop things that are necessary to us. And now we're not getting the opportunity to say, this is what we need this week. Everything's kind of scripted, I guess, especially because they want to make sure that we're all using data and that we're going over content. Those are important, but there are certain things that have been on the table that we need to discuss and we can't do it – even though we meet twice a week. (Erin)

In addition to requiring each PLC to have two meetings each week, work within a described template, and report out data, Marc and Gloria routinely attend PLC meetings, but in ways that extend beyond monitoring. Instead, says Joe, Marc's presence is

…almost like another teacher. Yesterday Marc was looking at our assessments, kind of going through, looking at student work, grading a couple, kind of focusing on a student's understanding of the work we've been doing. And then Marc will be talking to us about our PLC goals, kind of making sure that we have them, seeing where we should be working towards them, and then asking, real quick, two questions, how we can check our students' work towards that goal that we have, how we're doing, what we're going to be working towards next.

Marc's behavior in these meetings suggest a clear mandate around what he expects teachers to do in their professional learning communities, holding them accountable for processes as well as results. He also participates as a learner, actively inquiring into the experiences of teachers and students. As Steve notes when talking about Marc's behavior as a leader,

He's curious about the same sort of things I am – how to get a kid to make movement and want to make that movement on their own. Often they want to make movement, but maybe just don't know how.

Edmonson (1999, 2008) and Higgins et al. (2011) both claimed this act of public learning to be instrumental to creating psychological safety, as well as a culture of organizational

learning. The teachers' stories describe Marc modeling what he expects of his teachers while holding them accountable for the kinds of conversations he wants them to have.

This use of authority to model public learning and hold teachers accountable is not limited to the school level. District leaders also drop in on PLC meetings as a way of monitoring a process they have put into place and to understand the impact of the time the district has invested toward teacher collaboration. Cal discussed a recent visit and how he sees the role of the principal in PLC meetings:

> And I was in there last week and the conversations they're having, the data they're bringing, so that's another form of, okay, what are we doing, what are we doing, what are we doing to move the work. And I think those [PLC meetings] are even more effective than the Fridays because Friday is mostly a lot of professional development, learning the units, what are we doing. But when they have that little small group, the four teachers sitting around the table looking at each other, that's been really effective and they're getting better and better at it and I think the principal played a big role in that. All the principals played a big role in making those more effective.
>
> I think that's part of being a good instructional leader or the work that we expect is. They understand that when people can't do it, it's not because they don't want to. It's because they don't have the support they need to do it. But also constantly having conversations about where are your kids moving. How do you know they're moving there? What is your next move?

Cal's comments raise a key belief that frames the way in which he and Peg, Vista's assistant superintendent, approach accountability. When he says, "When people can't do it, it's not because they don't want to. It's because they don't have the support they need to do it," he brings up his view that a key component of accountability is not only mandating and monitoring the structures for teacher collaboration, but also the provision of support. Chapter 4 detailed their extensive professional development support system that includes district coaches to support math instruction, school-based literacy coaches, content representatives from each grade level, half-day release for every teacher each

Friday for professional development, and external content experts willing to model the

district's instructional mandate and provide differentiated support as needed.

The element of support as a part of Vista's accountability system is present in

administrator accountability as well. Marc's bi-annual evaluation, also described in

Chapter 4, shows that he, too, is required to have goals, to produce evidence in support of

progress toward those goals, and that his supervisors, Cal and Peg, actively participate in

a support and problem-solving mode as they simultaneously monitor Marc's

performance. Notable is the fact that I, as the researcher who happened to be present the

day of Marc's mid-year evaluation, was invited to sit in on his evaluation. Cal's

expressed expectation that his teachers "need to know that their practice is public"

applies to principals as well.

Two things appear to be present in this examination of accountability. First, it

illustrates a level of symmetry throughout the Vista School District, at least as it extends

to Skyview and the ways in which Marc has chosen to exercise his authority. Symmetry,

first mentioned in Chapter 2 in the context of adult learning, suggests recurring practices

that mirror each other. Roberts (2012) and Elmore (n.d.) claim that educators should

understand what students are asked to do by experiencing comparable expectations as

adult learners. This could be translated into Vista's accountability system: Administrators

understand what teachers are asked to do by holding them to similar standards and

practices. Chapter 4 described the elementary principals' professional learning

community and the propensity of district administrators to drop in unannounced. Marc is

required to have student goals and provide evidence that his practices are changing

results for students, as are his teachers. The underlying concept of symmetry, not asking

others to do what one is willing to do oneself (Roberts, 2012, p. 113), is strongly

illustrated through the accountability system at Skyview.

Another indicator of symmetry within the accountability practices at Skyview

Elementary is how the various systems serve to reinforce each other. Marc stated that the

peer observation work has

> bled into their evaluations. So I was debriefing with Joe and it's an hour long debrief, minimum. And we spent 30 minutes talking about how his next steps were really stemming from that peer observation work. At the end of our conversation, where he's talking about where he wants to be distinguished as a teacher, he ends with, "This is it. Can you write that? That's where I want my area of growth."

> It bleeds into all of the people who are involved that I have observed; our conversations come back to that. "I noticed that you called on 9 kids in 31 minutes. What about the other 22 or the other who know, the other 14?" "How do you know they're learning -- who's willing to share and who is just terrified to share. What are you doing about that?" I see [our data from peer observation] coming out in those conversations. I think it would be hard to share some of our information if we weren't all there seeing it together.

This blending of formal evaluation with a collaborative practice structure such as peer

observation is highly unusual. Chapter 2 reviews a literature base that generally warns

against cross-role collaboration, particularly in peer observation practices, and references

the presence of supervision as a detriment to productive collaboration. And yet no

teachers referenced this practice in a negative way, although Erin surmised that a bad

lesson might be a point of data for future growth in her evaluation, which, according to

Marc, is possible. Erin does not talk about this in terms that denote fear, however, only in

how she weighs his feedback:

> I am going to put a little more weight in his feedback because he's my supervisor. And something that he might see in my classroom might affect my evaluation. And that's something that could reflect positively on my evaluation if he knows I've been working on this.

The absence of negative data from teachers around Marc's practice of integrating cross-role collaboration (e.g., peer observation) into their formal evaluations infers a high level of psychological safety in both processes. Marc describes the blending of these two processes as "a collective practice for which ownership is gained… and that [details about practice that surface during evaluation] would be hard to share if we weren't seeing it all together."

Secondly, and importantly as we discuss authority and leadership, one of the specific areas this study examines, is how Marc employs several leadership styles described by Goleman (2000) simultaneously: authoritative, affiliative, pacesetting, and coaching. To wit, Marc clearly sets parameters and expectations through the authority he has been granted formally, and largely informally, by four of the five teachers interviewed. His teachers describe him as relational and caring, an attribute of affiliative leadership. There is no doubt that he pushes his teachers constantly to move beyond current levels of performance, pacesetting, and he employs a coaching, or helping, role as he does so.

Marc's leadership style is also adaptive through the ways in which he has created spaces for learning – for himself and for his teachers. Recall that adaptive challenges necessitate learning: of the leader, of the followers, and of the system itself (Heiftez, 1998; Heifetz & Linsky; 2002; Heifetz et al., 2009). They require the development of collective intelligence, processes which are clearly present at Skyview and for which Marc used his authority to establish, noted earlier in this chapter. On the other hand, the leaders at Skyview, and at the district leadership level, have used their authority to respond to an adaptive challenge, educating a high poverty population to high standards,

by determining *how* this challenge should be addressed. The most prominent example of this is the way in which teachers describe a tight instructional mandate, suggesting that Vista may be addressing the overall challenge of educating students in ways that Heiftez et al. termed as technical (Heiftez, 1998; Heifetz & Linsky; 2002; Heifetz et al., 2009). Gloria shares an example of how this instructional mandate, a technical response, is reinforced through peer observation, an adaptive process:

> There's just some things and behaviors that some of our highest performing teachers innately do and don't realize that they're doing, so we want to make sure and call out the specific teacher moves and reinforce that that is the best practice and we want to continue doing that [through peer observation] because they don't get to get into each others' classrooms all the time.

While most challenges contain elements of technical and adaptive challenges and require finesse in how the different elements are identified in order to approach an issue strategically, Vista seems to be blending the elements of technical and adaptive responses simultaneously. Does this represent a lack of alignment in their leadership strategy or artful leadership?

Peer-based accountability. In a system that includes significant elements of vertical accountability, one of the more unexpected perspectives from teachers was illustrated by statements from Steve and Joe that they held each other accountable as colleagues through their professional learning communities. Steve described the importance of peer-based accountability in meeting the challenge of educating today's students.

> Because with the shifts in education we need to work with our teams but if I have no idea of what my team mates are doing, then how do I trust that they're even doing their part, a good team member, and things like that?

Joe even noted that his PLC is his first level of accountability. Although only two

teachers discussed this type of lateral accountability when asked directly, there are other

hints through their stories that they feel accountable to each other. Michelle described

peer observation follow-up in future PLC meetings in ways that suggest they behave

accountably to each other:

> When we get together – when we talk about our frustration – remember you're
> not calling on the boys – we have did those checks. And then sometimes we'll
> talk about wait time. It's continued outside that conference room. But, I don't
> know. That's just my personality. If we do something we got to go back and
> check on it.

Erin reported feeling responsible for her team, another sign of accountability.

> Even though….I think and worry about the whole fifth grade because that's my
> team. I know some teams in the building have had difficulty, but I've never been
> on a team like that. We support each other and help out.

Sandra's description of how her team selected a math representative also indicates a level

of accountability to each other: "We talked about it as a PLC and we decided

collaboratively who would do it."

Peer-based accountability surfaced most strongly, however, through Wenger's

(2009) lens of accountability in social learning spaces reviewed in Chapter 2. Wenger

argues that accountability shows up through the utilization of one's practice as the

curriculum for one's learning and through accountability to one's identity that embraces

the mission of most teachers to change the lives of their students for the better. Steve's

description of his team's evolving ability to analyze the impact of their actions on

students brings life to Wenger's ideas:

> Then as we got better at it, I think, we all started to have a better conversation. In
> the debrief time, in the beginning, it was a lot of "Well, I liked that strategy," or "I
> liked that chart" versus "Why did you make the chart, what was the purpose of
> it?" "What was the outcome." "Did it actually help the student learn?"

Wenger's concepts are also present in how teachers approached the peer observation

process itself, as they expressed the desire to use the process as a way to improve their

practice and effectiveness with students.

> At the time I was so hungry for feedback because I was a brand new teacher and I
> realized that I play a very important role with my students. If I am not doing
> everything I can for them, then I am letting them down. And that's unacceptable
> to me. (Erin)

> It let me think about my practice a little bit more. You could rethink, oh yeah, I
> could do this and this and this… or things that come up, like misconceptions from
> students that I didn't plan for. (Steve)

> I do like the data that I get. The last time there were some things about status that
> I had no clue were happening in my classroom, but because there were so many
> more eyes and ears I could become aware of it. There were things like, students
> weren't having a voice at times. And so now sometimes when I'm teaching I'm
> not as focused on the content in the groups but in how the groups are working
> together and making sure everyone has a voice. (Joe)

> Because I was always doing the things that we should be doing but now that I
> know where I've learned to improve on it by the comments and the observations
> from the other teachers. I'm always looking, searching. And so even though I'm
> not observed, I go back and say, that's how I'm going to do it in my classroom. I
> apply them to my teaching. (Michelle)

There are hints, as well, that teachers may feel accountable for their colleagues' practices

as well as their own:

> It's not so much what I can do to help the teacher – well, it kind of is. What kind
> of patterns are we seeing throughout classrooms? Because I noticed when I was
> being observed there were things happening in my classroom that were happening
> in a second class we observed. And so it occurred to me that the things that were
> happening, they were not just for that teacher but could be for the whole building.
> (Joe)

Even Sandra who was not observed volunteered how she feels accountable to her practice

and the role peer observation plays in her effectiveness as a teacher:

> It really helped me as a teacher to observe another teacher and reflect back on my
> teaching…. You start to notice things that you need to work on or things that
> aren't working or what will help me – and areas of growth – it helped me in areas
> where student weren't engaged and not on task and where they were engaged and

were on task. It followed a lot of questions I could be reflecting on, about my teaching.

Testing

It would be unusual to address the issue of accountability, formal or informal, without mentioning the standardized tests that all schools are required to administer annually. These are the instruments with which Vista will be measured by the state to determine how well their students are performing in relation to the Common Core State Standards. In prior years, students were tested by measures that are purported to be less rigorous than the new tests that were required beginning in the spring of 2015, the year this study took place. Cal and Peg believed their students will actually perform better on the new tests as they intend to measure more complex thinking and problem-solving skills, something their inquiry-based approach to teaching has emphasized over memorization and rote academic tasks.

Standardized testing falls outside the discretion of the district leaders. It was only referenced casually during the administrator interviews. And only two teachers mentioned the issue of tests when describing for what they are held accountable as teachers, Michelle and Erin. Michelle incorporated her notation of tests into a list that included data and grades. Erin's response, however, spoke more to a tacit pressure to perform well on tests:

> Even though none of the obvious is said, looking at scores in the past, even though nobody has said that, there's a kind of unspoken pressure because we do take our test scores very, very seriously. That is our first meeting of the school year. As soon as we come back together, our very first meeting is looking at the previous year's data. And so even though no one's come right out and said, you're responsible for the scores, and if they don't do well, it's on you, it's unspoken. It's there.

Erin also references a level of competition and resulting inferences based on test scores:

> It can be competitive if, hey, people can look at other people's data and say, I did better than so and so. And then the bottom line is those are the kids that passed and there are assumptions made about teaching based on test scores.

And she volunteered her feelings of responsibility toward students:

> Nobody in this district has said, like, "it's your fault." And none of our admin have directly come out and said, well, whatever the scores are, you're responsible. But as a teacher I feel it is. This student needs help here and this student needs help here, and if I haven't done that, I haven't achieved my objective. And there's immense pressure on the kids to make those scores happen.

With the level of pressure Erin says she feels, it is interesting that only she and Michelle referenced testing during the interviews. Recall that Erin and Michelle both teach in the same grade level, raising the question of whether this is a school-level culture or one that is specific to their grade level.

Accountability and Collective Efficacy

Across all the findings around accountability, the most notable may be the degree of symmetry noted throughout the system. Teachers are held accountable for working toward student goals, for professional growth, for making changes in their practice, to each other as colleagues, and for supporting each other's practice. Further, their principals are expected by their supervisors to be accountable in these ways. The question at hand is how these accountability systems relate to peer observation and collective efficacy development.

Most pertinent to collective efficacy is how teachers feel accountable to their practice as the curriculum for their learning, another aspect of social learning spaces noted by Wenger (2009). Teachers' professional practice, as the content for their learning through peer observation, may serve as motivator to fully engage in the opportunities the

process presents for that learning. Even those who were reluctant to be observed at first, most of them according to Marc, "usually start shooting all these ideas out [about the possibilities of the process]." There's a positive energy described here that may be part of what offsets the initial negative emotions into productive ones, a phenomenon suggested in Chapter 10 and directly related to efficacy development (Bandura, 1994). If this accountability to one's practice and each other's practices has become an integral part of the culture at Skyview, which is suggested by data, peer observation, however scary, becomes an opportunity for what has become a social norm. The recurring and nested accountability systems, shown by the ways in which Marc and Gloria – and Cal and Peg – exercise their authority through their presence, curiosity, and support, likely played a significant role in establishing this culture.

There is also something about the assessment of peer capacity that relates back to the way accountability is practiced at Skyview, particularly lateral accountability. In Chapter 10 I reviewed how teachers found the structure of peer observation to be an important element in how teachers learned to trust the process. Recall that the data suggest that some level of trust was present *and* that the level of trust increased as a result of the process itself. The evidence that the studied teachers feel accountable to their practice, using their practice as the curriculum for professional learning, suggests that teachers might be less likely to give or receive feedback in ways that reflect on them personally. This practice may produce some distancing and, while not negating the role of one's personal and professional identity in the process, allow them focus on the purpose for which they are there – to change students' lives for the better. This factor may explain why the process served to increase trust.

Symmetry and Adult Learning

This study examined several questions related to adult learning systems and any impact they might have had on collective efficacy development. One of the areas of investigation, first discussed in Chapter 2, is symmetry, also revealed earlier in this chapter as a finding of the overall accountability system. Related to adult learning, symmetry is associated with mirroring the rigor expected of students so as to produce a level of empathy with students and "understand what it's like for students to struggle with rigorous or cognitively demanding tasks" (Roberts, 2012, p. 103).

Closely related to symmetry, a second question asks how adult learning is conceived within the Vista School District, whether it is theorized to be about conceptual learning (Posner et al., 1982) and developing experts in the learning process, a building block to teacher efficacy (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993). The evidence suggests that the Vista School District's theories around adult learning and student learning are tightly aligned. There is rigor in the way adults are asked to learn and some level of symmetry throughout the district's professional development. The discussion below will examine the evidence around symmetry from two angles: (a) alignment between adults and students in the way learning is theorized and practiced and (b) the coherence within Vista's adult learning system.

Alignment of Adult and Student Learning

The teachers' stories were examined for evidence that they are placed in similar learning situations to those they require of their students, particularly ones involving rigor and where students are asked to struggle. This is how Roberts (2012) defines symmetry. Several examples of this type of symmetry come from Erin and Sandra who describe

being asked to actually do the math tasks that students are asked to do. Sandra

acknowledges that she "struggles" with these tasks but that after persevering she is able

to make sense of them, allowing her to help her "students as they struggle also [through]

the process of learning." Erin expands with descriptions of her experiences:

> A lot of time our PD is doing the lessons together before we teach to the kids. We run it like we're the students. We actually do the work ourselves and then we might have one person come up and show how they solved it – to see different solutions. And then once we've looked at our different solutions, we decide, okay, which of these is most effective and what do we want our kids to get from them? And then we might decide, okay, what's the strategy to teach them.

> Doing the math together is very helpful because the struggles that our kids have, we have them too. Especially, being a teacher and looking at it as a child, it helps you figure out what the misconceptions might be right from the start because if you know where the misconceptions are going to come up, you also know how to head those off.

Note how both teachers described experiencing similar emotions to those of their

students. Their stories illustrate one of Roberts' (2012) notations about the importance of

teachers experiencing empathy for their students.

An analysis of lesson plans for teacher professional development showed the

same kind of symmetry; teachers are asked to learn in the same way they are expected to

teach. For example, the analyzed lesson plans included specific learning targets and

success criteria for each learning target. Also noted in these lesson plans is evidence of

rigor as defined by criteria adapted for adult learning, Appendix H, and explained in

Chapter 3. Three lesson plans for mathematics professional development sessions were

scored against these standards. Each lesson scored in the upper two quadrants of the

rubric in all four criteria: construction of knowledge, disciplined inquiry, productive

collaboration, and connections to practice. The lesson plans asked teachers to engage in

tasks that required analysis, to explain their thinking, and to unpack concepts. They

required transference and reflection. The analyzed documents expected teachers to construct knowledge and, to a lesser extent, engage in disciplined inquiry. At some portion of each lesson, teachers were asked to work collaboratively and build common understandings, suggestive of productive collaboration. And connections to practice were explicit, as teachers were specifically asked to relate what they are learning to teaching strategies to use in their classrooms.

The same rubric was applied to sample administrator professional development lessons, showing similar patterns. Principals were asked to collaboratively analyze, for example, a unit assessment in literacy, to reach a shared understanding of instructional leadership expectations, to reflect on criteria for professional growth goals, and so forth. Peg describes her goals for their time together and how she sees the connections:

> Under Cal's leadership, we have the opportunity to work with our leaders every Monday afternoon. And it's not that we don't ever spend time on operations, but I would say 95%, if not higher, we spend on what does it meant to be an instructional leader. What is your role as the lead learner in your building?
>
> The new evaluation system is something that the principals and we have to learn. There's two. We're learning one and the principals are learning that one and then we're learning the teacher eval and the principals are learning that. So we've spent a lot of time working through what would these goals look like. What are the criteria? What is evidence? And then even in their own practice, what would it look like for them to meet these criteria? So we spent some time during the last year going through what it would be to be proficient and then letting them struggle with writing student growth goals and getting into their teachers' shoes.

Note how Peg specifically described her goals for administrator learning in much the same way as teachers described being asked to put themselves in the students' place during their professional development. The analyzed administrator plans continued the lines of evidence around symmetry in how professional learning is expected to happen and in ways that mirrored expectations for students.

Together, the evidence around teacher and principal learning reflect a high level of symmetry between adult and student learning. The data around symmetry also point to the presence of an explicit theory of learning in use for adults and for students. Moreover, this enacted theory of learning fits within the characteristics of Bereiter and Scardamalia's (1993) expert learners. Explained in Chapter 2, expert learners are individuals who "tackle problems that increase their expertise, whereas non-experts tend to tackle problems for which they do not have to extend themselves" (p. 78). Examples of teachers extending themselves ranged from engaging in peer observation itself, being "hungry for feedback" and "considering alternative perspectives," "going deeper into why things happened the way they did for students," to more generalized instructional norms across the district, a stance of curiosity about how to better support unmotivated or low achieving students. The questions Marc claimed he asks teachers

> all the time. Is it safe? What have you done to make it safe? How do you establish a great rapport with every one of your kids? Do your kids know what they can and cannot do? How do they know that? How do you keep track of what your kids can and cannot do? How much do you dominate in the lesson? When you feel panic, do you take over to get it done? How many times do you go to your go-to kid, so you can finally find that right answer because you're frustrated versus are you willing to slow it down and to be masterful and to get real results and true understanding from your kids because you believe that they can get it? Those are conversations that we have every day in the hallway, in PLCs, in debriefs, in literally any conversation.

These conversations demonstrate an expectation that teachers engage in expert learning. There is high probability that students are asked to extend themselves as well, through the district's conceptual inquiry-based curriculum and teacher descriptions of students struggling with math tasks, an approach designed to reach what Common Core State Standards are asking of students.

But while the lesson plans and some teacher comments show evidence of learning

symmetry in how learning is approached, all four teachers who were observed mentioned

a lack of intersection in how peer observation and professional development support each

other. Michelle claims clearly, "they don't." Steve elaborates:

> I wish it intersected more, to tell you the truth. Our PD system is a silo-ed system where we either get together with our building level PLC or we get together with our district level PLC which would be still working in grades – or subjects within the higher grade levels. …mostly about the content, standards, and about our meeting them. Not as much about observing each other teaching those units and literally seemed what went well. Not really the observation part.

Erin sees a place for each of them but finds them "very different." Joe provides still

more specifics about the differences:

> It's almost like the PD is more theoretical whereas the observations are more, how to put it into practice or we can actually find things we can put in practice. Honestly – even in PD there are times I walk away and say, "I don't know how I'm going to use anything." Where, when we do this observation, there's always something I can walk away with.

The teacher descriptions of professional development, its misalignment with the

peer observation process, raise questions around why this is so, when all the other

evidence points to a high level of symmetry. One explanation is that the professional

development and peer observation are designed to accomplish different outcomes for

teachers. Professional development was acknowledged to be primarily around content

acquisition, with administrators noting the need for content knowledge in math

especially. Even in literacy, Gloria notes that

> It's all content, growing their content knowledge, especially some of our first year teachers or second year teachers have additional professional development to try to catch them up.

She goes on to explain why content is so important:

> So it's been very heavy content and understanding the new standards and how that fits in their grade level and where the kids are at, whether they've been in literacy units or math units that have been in common core for one, two, or three years.

Peer observation is seen by teachers as a way to try on instructional strategies related to a specific content area. But while they may be complementary in their purposes, it is clear that teachers do not see that alignment as it plays out.

Adult Learning and Efficacy

The data collected around conceptions of adult learning at Skyview Elementary are consistent in how they promote the kind of expert learning described by Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993). In some ways they bring to life the theoretical base of heutagogical learning, where one develops the capacity to use one's "competence in novel situations" (Hase & Kenyon, 2007, p. 113). In other ways, they do not. Recall from Chapter 2 how heutagogy "recognizes that people learn when they are ready and that this is most likely to occur quite randomly, chaotically, and in the face of ambiguity and need" (Hase & Kenyon, 2003, p. 3). The professional development system in Vista is very prescribed, content focused, and is not always seen as relevant by the teachers; in this way it more closely resembles pedagogy, where the content is prescribed and the need that typically characterizes adult learning theory is assumed.

The peer observation process, however, illustrates the ways in which heutagogical learning can occur in an elementary school setting; teachers consistently described its relevancy and resulting impact on their practices. And there is ample evidence that the professional development system, even with its prescribed content, did not allow for novice types of learning. This may account for the way in which most of the teachers,

even though anxious, responded to the peer observation protocol. It fit within many of the social norms of the system, no doubt an element that contributed to psychological safety. The differences come through in terms of content relevance; symmetry was consistent in terms of instructional delivery across all adult learning systems.

The type of expert learning in which teachers routinely engaged was argued in Chapter 2 as relevant to collective efficacy. I proposed that high capacity is required to meet the needs of a largely at-risk student population and that teachers need to apply discretion and flexibility in their teaching. Feelings of efficacy, therefore, will not be met without that capacity. All of the teachers gave examples of applying that type of discretion in their practice, even as some expressed frustration with pacing guides. Erin discussed flexing her lesson plan upon realizing that her students were not ready for new content. Michelle illustrated her strategy for getting her students to build on each other's thinking rather than respond directly to her. Marc shared his conversation with Joe who decided to adjust aspects of his teaching to promote greater status among certain students. Steve talked about his reflective process to determine possible origins of student misconceptions, and Sandra discussed conferring with students in order to differentiate support. Each of these teachers illustrated ways in which they are constantly learning during the act of teaching as expert learners. This implies that they must feel sufficient levels of efficacy in order to rely on their capacity as learners to make critical decisions on behalf of their students. It is almost as if the learning system in which they teach has expectations of efficacy.

Summary

In this chapter I reviewed the key characteristics of Vista's learning system and considered its contributions to collective efficacy among Skyview Elementary School's faculty. I described the ways in which the particular and consistent behaviors of school and district leaders have systematically developed trust and enabled the vulnerable process of peer observation to be practiced in the presence of authority, even to the point of influencing teacher evaluation without apparent resistance from staff. I described the similarities in how adults and students are expected to learn, embodying expert learning and including significant levels of symmetry. I also detailed similar types of symmetry within the district's accountability system and an overall commitment to making one's practices public, possible through high levels of psychological safety brought on by administrator actions and public learning.

The final aspect I described relates to the use of positional authority in the way Marc, the school's principal, employed a "voluntold" culture that permeated every aspect of the system this study examined. Positional authority was found to be instrumental to the ways in which each of these elements influenced the peer observation process. Thus, the guiding intersections for this study, illustrated in Figure 6, are better depicted as an *integration* of elements, shown below as Figure 9.
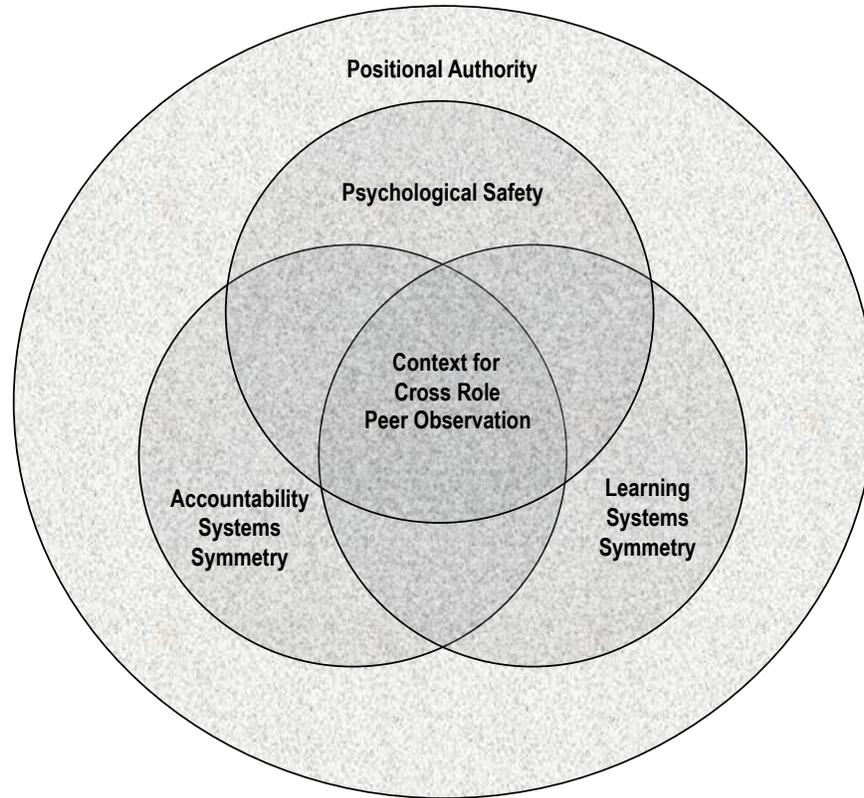
Figure 9. Organizational influences on collective efficacy development through cross-role peer observation.

The integration of these key areas – the confluence of psychological safety, learning systems symmetry, and accountability systems symmetry, all of which are permeated by the presence of positional authority – represent the context in which peer observation was practiced.

The final indications and implications of this study around the role of peer observation in collective efficacy development and the impact of the surrounding system are presented in Chapter 12.

CHAPTER TWELVE: INDICATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this investigation was to examine how the practice of peer observation might develop greater levels of confidence across a faculty that they are able to deliver on the promise of student success. It sought to understand the pulse of teachers' struggles and triumphs in helping young people to learn and the adult growth that accompanies their journeys. The heart of these findings, what makes this study distinct, are their stories. The five memoir-like and, I hope, compelling stories of how each teacher experienced the vulnerable process of peer observation highlight the remarkability of each teacher's experience. They illustrate the resulting changes to their professional lives and practice, individually and in interaction with their colleagues. The stories capture the inner and outer landscapes of the world in which each teacher practices the art of teaching and illuminate how their experiences brought about new agency in their efforts to impact the lives of their students. They reveal what was collective among them and where the intersectionalities that define who they are as individuals made their journeys unique. I am grateful for the opportunity to have, as much as possible, "walked in their shoes" in potential understanding of this complex undertaking we call teaching.

Study Limitations

There are many limitations to this study. So much of what was learned through these interviews is specific to the Vista School District and, within that context, to Skyview Elementary. The complexity of the data associated with this experience, the unanticipated intersections, and the challenges of approaching clean conclusions about whether peer observation can or cannot develop collective efficacy reinforced my

approach that I not separate each teacher's identity from the process. Even those areas

that might be claimed as truths would be applicable only to these five teachers, not

necessarily, even, to the school at large, highlighting the irrelevance of hard conclusions

that are disassociated from the intersections and influences of anyone's life. It is

presumptuous to assume that the experiences of the five teachers interviewed for this

study suggest that others experienced peer observation in the same way. Thus there is

much that we cannot know from a study of this nature. The best that can be hoped for are

impressions and understandings for these teachers, in this school, in this district.

But while this study is not generalizable to others due to its narrative approach,

the data itself, *because* of their qualitative aspects, are rich with opportunities for

incubation and future research to ultimately guide policies that are better positioned to

bring about real and lasting improvements to our nation's schools. This chapter will

discuss what the data indicate in response to the research questions of how peer

observation contributed to the development of collective efficacy and the organizational

processes that influenced that development. It concludes with suggestions for future

research and some lingering questions that have emerged, cause for contemplation and

also future study.

Indications

There was a moment while analyzing Steve's story when I wondered if watching

the act of teaching is, for teachers, similar to the obsession professional athletes have to

watch their sport. Anyone who has ever lived with a professional athlete can confirm

that watching others is a close runner up to actually competing. The value the teachers in

this study associated with peer observation was indisputably high, despite a consistent

recounting of anxiety and frustration with the process itself. While the study question did not ask whether or not teachers liked the process, and their overall attitude about the process may have affected how they reflected on their experiences, we can infer from the data a positive orientation to peer observation. This in itself may have promoted a positive spin to the preponderance of negative emotion Bandura (1994) warns works against efficacy development. Regardless, watching others teach and learning from the perspective of others about their own practices was highly valued by the teachers. In addition to the felt value of the process, a number of indications can be drawn from the data that relate to how peer observation contributed to the development of collective efficacy among these teachers and how the organizational processes within which it took place impacted their experience.

The Opportunity Exists

The first question to be answered is whether or not peer observation led to higher levels of collective efficacy among the Skyview faculty. While this question cannot be answered definitively, and this study was not designed to do that, there is evidence that the teachers involved in this study did develop higher levels of confidence in the teaching practices of their peers. There is even, through the staff survey referenced in Chapter 10, the suggestion that this development took place across the faculty as a whole. And while it cannot be said with certainty that the increased confidence in peer competency came about through peer observation, there are strong indications that at least some of the progress made occurred because of peer observation. These experiences, referenced throughout this study as sources of efficacy, are ways in which peer observation

contributed:

- Experiencing success in teaching a lesson while being observed, mastery experiences;

- Experiencing success in teaching a lesson subsequent to and as a result of being observed, noted as indirect mastery;

- Watching another teacher successfully teach a lesson, vicarious experiences;

- Affirming feedback from others related to successful teaching or data that were interpreted as successful, verbal persuasion;

- An orientation to the experience that heightens one's emotions, increasing the significance of the experience; and

- Opportunity to assess one's peers to determine competence.

The teachers in this study experienced some or all of these sources through the peer observation process, indicating that peer observation is a viable process to promote collective efficacy development.

Within this framing other indications and questions emerged from the data. These are noted below.

Simply observing others may not be sufficient to develop collective efficacy. One teacher in this study, Sandra, participated in peer observation as an observer only, and while there was evidence that she experienced some efficacy sources through the process, there was a marked difference in the number of sources accessed and the way in which she reflected on her involvement. Sandra described the process in the third person,

tending to rely on inferred emotions of her colleagues rather than her own experiences. The differences between her story and the other four teachers prompted a number of questions related to what actually happens differently when a teacher is observed. For example, does empathy for the observed teacher develop that causes future participation as an observer to be different as well?

Anxiety and nervousness do not always equate to destructive emotions that might regress efficacy. With the exception of Steve, all of the observed teachers experienced some level of anxiety before or during the lesson in which they were observed, yet these emotions did not always suggest a regression of efficacy predicted by Bandura (1994). The role of the principal before, during, and after a peer observation session, especially when he perceived that the feedback might be construed as negative, was pronounced. It could be argued that failure in a lesson during peer observation, with the right supportive environment, might actually foster mastery in that it promotes resilience. The data suggest that the presence of psychological safety enabled negative emotions to be used productively. The exception may have been Erin who, after two observations, prefers to only observe others. She was aware that Marc wanted her to feel more positively about her lesson, but the impact on his actions on her sense of efficacy is not evident.

New teacher participation in peer observation should be carefully considered. The reasons for Erin's responses to peer observation are unclear. They could relate to her developmental level, the particular days in which she was observed, or, a very tentative sense of efficacy prior to be observed, with the potential of being shattered through negative data. Joe had a very different response to what he termed constructive criticism. He sought it and was energized by the opportunities it presented. He is also someone

who may be self-authored and, even with fewer years of experience, responded more productively to negative data. Regardless, and given Bandura's warnings about the fragility of emerging efficacy, use of peer observation with new teachers should be monitored closely and adjusted with indications of negative impact on efficacy.

A teacher's level of individual efficacy oriented the ways in which the process contributed to collective efficacy. More efficacious teachers recounted greater interest in the peer assessment aspects of the peer observation process; less confident teachers used the process to build their own efficacy. This finding prompts several follow-up questions. Can collective efficacy be felt by some teachers and not others? Would peer observation as an avenue to individual efficacy be productive without the peer assessment component?

Mastery through peer observation can be experienced directly and indirectly; both can contribute to efficacy. Three teachers suggested feeling mastery from applying feedback that contributed to future successes with students. Two teachers, Joe and Steve, only reported indirect sources of mastery; Joe dismissed a successful lesson in which he was observed as being inconsequential to his development.

One's developmental level influences how efficacy sources are drawn from the peer observation process. The teachers classified as socialized sought affirmation from peer observation and drew upon verbal persuasion as a source of efficacy development. The two who might be considered self-authored did not. Steve and Joe were more interested in deepening their practice and receiving critical feedback that would allow them to improve, such as through indirect mastery.

Context Matters

The second research question considered the organizational context in which peer observation took place. Having established the likelihood that peer observation contributed to collective efficacy at Skyview Elementary, we can turn now to how established organizational processes and leadership practices appear to have influenced teachers' participation in peer observation.

Throughout the teachers' stories and the administrator interviews were references to organizational processes that (a) suggest how much context mattered to the process and (b) cast some light on why the cross-role collaborative structure worked in favor of increased efficacy. Chapter 11 reviewed the organizational findings, noting symmetry across the district's learning and accountability systems, along with high levels of psychological safety. As shown in Figure 10, authority served as a backdrop to each of these intersecting elements. However unusual this level of coherence may be in school systems, the questions at hand relate more to whether and why these conditions contributed positively to collective efficacy development. Without these factors, I argue that the productive cross-role collaboration, manifested in this study as peer observation, would not have occurred. Several findings provide possible explanations as to why they mattered.

The way in which learning is conceived in the Vista School District has become an organizational norm. One of the areas of study I suggested would influence efficacy development related to how learning is considered and practiced among adults in the system. The data suggest that the concepts of symmetry described by Roberts (2012) and Elmore (n.d.) are nearly universal in how teachers work with students, the way

teachers receive professional development, and the learning experiences of their

administrative supervisors.   This is significant in two ways.

1.   Collaboration that is based in inquiry and the ambiguity associated with

discovery, practiced in peer observation, entails risk-taking; exploration is valued

over expertise. When these types of processes are unfamiliar, the practice can

invoke negative emotions and often cause a lack of authentic participation,

something collective efficacy requires. High levels of anxiety otherwise

associated with ambiguity can cause participants to attend first to safety, ignoring

the purposes and deep conversations for which they are gathered.

2.   Because the learning concepts are collectively owned and practiced,

teachers have a heightened ability to analyze and discuss the learning and

teaching with common language and understandings. The conversations during

peer observation enhanced collective understanding and enabled a more accurate

assessment of their peer competency.

The use of authority is a prevalent and productive leadership practice at Skyview

Elementary. Figure 10, shown in Chapter 11, shows the influence of authority in

Skyview Elementary School's learning systems, accountability, and psychological safety.

The ways in which school and district leaders informally but definitely insert themselves

into practices that are typically private and often kept separate make it difficult to imagine

how some of the symmetry present in the system could take place without the mandates

that came to light through the data. Examples included the use of accountability

measures in professional learning communities and integrating peer observation data into

teacher evaluations.

There were, however, certain qualities associated with the way authority was used. True, teachers were not permitted to opt out of peer observation, but the presence and behaviors of Marc and Gloria in the process ensured that the ultimate takeaways were affirming, included significant learning, and put into practice. Reinforcing the district's instructional mandate assured that teachers, for the most part, attended to the overall purpose of peer observation, making the results rewarding as they contributed to their sense of mastery as practitioners. Their administrators' presence as learners and the employment of open curiosity and public learning reinforced the expectations that all adults in the system improve through learning. The existing trust level, no doubt brought about by the ways in which Marc interacted with his staff, lived his own values, and established credibility while exhibiting curiosity established a baseline of safety in which he could demand participation – and which was then able to be extended by the process. Use of his authority and the way in which he presented this authority appeared instrumental to the seamless intersection of high psychological safety and accountability.

It is easy to imagine how the use of authority might have negative effects, reinforcing the limitations of this study and the contextualized results. Had any one of these systems elements not been in place, had Marc's curiosity not been so open to others, had he not exhibited the caring for his teachers, personally and professionally, and kept a consistent focus on student success, if the learning systems were not so aligned to make the conversations among staff so focused and relevant, the process may have added value to teachers, but may not have shown as much movement toward efficacy. Even the accountability system, designed with support as opposed to punitivism, served to align the system and orient the teachers in a positive way.

Implications

Despite the limitations of this study, there are real implications for practitioners, leaders, and policy-makers. Chapter 2 noted Soisson's (2013) mixed-method study of teacher and principal collective efficacy in middle school. Her findings were inconclusive in terms of efficacy patterns among teachers and pointed only to the existence of collaborative opportunity as important to teachers, rather than identifying qualitative aspects of that collaboration that contributed to efficacy. This study fills that gap as it brings to life, through the teacher stories and the hypothetical day of the Vista learning system, what teachers actually experienced and how they drew on this particular collaborative opportunity for sources of efficacy. The specifics of these experiences are, for the most part, replicable to any system in which the leaders wish to foster greater internal coherence and efficacy among its teachers. The ways in which the administrators used their authority to build a psychologically spacious culture that is accountable and safe and that fosters the rigorous learning of adults and students with symmetry are descriptive in ways that can take theory into practice.

The organizational processes and practices, while not challenging those described by Elmore and Forman's (2011) framing of efficacy development, add the element of authority to their theory, making this study significant in how it breaks down the taboos associated with the use of positional authority in leadership generally, and specifically, for educational leaders. Nothing in this study suggests that the qualitative aspects of leadership required for complex social systems as described by Heifetz (Heiftez, 1998; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002; Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009), Goleman (2000), Wheatley (2005, 2006), and others are not indicated. This study does, however, call out how

positional authority can be used in concert with, for example, adaptive leadership strategies, how a leader might be on the dance floor with teachers, supporting the acquisition and use of data, while mandating the way in which those data orient toward a particular, and shared, instructional mandate. It illustrates the interpersonal dynamics of a principal-teacher relationship that enable a safe integration of professional development and evaluation, working behind the scenes to make sure a teacher is not demoralized by a critical review of her lesson, where learning and curiosity are intimately related to how goal setting is approached so that data from peer observation can be introduced into the conversation naturally, and embraced by the teacher. Curiosity may be inherent to Marc, but the behaviors he exhibits – questioning, affirmation, regard for others, constant attention to individual students, and a dogged determination to figure out what he doesn't know about teaching and learning – can be taught and replicated if the will is there.

There are implications also for central office leaders and for those charged with making policy at all levels, such as what coherence looks like in the ways that leaders approach their jobs. Notice the lack of meetings in Chapter 4 that did not relate directly to instructional practices; each mirrored the type of inquiry and learning expected of students. Recall Peg's admonition that "there are no perfect lessons," offering permission for teachers to push the edges of their practice. Note that Cal's theory of action has not shifted since the day he rolled it out in Vista 11 years ago. Longevity in leadership plays a role, to be sure, but longevity in strategy, as a lever to coherence, is critical. All of these are deliberate decisions that can be made, if the will is there.

And ultimately, the most obvious implication for educators and policy makers at all levels is the fact that the peer observation process is a viable way to increase teacher

efficacy, individually and collectively. A relatively low-cost intervention, it was highly

valued by teachers and proved to be an instrumental way for the system to learn from

itself, from its own teachers, and in a context that could not be more relevant – the

students they share. And in *this* system, given the ways in which *these* leaders function,

the process actually increased trust among staff and promoted more inclusive dialogue

around shared teaching challenges, contributing to Skyview Elementary School's internal

alignment as a system. There are opportunities to increase that alignment and improve

the process, to be sure, one of which is to connect the district-provided professional

development more tightly to the opportunities for teachers to see that learning in action

and to ensure that all teachers are able to fully engage in the process through hosting

lessons for their peers to observe. But the start they have made is one from which others

can, and should, learn.

Implications for Theory and Future Research

The theory guiding this study posited that the influence of certain leadership

behaviors and organizational processes – strategic authority as a leadership practice, the

intersection of accountability and psychological safety, and systems of adult/expert

learners – might enable teachers to draw upon efficacy sources through peer observation,

leading to increased collective efficacy (Figure 6). This study confirmed my general

hypothesis, but added certain refinements to my original construct, notably a more

seamless confluence of positional authority and psychological safety integrated with

systems of accountability and learning characterized by symmetry. This integration was

depicted in Chapter 11 as Figure 9. Also included in my findings on organizational

processes was the way in which trust was called out specifically as a critical and

preliminary condition to the peer observation process and that trust increased as a result of the process itself.

The study also revealed a relationship between a teacher's adult development level and the kind of efficacy sources he or she drew through the peer observation process, with certain sources, mastery and vicarious experiences, having slightly less impact on efficacy (Figure 8). And finally, the specificity of the peer observation protocol that oriented this study (Appendix A) was found to be important to teachers drawing efficacy sources from the peer observation process.

The results of this study suggest a refinement in my original hypothesis, shown below as Figure 10. The revised theory depicts the organizational context for cross-role peer observation, use of the particular peer observation protocol that has its foundations in the instructional rounds process (City et al., 2009), and my findings that relate to the efficacy access points in two adult development levels. It also calls out the importance of trust in the establishment of psychological safety in this system and how the process itself actually increased the level of trust among the participating teachers at Skyview Elementary.

ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT
FOR CROSS-ROLE PEER
OBSERVATION

CROSS-ROLE PEER
OBSERVATION

ACCESS TO EFFICACY IN TWO DIFFERENT
ADULT DEVELOPMENT LEVELS

Positional Authority

Accountability
Systems
Symmetry

Learning
Systems
Symmetry

Context

Psychological Safety

Trust

Peer Observation*

+

Direct
Mastery
Experiences

Vicarious
Experiences

Socializing

Self-Authoring

Indirect
Mastery
Experiences

Verbal
Persuasion

Productive
Emotions

+

Peer Assessment

COLLECTIVE EFFICACY

Figure 10. Organizational influences on collective efficacy development through cross role peer observation (revised).

This evolved theory suggests two primary areas of research. The first and most obvious area for future study is how the peer observation process as a route to collective efficacy might fare in other systems. In a study such as this, one that was limited to a handful of teachers and that takes place in a system that is such an exception to the typical district – absent the politics of urban and suburban districts, flexible enough to practice symmetry, and with the longevity of leadership that enables continuity – the most pressing question is one of transferability. How might peer observation provide opportunities for efficacy source acquisition in a system that is not already coherent?

Elmore and Foreman's (2011) internal coherence model was school-based, yet much of the coherence found in this study was established at the district level. What

would happen to a school that established a peer observation process in a district without a clear instructional mandate? Or in which accountability systems are less coherent? Or without an adult learning system in place that mirrors the kinds of inquiry in which teachers engage in peer observation, as researchers into their own practice?

One answer might be that the process might actually create some of the conditions found at Skyview. Another, however, might be that the emotional pressure of the process could serve to further fragment an already disconnected system. The potential of this process to really enhance student learning through higher levels of collective efficacy demands further research. Adding quantitative measures of efficacy acquisition would further contribute information on the value of peer observation to the field.

The other area of research suggested by the findings in this study relates to the practices that stood out as unique and which challenge prevailing wisdom and/or common practices among educational leaders.   The most notable of these is the use of positional authority to engender trust, psychological safety, and lateral accountability and the impact of its application on adult learning systems that surfaced throughout this study. The Vista School System is small and nimble, with two high schools, one middle school, and two other elementary schools similar to Skyview in demographics and size. It has longevity of leadership and a superintendent who arrived with a clear theory of action that he put into action immediately upon arrival. One must assume preconditions that enabled him to do this; there are many cases that suggest he might not fare as well in a more political environment. Still, the symmetry in accountability and adult learning that Cal and Peg have achieved warrant a second look at how the way in which leaders lead in

Vista might transfer elsewhere, especially if, and maybe only if, they reap the benefits Cal predicts for Vista students.

Wonderings

As I have noted elsewhere in these findings, the Vista School District is a tight system; there is not much room for latitude or diversion. This is all well and good as long as the theories that drive that coherence are, in fact, delivering the anticipated results. If those results are defined by student performance, which seems obvious, it may be too early to know whether their instructional approach and commitment to critical thinking and problem solving will serve students better on the new measures and in life beyond school. These results are not yet known, but we can wonder about the type of efficacy development that is really taking place – at this point in time – at Skyview.

So much is heralded about coherent systems – within and outside of the education sector. The Vista School System would be considered exemplary by any of today's standards in its coherence (Childress, Elmore, & Grossman, 2006; Childress et al., 2006; Honig et al, 2010). This study may provide one of the first glimpses of learning symmetry in action. It brings the concept of symmetry in accountability into the literature. But the teachers' stories raised questions for me about whether it is possible for a system to be too tight.

At one level, it has been argued that consistency in practice is important to reduce the variability of instructional excellence that is typically found within schools and which, according to some studies, accounts for much of the variation in student performance (Rowan, Correnti, & Miller, 2002). The benefits of a strong instructional mandate were evident in the way Skyview's teachers were able to casually draw upon

each other as thought partners throughout the day and in more formal structured opportunities for peer support such as their professional learning communities. They were working on the same instructional strategies, had common goals toward which they were all working, and a common language that was evident. At the same time, there were hints, some not so subtle, that caused me to wonder how much coherence becomes stifling to teachers, or limits their ability to support students in ways that are needed.

Across a group of teachers who seemed wedded to the instructional norms of the district, Michelle was an anomaly whose frustration with the mandate stood out among the stories. We cannot know if her beliefs extend to other teachers beyond the five interviewed for this study. But there are hints that Sandra and Erin felt challenged by the required pacing, particularly in this population of students who often arrive with very different academic foundations. Marc admits that their test scores never seem to shift much over the years. And Erin's story about her student who displayed talents she knew nothing about raises questions about whether there are other instructional approaches that might better meet some of their students' needs.

So this is something to watch, and perhaps study – in Vista and elsewhere – as researched exemplary practices for school systems push systems toward greater alignment and consistency. Are the theories that drive instructional practices working? Is there enough flexibility for teachers to find a route for each and every student or can coherence inadvertently hamper opportunities for students? And what progress? Will a sustained focus on higher level thinking capacity in an impoverished population make a difference over time in ways that are not measured through standardized tests? Because

when all is said and done, the question that must be asked is, what has really changed for students as a result of the tight, aligned system with collectively efficacious teachers?

Do They Think They Can?

And so here we come back to that simple little concept that summarizes efficacy in a single phrase: *I can, because I think I can*. Perhaps the real question at hand as I reflect back over this study, the stories told, and the analysis done is simply that: *Do they think they can?*

There are certainly signs that teachers are able to engage their students in complex tasks, using defined engagement strategies so that students think for themselves. One of the first things I look for in a classroom is to see who is really doing the work. Not long ago I observed a lesson in Vista in which the students were asked to come up with two different ways to solve a mathematic problem. Several students were asked to present their strategies, during which time one student committed an algorithmic error. The teacher remained silent and, apparently as expected, one of her classmates pointed out her error. She was not embarrassed, but acted in ways that suggested she was grateful for the help, and proceeded with her presentation. At the conclusion of both presentations, the students were asked to work in their groups to compare and contrast the two strategies. This culture of normalizing error as an opportunity for learning and pushing students to explore their understanding is typical. The consistency I have seen across classrooms across the Vista School District stands out as unique in my two decades of consulting experience. This *is* the instructional mandate in Vista and teachers, for the most part, embrace it.

But efficacy is more than confidence in being able to deliver instruction in a prescribed manner. These teachers exhibited signs of being instructionally efficacious and with student outcomes that fit within desired student behaviors (e.g., engagement). Without arguing the merits of these desired behaviors, real efficacy also includes an *I can deliver* on my promise to students – just as collective efficacy supposes a *we can deliver*. What is not clear from these data is whether the capacity to deliver instruction according to the instructional mandate has led to a real sense of *I can* in terms of student outcomes, even, and especially, confidence that their students will be equipped to move into an incredibly complex adult world in which some of the most profound issues of society will undoubtedly prevail. Most of the teachers interviewed inferred a level of hopelessness that their support in the classroom might overcome the difficulties students bring with them in the classroom. Joe equated that likelihood to a student's level of independence, not to his teaching:

> Honestly? I think it depends on the kid. I try to get them toward being more independent. There are ones that still rely on me. I think those kids may not be so successful. Some I can hold accountable, some I cannot – those will struggle.

Sandra spoke to her "hope" that her students would be lifelong learners and that she "wanted them to be successful in life" without predicting that they would be. Erin reacted to the emphasis on testing and how students struggle to keep up with academic demands, noting that "we forget that these are kids. Their [test] scores are the farthest thing from their mind most of the time." She goes on:

> Here's the thing that the tests don't get. These kids are so much more than those test scores. I never have a day when I don't have one kid in my class not blow me out of the water.

Like Joe, there are kids she worries about. Erin measures the likelihood that her students

will succeed by the effort they put in, even as she tells them that "success will not be

easy." And like Joe, she is not convinced that she can make enough of a difference:

> Some days, you come in and work so hard and you see there are some days where
> I have to make the kids work harder than they have in them that day. And I have
> to make students care. It's hard to make students care.

> In order to stay in this career, you have to feel like you are making a difference.
> Sometimes on a given day you don't feel that. Sometimes I don't feel that I do.

So despite the dogged determination of these teachers who care extraordinarily,

despite the presence of consistent and learning-oriented leaders, despite a carefully

constructed system that exhibits unparalleled levels of psychological safety and

symmetry, the evidence suggests that some teachers at Skyview feel that many students

will not make it, regardless of their efforts. And perhaps this is where the real efficacy

lies in a school such as this, beyond success in the teaching task, beyond evidence that

students are able to think critically and solve problems, and beyond any future progress

on standardized measures of performance. Ironically, only Michelle, the outlier in her

attitudes and approaches, who challenges the instructional mandate, and who fights

administrator presence in her practice, believes that she can deliver on what she really

wants to instill in her students.

> I KNOW my students are prepared because I have taught them to be
> understanding, patient, and kind to themselves and to others. They will forget
> what I taught them, but they will never forget how I treated them.

Michelle, who believes the most important contribution she can make is to teach them

how to treat each other, believes that she can.

So What?

In my work as a consultant, the question I pose to clients most often is "so what?" How and why does all this matter? A simple question, it is one I find to be often absent in the myriad of activities that comprise the daily work of educators who, so caught up in getting things done, sometimes lose sight of the deeper purposes that drove them to this profession in the first place. We get, as Heifetz might put it, stuck on the dance floor.

I found this to be true with this study as well in the abundance of data so willingly shared and the multiple analysis options available to me. I had to force myself to jump to the balcony, to get above the action, to see what was really going on. And, as I summarized in response to my research questions, the patterns I chose to recognize suggest peer observation to be a powerful lever to developing collective efficacy, especially with attention to the systems elements that enable the psychological safety and symmetry present in the Vista School District. In the end, I focused on the areas that mattered to me, ones my experience suggests are important levers to systems that are able to learn, in itself another value I hold. In the end, this research matters because I, myself, will carry it forward in my work, to other clients, and as broadly as the field allows because I believe it will make a difference, in the end, to students as their teachers learn from one another and gain confidence in a collective capacity.

The teachers I interviewed allowed me to learn what, in the end, matters to them, to walk in their shoes, albeit briefly. They taught me about the personal nature of efficacy and how the intersections of their identities framed their individual and collective journeys toward that inherent need we all have to feel competent, efficacious, in those things that matter most. The beauty of the collective at Skyview Elementary School, with

its nuanced emotions, common struggles, and momentary successes illustrates the potential in drawing resource from the most vulnerable act of trying to affect the life of a student. It illustrates all that is written about the power of social capital, while recognizing that, in the end, we hold what matters most, our "so what" determination, internally.

If I jump to an even higher balcony, my own internal "so what" centers around the larger and deeper societal issues faced by educators in this turbulent era, and with that lens, however, I think the proverbial jury is still out. To be sure, the teachers demonstrate at least some degree of instructional efficacy in response to a strong instructional mandate, a mandate most of them unquestioningly seem to accept. There is no question that, as an instructional improvement system that coheres around high standards for all students, the Vista School District is, in my experience, as good as it gets. And I believe this study shows that the peer observation protocol is a powerful facilitation tool for peer observation that enhances psychological safety and collective efficacy.

But this is as far as we can draw conclusions at this time. The jury *is* out on whether this, or any, instructional system will ultimately conquer the institutionalized hegemony responsible for the inequities that have shaped society, and education as its microcosm. We do not yet know if the dedicated instructional focus of Skyview's teachers will result in students able to successfully navigate their futures and contribute to a sustainable democracy. We do not yet know if the students at Skyview Elementary will overcome the obstacles society has put in their way, much less overturn them for others as they move into citizenry. That will be the ultimate determination of whether any of us in education have earned the right to say, with efficacy, that we can.

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APPENDIX A

Peer Observation Protocol

Time	Activity
15 min	**Overview and Host Teacher Presentation** Host teacher describes what s/he wants to get out of the day. Information shared might include: ▪ What lesson will be presented? ▪ Where do you predict the students will struggle with this lesson and what plans do you have to support them? ▪ Where do you predict the students will do well? Why do you think that? ▪ What questions did you have for yourself as you planned this lesson? ▪ How can we help you? What would you like us to collect data on? (Ideally the host teacher presents an overarching focusing question that serves as a guide for data collection. Harriette can help develop this question in advance.) Host teacher then departs to transition into the classroom.
30-40 min	**Lesson Observation**

10 min	**Data Compilation**
	Observing teachers pair/share their data and look for trends in reaction to the host teacher's focusing question; prepare to share.
10 min	**Host Teacher Reflection**
	Host teacher shares his/her reflections on the lesson, highlighting any particularly significant moments.
20 min	**Data Sharing and Discussion**
	Observing teachers share their data and participate in facilitated discussion. Host teacher is observer/listener.
	Host teacher then rejoins conversation and shares final thoughts/take-away, such as what was interesting or surprising, new perspectives gained, etc.
5 min	**Debrief Process**

APPENDIX B

Administrator Interview Invitation

Dear

I hope this finds you well!

As you know, in addition to my coaching work, I am a doctoral candidate at Fielding Graduate University. I am conducting research for my dissertation, which is studying the potential that the peer observation process I've been facilitating over the past few years at Skyview Elementary might have developed a stronger sense of confidence among the faculty that they, collectively, are able to help their students learn. Known as collective efficacy, it was not one of our anticipated outcomes of this process, but I'm intrigued by the potential connection and have made it the topic for my doctoral research.

I will be attempting to answer my research questions through a process known as narrative inquiry, in which I will create narratives of five teacher stories that chronicle each teacher's individual experiences with peer observation. Equally important to answering my research question will be the organizational and leadership practices that situated their experiences. I would like to invite you to participate in a 60-minute joint interview with

_____ to discuss organizational and leadership practices specific to Vista, any role you may have played in the peer observation process and/or follow-up to that process, and any changes you have noticed in school-based leadership practices, teachers' instructional practices, teachers' relationship with peers, and overall school performance. This interview will ideally take place within the next 30 days and will be scheduled at your convenience. I anticipate that you may spend an additional 30 minutes reviewing any proposed quotes and that your total time commitment will not exceed 90 minutes.

Your participation in this is completely voluntary. If you agree to participate, you will be assigned an alias in the published dissertation and will be given the opportunity to authorize any specific quotes that are directly attributable to your position prior to inclusion. My goal is that your participation is anonymous and your perspectives confidential. It is also true, however, that Vista is a small district so I want to fully disclose that it is possible that even with an alias, you will be recognizable to anyone in Vista who may read the final dissertation and possibly to readers from outside the district.

Attached, please find a copy of the consent form you would be asked to sign if you agree to participate in this research. And, I am happy to share Fielding Graduate University's Institutional Review Board documents if you'd like to see them.

Thanks so much for considering this. I would love to hear back from you as soon as possible. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions at all. My contact information is below.

Harriette

APPENDIX C

School Positional and Instructional Leader Protocol and Interview Questions

Interview Protocol

Thank you for meeting with me today. Our interview will help inform my research to determine if the peer observation process here at Skyview Elementary can lead to a greater sense of collective efficacy, meaning that Skyview teachers together believe that they are able to teach students what they need to learn. Although I've facilitated this process, and in that sense have accompanied Skyview Elementary School on this journey, I am here in my role as a researcher and want to encourage you to respond as openly and honestly as you can so that I will be able to answer my research questions.

I will be asking you questions about your roles in this process as school leaders, about organizational processes and leadership practices that may impact the development of collective efficacy. As you know, I will assign you both aliases, as well as the school and district, but it is likely that anyone reading the dissertation who is familiar with the amazing work you do here at Skyview may be able to identify you.

I will be recording this interview in order to accurately analyze the data. However, at any point you can identify some information as "off the record" or you can go back and say, "I don't want you to include what I said earlier about…".

I have explained how I plan to keep your data confidential and secure during this process in this interview consent form. If you've not already read it, please take the time to do so now and be sure to let me know what questions you have before signing it.

Interview Questions

1. How do you see peer observation impacting teaching and learning at Skyview? In other words, what was your theory of action around implementing peer observation and how has that played out? What have you noticed about your teachers over the past two years in terms of their teaching practice, their students, and their relationships with their peers? What, if anything, might or do you attribute to peer observation?

2. What have you noticed about peer observation during the process itself? What role do you play during peer observation? Before it occurs? Afterwards?

3. What types of professional learning do your teachers experience? Do these originate from the building or from the district?

4. For what are teachers held accountable and how does that happen?

5. What is your role as leaders in teaching and learning? What are some of your most important priorities?

6. And finally, have you shared all that is significant with reference to the experience of peer observation?

APPENDIX D

District Leader Interview Protocol and Questions

Thank you for meeting with me to today. Our interview will help inform my research to determine if the peer observation process at Skyview Elementary can lead to a greater sense of collective efficacy, meaning that the teachers together believe that they are able to teach students what they need to learn. Although I've facilitated this process, and in that sense have accompanied Skyview Elementary School on this journey, I am here in my role as a researcher and want to encourage you to respond as openly and honestly as you can so that I will be able to answer my research question.

I will be asking you questions about your roles in this process as district leaders, about the organizational context in which Skyview Elementary is situated and that shed light on any political and external mandates in place that may impact school level leadership and instructional practice. In other words, I want to understand the instructional improvement system in place in the Vista School District. As you know, I will assign you both aliases, as well as the school and district, but it is possible that anyone reading the dissertation who is familiar with the amazing work you do here in Vista may be able to identify you.

I will be recording this interview in order to accurately analyze the data. However, at any point you can identify some information as "off the record" or you can go back and say, "I don't want you to include what I said earlier about…".

I have explained how I plan to keep your data confidential and secure during this process in this interview consent form. If you've not already read it, please take the time to do so now and be sure to let me know what questions you have before signing it.

When you're ready we can begin.

1. What is your role in teaching and learning in Vista? What is your role in peer observation at Skyview Elementary School? How do you see peer observation impacting teaching and learning? Why did you decide to fund this process?

2. What are your expectations for school principals here in Vista related to teaching and learning? How are they held accountable for those expectations and what supports are provided to them? What changes have you observed in school-based leadership practices over the past two years? Which changes might you attribute to the principals' role in peer observation? Why?

3. What are your expectations for teachers here in Vista? For what and how are they held accountable?

4. What support systems, professional learning opportunities, are in place for teachers? Who has responsibility for Vista teachers' professional learning?

5. What, if anything, have you noticed about Skyview Elementary teachers over the past two years in terms of their teaching practice and overall school performance? What, if anything, might or do you attribute to peer observation?

6. And finally, have you shared all that is significant with reference to the experience of peer observation?

APPENDIX E

Teacher Interview Invitation

Dear XXXX:

I hope this finds you well!

As you may know, in addition to my coaching work, I am a doctoral candidate at Fielding Graduate University. I am conducting research for my dissertation, which is studying the potential that the peer observation process I've been facilitating over the past few years at XXXX Elementary might have developed a stronger sense of confidence across the faculty that you, together, are able to help your students learn what they are expected to know and be able to do. Known as collective efficacy, it was not one of our anticipated outcomes of this process, but I'm intrigued by the potential connection and have made it the topic for my doctoral research.

I will be attempting to answer my research questions through a process known as narrative inquiry, in which I will create narratives of five teacher stories that chronicle each teacher's individual experiences with peer observation. I am attempting to pull together an interview group that is as diverse as possible in terms of teaching tenure, tenure in the school district, grade level, the number of years of peer observation participation, and your actual role in the peer observation process, i.e., whether you were observed teaching or functioned only as an observer. I would love to have your story be a part of my research.

Your participation in this is completely voluntary. It would involve a 90-minute individual interview with me during which time I'd invite you to explore your experience with the peer observation process and any impact it may have had on your practice as a teacher, your success with students, and your perceptions of your peers. I will then turn your

interview into a personal narrative that will be your unique story and which will become part of my dissertation. Your narrative, along with other narratives and interviews, will be used to answer my research questions. You will have the opportunity to review this narrative to make any changes for accuracy or eliminate portions that you would rather not have included. In other words, you will have full editorial rights. You will also be assigned an alias – which you can choose if you wish – with the goal that your participation be anonymous and your perspectives confidential. It is also true, however, that Vista is a small district so I want to fully disclose that it is possible that even with an alias, you may be recognizable in the final dissertation.

Your interview would take place during the school day within the next month or so; your classroom (and those of your colleagues who also participate) will be covered by a roving substitute. Thus your involvement in this study may be known to your colleagues. As noted earlier, our interview would take approximately 90 minutes and I expect that you might spend an additional 30 minutes reviewing and editing your narrative over the few weeks following our interview. I realize this is a significant investment of time for you but my hope is that you might benefit professionally from participating in this study as you reflect on and discuss your experiences with peer observation, considering moments that impacted your practice and your students. And I want to reiterate that your participation is completely voluntary.

Attached, please find a copy of the consent form you would be asked to sign if you agree to participate in this research. And, I am happy to share Fielding Graduate University's Institutional Review Board documents if you'd like to see them.

Thanks so much for considering this. I would love to hear back from you as soon

as possible. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions at all. My contact

information is below.

Harriette

APPENDIX F

Teacher Interview Protocol and Questions

Interview Protocol

Thank you for meeting with me today. Your experiences will inform my research to determine if the peer observation process can lead to a greater sense of collective efficacy, meaning that you and your colleagues collectively believe that you are able to teach students what they need to learn. The questions I ask will attempt to learn about your experience with peer observation personally and professionally and how it may have impacted your teaching, your students, and how you think of your colleagues. Although I've facilitated this process, and in that sense have accompanied you on this journey, I am here in my role as a researcher and truly want to see this through your eyes. So even if there are aspects of the process that were not valuable to you, I want to encourage you to tell your story as openly and honestly as you can so that I will be able to answer my research questions.

My hope is that you will be able to tell me a story about your experiences with peer observation in ways that take us both back to those moments and that will help me to understand what happened over time, how it felt, and any changes you may have noticed in your own practice and how you relate to and consider your peers. Please include as much detail as possible and, as a story, to include a beginning, middle, and an ending. When we're done, I will go home and write up your story in narrative form to the best of my ability and then send it to you for editing and revision. You'll be able to edit for accuracy and also to delete anything you don't feel comfortable in publishing, for although I'll assign you an alias, as well as the school and district, it is possible that anyone reading this who is familiar with

the amazing work you do here at Skyview, including your colleagues, may be able to identify you.

I am conducting interviews with four other teachers who will also be telling their stories. The consent form explains the process for keeping this information confidential throughout this entire process, including, as I've already noted, using aliases for your name, school, and district.

Our interview will take place in four phases. During the first phase, I'll get some background information about you as a teacher, how long you've been here, etc. In the second phase I'll ask you to tell your story without interruption. When you're done, I'll ask you clarifying questions. This portion of our interview will be taped and transcribed so that I can be assured that I am accurately capturing your story. However, at any point during these phases you can identify some information as "off the record" or you can go back and say, "I don't want you to include what I said earlier about…".

The last phase of our interview will take place without recording, although I will be taking notes. I may probe some areas that are more sensitive and I want us to both to feel more relaxed during that phase.

I have explained how I plan to keep your data confidential and secure during this process in this interview consent form. If you've not already read it, please take the time to do so now and be sure to let me know what questions you have before signing it.

Interview Questions

1. I want to start with a brief history of your teaching experience, how long they have been at Skyview Elementary, what grade you teach, and a little bit about your professional life here at Skyview. What's important to you, how you came to be

teaching here, how your day is organized…. Where have you felt successful as a

teacher? What has challenged you over the years? What, if anything, has been

helpful in addressing those challenges?

2. Please tell me the story of your experience with peer observation over the past _____

year(s). How did you come to be involved? What was the process like for you?

What different roles did you play in the process? What kinds of things did you feel or

experience as you were observed/or observed others? And please talk about how

your experience with this process and your practice and perceptions of your

colleagues may have changed over time.

3. In addition to clarifying questions from story: What role did your principal or

instructional coach play in the peer observation process? What other roles do they

play in your professional life? How does the peer observation process intersect with

other support you receive as a teacher here? For what are you held accountable as a

teacher and how does that happen?

4. (Without recorder). In addition to issues that surfaced during the story and previous

questioning phase: What was the best part of the peer observation process and why?

What was the most difficult and why? Can you talk a little about the kinds of societal

challenges your students face and how you're able to support them in meeting those

challenges? How confident are you that your students will be successful as they

move through school and into society? What is your role in making that happen?

And finally, have you shared all that is significant with reference to the experience of

peer observation?

APPENDIX G

Email Accompanying Draft Narrative

Hi (teacher's name)

I hope you are having into a great weekend!

I want to thank you again for taking the time to talk with me last month about peer observation. I have taken our interview and turned it into a narrative of what I heard. I've written it in 3rd person with most of it being direct quotes but I've done a lot of rearranging. I have also taken a few liberties given you quotes that rounded out sentences, or ideas in order to kind of "wrap" it up into a tidy package.

As a reminder of what will happen with this.

1. This is the basis of my analysis for the data you provided me so it's important from a research perspective that it feels right to you. There were places in the tape that I could not decipher and my interpretation could absolutely be wrong. So please read it for accuracy about what you think and feel and remember. It's not important that it's accurate from whether or not you actually said something at the time we talked. If it's true, and you're fine with it being in there, that's good enough, but I want it to sound like you. I think there was only one or two places that I actually made up a quote, but there are many places where I strung several together.

2. You'll see that there are a number of words included that are left in there to make the dialogue seem like dialogue, rather that a report. It may feel uncomfortable to keep these in but leave them if you are willing to. I want this to feel authentic.

3. If there are things that you've thought of since we talked that you want to include,

feel free to add them, but don't feel like you have to spend time on that. You've already given me an amazing gift of time and I don't want to add to that any more than I have to.

4. I have not yet changed any names in this but I will. I thought it would be easier for you to read without that at this point in time.

5. My intent is to publish this verbatim in the dissertation, but I am not sure at this point whether it will be in the body of the dissertation or as an appendix. These are longer than I had thought they might be. If after reading and editing this you are concerned about it being published (even to a very limited audience) please let me know. I want you to feel okay. The important part of this is to get data to answer my research question; the data presentation is less critical but definitely a consideration.

6. You can change anything you want in this narrative. So please read it and edit, or comment. I will take whatever you give me and revise accordingly. You can send it back in doc form (reviewing comments would be great) or hard copy. My address is below. When it feels as if we've got something you're happy with, I will insert pseudonyms and send you a final version with an approval form. Or I can come find you and have you sign it in person on an upcoming trip.

I hope it's fun reading about yourself. And again, thanks so very much for this. Your story is really important to my research and I can't tell you how much I appreciate your willingness to participate.

Enjoy your weekend!

Best,

Harriette

APPENDIX H

Adult Learning Rigor Rubric

Adapted from Newmann et al. (2007)

Standards and Criteria for Adult Learning

Construction of Knowledge

Disciplined Inquiry

Productive Collaboration

Connections to Practice
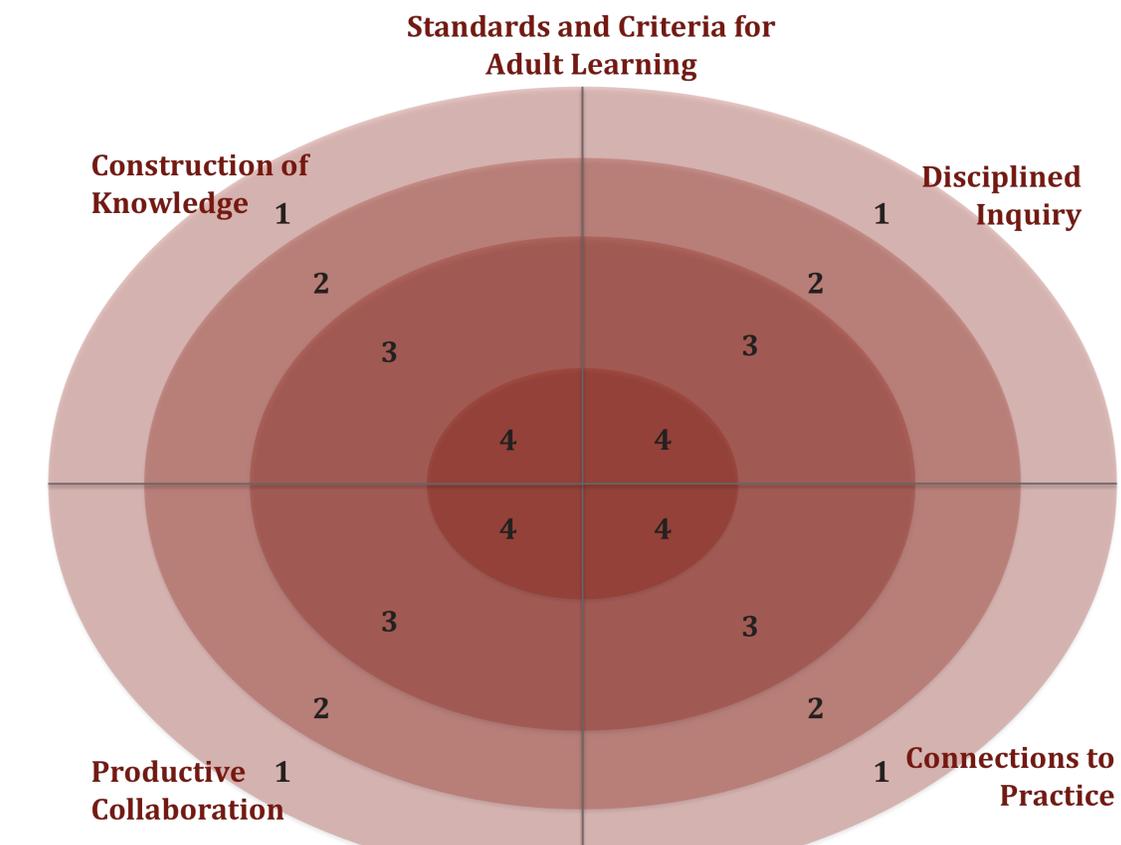
Tips for Scoring Construction of Knowledge

- To what extent does the task ask the learner to surface prior knowledge through professional, academic, or life experiences, connections to other professional development sessions, or by surfacing assumptions?
- To what extent will the learner be required to manipulate information and ideas in ways that transfer their meaning and implications?
- To what extent is the learner asked to hypothesize or arrive at some conclusion or interpretation?
- To what extent does the task invite reflection, transfer, and other meta-cognition?

Tips for Scoring Disciplined Inquiry

- To what extent will the learner be asked to consider complex problems in relation to the content?
- To what extent will the learner be required to work from data, draw conclusions or make generalizations based on data?
- To what extent does the task present content in ways that will ask the learner to grapple with central ideas open to interpretation?
- To what extent does the content itself require the learner to consider complex and ambiguous ideas?

Tips for Scoring Productive Collaboration

- To what extent does the task invite discourse devoted to creating or negotiating common understanding of the content?
- To what extent does the task develop a common language around the instructional core?
- To what extent does the task enable the learner to understand his or her role in the learning process, task production, and/or incorporating the content into his or her practice?
- To what extent does the task enable the learner to draw upon the wisdom and experience of peers?

Tips for Scoring Connections to Practice

- To what extent is the content driven by an explicit improvement strategy?
- To what extent does the content address the knowledge and skills of the teacher in implementing an explicit improvement strategy?
- To what extent are the desired outcomes (knowledge and skills) connected to competencies and concerns in the classroom?
- To what extent does the task enable the learner to personalize the content, i.e., an individual "problem of practice" that is explicitly relevant to the context in which the learner practices?

APPENDIX I

K-12 Argument Writing Continuum

Vista School District Argument Writing Continuum DRAFT								
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7	Level 8
STRUCTURE								
Overall	Tells about something liked or disliked with pictures and some "writing."	Tells, draws, and writes opinion or likes and dislikes about a topic or book.	Writes opinion or likes and dislikes about a topic or book and writes at least one reason why.	Writes opinion or likes and dislikes about a topic or book and connects reasons for opinion.	Writes opinion and ideas on a text or a topic and supports a point of view with reasons in an organizational structure.	States a claim about a topic or a text and supports a point view with reasons and information in an organizational structure.	States a claim or thesis on a topic or text, supports it with reasons, and provides a variety of relevant evidence from credible sources for each reason.	Writer not only stakes a position that is supported by a variety of trustworthy sources, but also builds an argument that leads to a conclusion in each part of his text.
Introducing Opinion/ Argument	Starts by drawing or saying something.	Writes opinion in the beginning.	Writes a beginning that gets readers' attention. Writes about topic or text he/she is writing about and gives opinion.	Writes a beginning in which states an opinion, but also sets readers up to expect that the writing should try to convince them of it.	Writes a beginning in which the writer not only sets readers up to expect that this is a piece of opinion writing, but also tries to hook them into caring about the opinion.	Writes a few sentences to hook readers, perhaps by asking a question, explaining why the topic matters, telling a surprising fact, or giving background information. The writer states a claim.	Writes an introduction that leads to a claim or thesis and gets readers to care about the opinion. Gets readers to care by not only including a cool fact or jazzy question, but also figuring out what is significant in or around the topic and giving readers information about what is significant about the topic. The writer works to find the precise words to state a claim; lets readers know the reasons that would be developed later.	Writes an introduction that helps readers understand and care about the topic or text. Thinks backward between the piece and the introduction to make sure that the introduction fits with the whole. The writer not only clearly states a claim, but also names the reasons that would be developed later. Tells readers how the text will unfold.
Transitions	Says or draws about an opinion or preference about a book or topic.	Tells, draws, and "writes" about an opinion or preference about a book or topic.	Writes about a topic or book and states an opinion and supplies a reason. Uses words such as because.	States an opinion about a book or topic and supplies reasons in the piece using linking words such as and, also, and because.	States and opinion about a topic or text and connects opinion with reasons in the piece by using linking words such as because, therefore, since, for example, and another.	Uses words and phrases to link claim, reasons, and supporting facts together. Uses phrases such as one reason, another reason, in addition to, in order to, and must be considered to show the shifts from saying reasons to giving more evidence and, in addition to, also, one time, for instance, another example, for example, and research/studies/experts state that . . . to show when making a new point.	Uses transition words and phrases to connect evidence back to his reasons using justification phrases such as this shows that . . . , this demonstrates how . . . , clearly, this describes the impact of . . . , etc. Writer helps the readers follow logical thinking with phrases such as another reason, another critical reason, and the most important reason. To show what happens he used phrases such as consequently and because of. Uses words such as specifically and in particular to be more precise.	Uses transitional words, phrases, and clauses (including previous level and more) to help readers understand how the different parts of the piece—claim, reasons, and evidence—fit together to support the argument. Phrases also include the introduction of credible sources.

Appendix I: Argument Writing Continuum (Continued)

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7	Level 8
Ending	After the writers says, draws, and "writes" all he/she can about the opinion, it ends.	Includes a last part, statement, or page that may include some sense of closure.	Writes an ending statement or section that provides some sense of closure.	Writes a statement or section ending in which reminded readers of the opinion.	Writes an ending statement or section, perhaps thoughts or comments related to the opinion.	Writes an ending for piece that restates and reflects on the claim, perhaps suggesting an action or response based on what is written.	Writes a conclusion that connects back to and highlights what the whole text is mainly about, not just the preceding paragraph. May suggest an action or response based on what is written.	Writes a conclusion that restates the main points of the essay, perhaps offering a lingering thought or new insight for readers to consider. The ending added to and strengthened the overall argument.
Organization	Draws and attempts to write words.	Tells, draws, and writes an opinion in one place and in another place says why.	Writes a part that gets readers' attention, a part that states an opinion, a part where states at least one reason, and a part with some sense of closure.	The writer's piece has different parts; writes a lot of lines for each part. Writes a part that gets readers' attention, a part that states an opinion, a part(s) supplies reasons to support opinion and uses linking words to connect ideas, and a part with a concluding statement or section.	Writes in an organizational structure that lists several reasons or examples why readers should agree with opinion and writes at least several sentences about each reason. The writer organizes information so that each part of the writing is mostly about one part (introduction—opinion, reasons that support opinion—each reason has a different part, concluding section).	Writer separated sections of information using paragraphs to support the author's purpose including: Clear introduction or topic or text, statement of opinion, related ideas are grouped—reasons are supported by facts and information, and concluding statement or section reflects upon opinion presented.	Groups and connects information (reasons, evidence, and justification) and related ideas into logically ordered paragraphs. Puts the parts of writing in the order that most suits purpose and helps prove reasons and claim.	Arranges paragraphs, clear reasons, and relevant evidence purposefully, leading readers from one claim or reason to another. Writes more than one paragraph to develop a claim or reason.

DEVELOPMENT								
Elaboration	Added more to one page by telling, drawing, or writing.	Draws and writes everything he/she is thinking about the topic (or book) on the page(s).	Writes at least one reason for the opinion.	Writes at least two reasons and writes at least a few sentences about each one to support the opinion.	Names two or more reasons to support opinion, and also writes more to show how reasons connect to the opinion.	Gives reasons to support opinion. Purposefully chooses reasons to convince the readers. Includes evidence such as facts, examples, observations and/or additional information to support reasons, perhaps from a text, own knowledge, or life.	Gives reasons to support opinion that were comparable and did not overlap. Puts them in logical order that is thought to be most convincing. Includes evidence such as facts, examples, quotations, micro-stories, and information to support the claim. Discusses and unpacks the way that the evidence goes with/supports the claim (justification).	Includes and arranges a variety of relevant evidence to support her reasons. Uses trusted sources and information from authorities on the topic. Explains how evidence strengthens the argument. Explains exactly which evidence supports which point. Acknowledges different sides to the argument.

Appendix I: Argument Writing Continuum (Continued)

	Vista School District Argument Writing Continuum DRAFT		
	Level 9	**Level 10**	**Level 11**
STRUCTURE			
Overall	Writer lays out a well-supported argument about a topic/text by consistently incorporating and citing trustworthy sources. Includes acknowledgement of other positions on the topic that might disagree, but still shows how his/her position makes sense.	Writer lays out a well-supported argument about a topic/text and makes a clear stand on why this particular argument is important and valid. Maintains a fair stances to those who might disagree by describing how his/her position is one of several, making it clear where his/her position stands in relation to others.	Writer presents a well-supported argument, offering context, honoring other points of view, and indicating conditions under which the position holds true. Writer develops argument with logical reasoning and convincing evidence, acknowledging limitations of the position and citing—and critiquing sources.
Introducing Opinion/ Argument	Writer interests readers in argument and helps them to understand the backstory/context behind it. Gives backstory in a way that gets readers ready to see writer's point clearly. Writer makes it clear to readers what piece will argue (claim) and forecasts the parts/reasons of his argument.	After hooking readers, writer provides specific context for own position as well as another's position(s), introduces claim/position, and orients readers to overall line of argument that will be developed.	Writer demonstrates significance of argument and may offer hints of upcoming parts of the essay. The writer presented needed background information to show the complexity of the issue. In addition to introducing the development the argument will take, the writer distinguishes that argument from others.
Transitions	Writer uses transitions to link and strongly connect the parts of argument. The transitions help readers follow from part to part and make it clear when writer is stating a claim or counterclaim, giving a reason, or offering or analyzing evidence. Transitions include terms such as *the text states, as, this means, another reason, some people may say, but, nevertheless, and on the other hand*.	Writer uses transitions to lead readers across parts of the text and to help them note and connect how parts of the text relate back to earlier parts. Uses phrases such as *now some argue, while this may be true, it is also the case that, despite this, as stated earlier, taken as a whole, this is significant because, the evidence points to, and by doing so*.	Writer uses transitions to clarify the relationship between claims, reasons, counterclaims, and evidence, and help the reader follow the logic in the argument. Also uses transitions to make clear the relationship of sources to each other and to the claim, such as *while it may be true that, nevertheless, there are times when/ certain circumstances when, and others echo this idea*.
Ending	In the conclusion, the writer reinforced and built upon the main points in a way that made the entire text a cohesive whole. The conclusion reiterated how the support for the claim outweighed the counterclaim(s), restated the main points, responded to them, or highlighted their significance.	In the conclusion, the writer described the significance of the argument presented for stakeholders or offered additional insights, implications, questions, or challenges.	In concluding section, writer may have clarified conditions under which the position holds true, discussing possible applications or consequence, and/or offered possible solutions.
Organization	Writer purposely arranged parts of the piece to suit her purpose and to lead readers from one claim, counterclaim, reason, or piece of evidence to another. The writer used topic sentences, transitions, and formatting (where appropriate) to clarify the structure of the piece and to highlight the main points.	Writer organizes claims, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence into sections and clarified how sections are connected. The writer creates an organizational structure that supports a reader's growing understanding across the whole of his argument, arranging the sections to build on each other in a logical, compelling fashion.	Writer creates a logical and compelling structure for the argument so that each part builds on a prior section, and the whole moves the reader toward understandings.
DEVELOPMENT			
Elaboration	Writer includes varied kinds of evidence such as facts, quotations, examples, and definitions. He analyzes or explained the reasons and evidence, showing how they fit with the claim(s) and built his argument. Writer consistently incorporates and cites trustworthy sources. Writer writes about another possible position or positions—a different claim or claims about this subject—and explains why the evidence for his position outweighed the counterclaim(s).	The writer brings out the aspects of the argument that are most significant to her audience and to her overall purpose(s). The writer incorporated trustworthy and significant sources and explains if and when a source seems problematic. The writer analyzes the relevance of the reasons and evidence for her claims as well as for the counterclaim(s) and helped readers understand each position. The writer makes sure all of her analysis leads readers to follow her line of argument.	The writer brings out the aspects of the argument that are most significant to the audience and to the purposes. When appropriate, the writer acknowledges limitations or critiques of sources—perhaps evaluating sources' reasoning or suspect motivations. The writer angles and/or frames evidence to clearly and fairly represent various perspectives, while also maintaining a clear position.
	Writer works to make argument compelling as well as understandable. Brings out why it matters and why the audience should care about it.		

APPENDIX J

Primary Math Professional Development Lesson Plan

Grade 2: Implementing Common Core Standards

8:30	Opening and Agenda
8:45	Prepare for implementation of lessons and routines in Unit 1
11:30	Lunch: 30 Minutes
12:00	Prepare for implementation of Centers and Guided Groups
1:30	Prepare for implementation of Unit 2
2:40	Reflection and Feedback

Learning Target 1: Deepen understanding of how patterns and structures support fluent mental addition and subtraction of numbers to 20 are used to add and subtract tens and ones and numbers to one hundred .
- Provide examples of the different strategies and tools that are designed to support fluency with addition and subtraction of numbers to 20.
- Describe the strategies based on place value and properties of operations to add and subtract numbers to 100.
- Explain the role that translation between representations plays in the lessons and routines.
- Reference specific examples of opportunities for the use of MP.1 and MP.7 during lessons and routines during the unit (*MP.1. Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them*; *MP.7. Look for and make use of structure)*.

Learning Target 2: Make connections between the components of the math block. Core Lessons, "Centers", Guided Groups, Routines and Formative Assessment. Success Criteria:
- Describe the:
    - Role of assessment in the selection and modification of centers;
    - Difference between Review and Repair and Core centers;
    - Strategies for getting students to take responsibility for their learning;
    - Informal assessments during each of the components;
    - Use of assessment data to plan and implement guided groups;

Learning Target 3: Build understanding of the learning progression in the first measurement unit that will support planning and implementing the first Common Core measurement unit.
- Do the math through the lenses of a learner and a teacher.
- Analyze the learning targets for connections between the lessons.
- Describe ways in which the learning targets relate to the selected Math Practices and Standards.
- Explain how the measurement unit lays the foundation for introducing use of the number line as a tool.
- Connect the use of the number bond to represent common addition and subtraction situations to the part whole and comparison tape models.

APPENDIX K

Principal Student Growth Goal

Student growth goal:

Describe assessment given for pre- data.

Describe analysis of data:
Number of students, grade levels, scores, maybe teachers,
Distribution of scores.   **Include rubric if one was used.**

Next steps:
Teacher support:

Next assessment:

How will you monitor progress before next assessment?

APPENDIX L

Coach Development Professional Development Plan

2014-2015
Vista School District
Coaching Professional Development Plan

School:_____

Time Frame	August	September	October	November	December
School-Wide PD Foci					
PLC Focus					
PD Focus					
Coaching Support					
Time Frame	January	February	March	April	May
School-Wide PD Foci					
PLC Focus					
PD Focus					
Coaching Support					

Vista School District--2014-2015 Coaching Professional Development Plan
Revised by _____ on_____

APPENDIX M

Unit Assessment

Date_____ Grade Level _____
Unit name and number _____

Overall Assessment results: Include percentage of students meeting proficiency and percentage not. Include areas of strengths and areas of weakness.

For Literacy:
Which skill(s)/standard(s) did all or most get correct? Please write the number.

Which skill(s)/standard(s) did all or most get wrong? Please write the number.

What next steps are you taking to help those students not meeting proficiency? How will you measure that they have made progress?   Be specific.

For math:
Which problem(s) did all or most get correct? Please write the problem number(s).

Which problem(s) did all or most get wrong?   Please write the problem number(s).

What next steps are you taking to help those students not meeting proficiency? How will you measure that they have made progress?   Be specific.

APPENDIX N
Administrator Professional Development Lesson Plan

Vista School District Admin Meeting				
Time	**Learning Target**	**How will we get them there?**	**Who and materials needed**	**Success Criteria**
4:00 – 4:05		Opening	Cal	
4:05 – 4:50	Analyze unit assessment for in literacy		Betsy	Identify standards assessed and achievement for each Discuss progress monitoring and feedback to teachers of unit work
4:50 – 5:00	Reflect on process of analyzing assessment		Betsy	Share learnings
5:00 – 5:25	Smarter Balanced Assessment Info		XXXX	
5:25	Round Table		Cal	
5:25	Closing		Cal	

APPENDIX O

Literacy Unit ＿＿＿ Assessment
Grade ＿＿＿
Date Given ＿＿＿＿

1. What standards were being assessed?

2. How did the students do by standard? Which one(s) were the students the strongest on?

   Which standard(s) were the students the weakest on?

3. What did your teachers do as a result of the assessment?

4. What did you observe in the classroom during this unit?

   a. Teacher practice around the content and pedagogy? What feedback did you give teachers around their practice in this unit?

   b. Student learning? Anecdotal notes you took

APPENDIX P

Michelle's Indications of Efficacy Development

Individual Teacher Efficacy	
Efficacy Source	**Supporting Data**
Mastery Experiences	I was always doing the things that we should be doing but now I've learned to improve on it by the comments and the observations from the other teachers. Where I've learned to improve on it by the comments and the observations from the other teachers. And so even though I'm not observed, I go back and say, that's how I'm going to do it in my classroom. Oh, I like that. So I find, all those noticings. I apply them to my teaching. When they gave me feedback – this is what you could do better. Not necessarily what you could do better, but this is what my noticings are. To me – it was a good way for my colleagues to see that – especially the younger ones.
Vicarious Experiences	And so even though I'm not observed, I go back and say, that's how I'm going to do it in my classroom. Oh, I like that. So I find, all those noticings. I apply them to my teaching. I enjoyed going to other people's classrooms because you got to see how they were. I'm here to learn from her.
Verbal Persuasion	I see great things in your room. I think it needs to be shared. So when we debriefed I got to hear what the teachers thought – what they liked. Because I was always doing the things that we should be doing but now that I know. Where I've learned to improve on it by the comments and the observations from the other teachers. Being acknowledged for the things that impress the teachers. What they liked. Like, "I like how you did this!" What they saw. It's like a compliment. It is nice.

| **Emotions** | Once in awhile somebody will notice something and you just let that feed you for a long time. In the middle of rainy days, you get that one day of sunshine. You just have to remember that. That's kind of rewarding.

I basically cleaned them out in my head because I have to take care of myself. I felt like, "OK. This is it. I'm letting you in. I'm giving you a piece of me and if you judge me, then shame on you, or whatever. I'm going to be the best I can be."

I thought. "NO. Oh my gosh I'm going to be judged. " Nobody wants to be judged. And I don't want any of that "this is not the way it's supposed to be." I don't want any of that stuff.

When we were observed, I remember, I was in 4th grade and there were some teachers in there and I didn't feel safe.

My nervousness was about one particular teacher. What does she really think. She doesn't ever complement me. She's very negative towards me. Anything that comes out of her mouth is always, it's like, not nice.

It is nerve wracking when you're being observed, no matter how confident you are, no matter how long you've been teaching. It's just nerve wracking. You know. In the minds of people.

When you're excited about what you're doing in your classroom and it's difficult to share that if they don't get it, if they don't understand you.

You want to get to the point, this is what you're doing wrong. But it comes across really bad. And you don't want to ruin that person to where you're never going to want to teach anymore.

That moment when they tell you that you're voluntold….you're going to be watched on the stage. And then you go "awww" and suck in all the air in the room. |

Collective Efficacy	
Peer Assessment (Formative)	In our education we label veteran teachers as, "oh, they don't know any better. They're old school, dinosaurs." I'm new upbeat, I'm more informed. I know because I was that person at one time. And so I really respect old teachers, I do.

I would prefer to see that same teacher again. Because I feel like one time is not enough. A couple of times. It's good to see variety, but there's something rewarding about the same thing. I don't know. Does that make sense? Maybe you're focusing on the [inaudible] second time. You're going to see if that behavior is the same. I want things to be genuine – I'm not saying they're not.

The quiet ones. I want to know how they are. We've not ever observed.

I enjoyed going to other people's classrooms because you got to see how they were. |

Peer Competence (Summative)	I always felt that I do wonderful things in my classroom. And I know that. Is it conventional? Like everybody else? No. And I know that as well.
	I feel like everyone is really doing the Harriette work – holding accountable talk – the wait time. I think all of us are more in tune with that where before we were more glossed over. I really believe that the things that we brought to the table – people were doing that. There was very good constructive criticism. When I gave my opinion I meant it with 100% certainty – it was coming from a good place. What you do with that? That's up to you.
	There is a difference when you watch someone who's been here for twenty years, thirty years, and watching someone with two years experience. So when I watch a younger colleague, I think to myself, "I remember when I did that." They're going through the same emotional duress that I went through. It was nice to see. You felt in check, like "I get you, you get me."

APPENDIX Q

Joe's Indications of Efficacy Development

Individual Teacher Efficacy	
Efficacy Source	**Supporting Data**
Mastery Experiences	Yeah. All I remember from that is that there was a lot of modeling at the beginning of the lesson and we didn't really get to the engagement until the end and I know that the engagement is where we get the most data. So it didn't seem very remarkable, I guess. I do like the data that I get. The last time there were some things about status that I had no clue were happening in my classroom, but because there were so many more eyes and ears I could become aware of it. There were things like, students weren't having a voice at times. And so now sometimes when I'm teaching I'm not as focused on the content in the groups but in how the groups are working together and making sure everyone has a voice. The data I got as a teacher. Because it directly affected how I can change my classroom or change what I do to help my classroom. Getting criticism … was constructive. It was like a difficult part at first and then it was, how can I keep my mind open. How can I use that to be constructive? That's my favorite part: How I can use constructive criticism. That's my favorite part. How I can use it.
Vicarious Experiences	What I remember about observing, the first time I observed. I was looking for things I could use in my classroom and things that teacher did well. And then, also taking notes to help that teacher … with their students. Sometimes it would be specific to teaching practices. Pulling out little things that anyone could use any time. And then, a second phase would be to see what other teachers are doing that I will use in my classroom. When we do this observation, there's always something I can walk away with. It occurred to me that the things that were happening, they were not just for that teacher but could be for the whole building.
Verbal Persuasion	None noted
Emotions	I felt pressure to be observed. Maybe that's because I'm new. Well, it was kind of portrayed like, there was something going on my classroom that was good, that other people should see….? (voice goes up) And I mean, I was still, even though that's a good thing, I was still nervous. I was still worried. Maybe because I'm new. It kind of felt like I couldn't say no. No, that's not true. I could have said no, but….

	I remember both times I taught and was observed I found out the day before or the week before. It felt – as much as we say, we're not judging – any time you get observe it feels, not judgmental, but you want to do well. (laughs lightly) Be successful.
	About 5 minutes into the lesson that [stress] starts to go away and I started focusing on the students more than the people who are there to observe. The students are definitely focused on the people in there as well.
	This process is stressful. It's stressful all the way through the process. But it's like a game. It's stressful before you start. And then you get into the game and forget it. But the aftermath is stressful because you don't really know the game score even though you're done and the game is over and you're debriefing the game. It's nerve wracking but it's also my favorite part of the process. It's where I learn.
	Collective Efficacy
Peer Assessment (Formative)	What I remember about observing, the first time I observed. I was looking for things I could use in my classroom and things that teacher did well. And then, also taking notes to help that teacher … with their students.
	I guess moving to the second time I was observed, what changed since then, is that it's not so much what I can do to help the teacher – well, it kind of is. What kind of patterns are we seeing throughout classrooms? Because I noticed when I was being observed there were things happening in m classroom that were happening in a second class we observed. And so it occurred to me that the things that were happening, they were not just for that teacher but could be for the whole building.
Peer Competence (Summative)	I don't really think how it's changed much about how I think of them as a teacher. I think, mostly because only one little lesson, 30 minutes.

APPENDIX R

Steve's Indications of Efficacy Development

Individual Teacher Efficacy	
Efficacy Source	**Supporting Data**
Mastery Experiences	It let me think about my practice a little bit more. You could rethink, oh yeah, I could do this and this and this… but you don't see the whole – maybe some of it's in our head, or things that come up, like misconceptions from students that I didn't plan for. My own learning. It seems a little selfish, but learning about myself and the things that I could do better at. I don't care so much about the things I do well and getting the praise for. I'd rather know what, if I have an issue or a problem area I need help in, I like to hear that feedback so that I can consider it – because sometimes we don't even know that we've done something. And, hearing that we did it, either good or bad. I like when I get negative feedback more, but maybe that's just…. I like to learn. I think that would be the best part. Come in and look at what I'm doing well and help me with the areas where can I improve.
Vicarious Experiences	The other thing about being on the observer side – I still can grow because I can say, wow, I've never thought about it that way. And so I can think about other people's way of thinking.
Verbal Persuasion	Then as we got better at it, I think, we all started to have a better conversation. In the debrief time, in the beginning, it was a lot of "Well, I liked that strategy," or "I liked that chart" versus "Why did you make the chart, what was the purpose of it?" "What was the outcome." "Did it actually help the student learn?" Instead of, well, "what did you do first, second, third"…basic lesson planning ideas…and more into the depth of the lesson. Come in and look at what I'm doing well and help me with the areas where can I improve. Being the observed was really awesome because I get to hear all the people's feedback from different perspectives. It let me think about my practice a little bit more. You could rethink, oh yeah, I could do this and this and this… but you don't see the whole – maybe some of it's in our head, or things that come up, like misconceptions from students that I didn't plan for.

Emotions	One thing I was really excited about at the beginning, I was excited to hear that it was going to be facilitated and that it was actually going to happen. So at the beginning that part of process was exciting to me, that we were actually going to get a chance to do this, see how other people work in the building. As we went through first year people started relaxing a little bit more and realized, "no it's not more work. I don't have to be perfect for the observation. That's not what it's about. It's about – you don't have to be perfect. I think I'm pretty open. I know everyone was really nervous about who would teach and who would observe. That was the scary part of it, opening up our practice. I remember feeling that the building was really, we were apprehensive and it felt like it would be more work to be observed. Other people are real worried when other people come in.
Collective Efficacy	
Peer Assessment (Formative)	So at the beginning that part of process was exciting to me, that we were actually going to get a chance to do this, see how other people work in the building. When somebody says, "I didn't teach it that well, I didn't understand, but I'm not sure what went wrong. And then another teacher says the same thing and then another teacher says that. So we may need to see the lesson happen, to identify why it's not going well versus just having the lesson on paper and saying, well I think it's that piece. Because it's hard to really say, was it really that deep or was it the way it was delivered. Or was it the student misconceptions? Maybe they didn't have the background knowledge to access that knowledge. If I have no idea of what my team mates are doing, then how do I trust that they're even doing their part, a good team member, and things like that? Not that I think we don't. We have a pretty good staff. But it's always, we have that feeling of yeah, we are working hard and seeing that we all work hard. And seeing each other's strengths – that part was all exciting at the beginning. Hearing other people's ideas. I got a perspective of how they think about learning and teaching. We actually got to see each other doing our jobs rather than listening to them tell each other "I did that." You know, we would go back to our PLC, we could say, well did you guys try this strategy or did you do this lesson? We actually did that. We take it at face value because we do talk to each other as professionals but it's nice to have a process for people trying things on even when they're not comfortable with them, fully trying it and saying "I did that a little different," and sometimes "I

	had the lesson instructions for the lesson in front of me and I did it step by step but I didn't fully get into the why and how and thinking about students and all those other little pieces. If people are actually getting in, and they've done that, and you've watched them do a lesson, you can that they've done that kind of work when they say "teaching" versus, "I pulled the lesson plan out and I followed the steps." That's kind of what I mean by trusting the work. Maybe that's where I'm coming with the trust. We became more willing to be open with our practice and so maybe it was not more that I trust them, but they learned to trust us to come in, that they're willing to trust us to come in and look at their practice and look at it in a way that it's not "we're trying to get you, top down, dinged. It's "come in and look at what I'm doing well and help me with the areas where can I improve." And so having that openness from the knowledge that I'm really not here just to catch you doing something wrong. People started opening up and then I got to be the observer more, which I found to be difficult at times because …….. I wanted to know why did they do it, what actually happened, and what was the outcome. In the beginning it was kind of hard to be more analytical…. This is what I'm looking for…. Then as we got better at it, I think, we all started to have a better conversation. In the debrief time, in the beginning, it was a lot of "Well, I liked that strategy," or "I liked that chart" versus "Why did you make the chart, what was the purpose of it?" "What was the outcome." "Did it actually help the student learn?" And we got better at it. We got better at the process and moved toward "how did you this do this and why did you do this" rather than a retelling of the lesson. We got more into depth of the lesson. Difficult for me is not talking and listening to everybody's ideas. That is actually difficult for me, to take the time and sit back and wait for everybody else to have their voice. We were actually going to get a chance to do this, see how other people work in the building.
Peer Assessment (Summative)	We have a pretty good staff. But it's always, we have that feeling of yeah, we are working hard and seeing that we all work hard. And seeing each other's strengths. Seeing each other's strengths – that part was all exciting at the beginning. As we proceeded we got more trusting and understanding of each other's work. I fully believe that everyone here wants to do the best for students. And I do I don't distrust my colleagues in that matter.

APPENDIX S

Sandra's Indications of Efficacy Development

Individual Teacher Efficacy	
Efficacy Source	**Supporting Data**
Mastery Experiences	None noted
Vicarious Experiences	It really helped me as a teacher to observe another teacher and reflect back on my teaching even though I didn't get to be observed because a lot of time focusing on the student engagement part was what the big piece was. It's hard because it kind of get messed into everything but when you're truly isolate it and you truly just use that lens you start to notice things that you need to work on or things that aren't working or what will help me – and areas of growth – it helped me in areas where student weren't engaged and not on task and where they were engaged and were on task. We do look at student engagement but it has never been 100% on student engagement. And it was very, very different for me to do that. It was very, very difficult at first. I participated in, I believe, two of them and it was very difficult to separate both of them the first time. They benefit because as I see the data I can see where I can meet my students needs and where I can, for example, if it had been a reading lesson and I really wanted the kids to engage with the text, and I found that five of my students were not involved with the text, they were not engaged, it would help me to evaluate why weren't they engaged. Is it behavior first of all? Is it that they didn't have the correct strategies? Did I not check for understanding when I released them to do their work? So the data benefits my students and it benefits my practice overall.
Verbal Persuasion	None noted
Emotions	It felt uncomfortable. Because, it was uncomfortable to not know what to do. Because when you're teaching, you know what's going on. But it was uncomfortable because I had never isolated skills and it felt like we were splitting hairs and it felt very microscopic and really just isolating a skill or a strategy that a teacher was using. And so I wanted to do it well. I can say that at the end of the second cycle I understood. My first cycle was a little bit uncomfortable, a little bit difficult because I found myself as I was giving feedback – I don't remember you gave us but I do remember that you gave us a protocol to follow and some vocabulary with some tips for giving feedback, which made a lot of sense but just trying it on was a little uncomfortable at first. Being observed is always uncomfortable. It's just different, because you have eyes on you and you're not as natural as you are when you teach a regular lesson but you do gain a lot of insights. I would have been nervous.
Collective Efficacy	
1. Peer Assessment	None noted

APPENDIX T

Erin's Indications of Efficacy Development

Individual Teacher Efficacy	
Efficacy Source	**Supporting Data**
Mastery Experiences	The first lesson I was observed teaching. I felt it went really well. It was that class was an amazing class – they did everything that I had told them to do. They didn't need me. It was a beautiful lesson. I just remember that there was no disappointment from me. There were no changes I would make. It went very smoothly. And the feedback that I got, I would say was mostly positive feedback, which is always nice to hear.

Since that day, I think, I really don't call on raised hands anymore. I use sticks now 95% of the time.

It kind of drives you nuts when you hear about this teacher who is able to confer with every student every week and I only got to confer with every student in this one month. And you think 'How is that teacher doing all these things that I can't manage to do?' But when you get to observe, you realize, 'Actually, I'm doing as much or more as everybody else.' And I don't feel so bad.

The best thing about being observed is when someone says something and you say you know that, that was great. And you feel good about yourself.

And the other thing is when someone notices something that you didn't know before. Something constructive that maybe you didn't notice before. Like the fact that you called on one student five times. It's nice when somebody notices something and you can say, 'Here's a problem right now, something that you can fix easily that you do. It will improve the efficiency in my classroom. Nice when you can go home that day.

So I went back to my classroom to make sure that the kids are using the group roles properly.

Now I say, "have you talked to … about that yet?" Then they get the help they need. My time is saved up for the kids who really need it.

And so it was nice to get that feedback. Because you won't be able to change unless someone gives you feedback.

It just went so well there really wasn't much to say about it. |
| **Vicarious Experiences** | I think you can get in a teaching rut. And so maybe you've been doing direct instruction, you realize it's not working. Or, you've been doing this procedure but you realize been doing something and it's not been effective. So it's nice when you can see something from someone else, a difference in the questions, or something that you never thought of before – when you see something great and you know you can use. It's nice to vary classroom behavior – something you never thought of before. |

If you see something great, you have to steal it. If you see something great, and if you think it will fit in with your style, that's nice.

One of the most helpful things for me is I do love to observe other teachers. You know Michelle. She probably has the best classroom management I have ever seen. I am not exaggerating. She could leave her kids alone all day and teach by phone and they would be angels. So I have to help me out. I can go to her and she tells me what she would do.

I have found that I like observing a little bit more than being observed.

Now I think I'm great at observing other people more because the last couple of times I've always come back with at least one thing that I could take back to my class. When we watched Joe a couple of months ago, the way he did his groups, his complex feedback thing, I saw the kids were so much more stronger in using their group roles than mine were. So I went back to my classroom to make sure that the kids are using the group roles properly.

Especially where, one of the things about students, if they have questions or a problem or are struggling, in my class they have tended to come to me before they go to any other student. They come to me. Whereas if you have 26 students and they're all coming to you with a problem…. When I saw Joe's class in action I knew I had to put my foot down on that. Now I say, "have you talked to … about that yet?" Then they get the help they need. My time is saved up for the kids who really need it. And then also making my own observations as to what's going on.

I've never been in an observation that I didn't take something away from. Everybody has something. Sometimes it's a first year teacher, sometimes it's someone with three times the experience. Now I love observing more than I love being observed.

I kind of personally feel that I can learn more when I observe somebody else than I'm observed.

When you're observed people are telling you their takeaways – I mean, you can get valuable information but it's through their perspective, not necessarily mine and what I would want. But when get to observe, I get to pick and choose as to what I see as valuable.

The best thing about observing others is picking up their ideas, observing that teachers are doing. We have to – if you see something great, you have to steal it. If you see something great, and if you think it will fit in with your style, that's nice.

Being in other people's classrooms makes me feel a little better because I realize that I'm not the only one having this struggle. I'm not the only one who will take two days to complete a lesson. And so kind of seeing other people's imperfections makes me feel better about mine.

I think there are other people who think it should always be done the same way. We're not the same people so we're not going to deliver in the same method.

Verbal Persuasion	The best thing about being observed is when someone says something and you say you know that, that was great. And you feel good about yourself. When you're observed people are telling you their takeaways – I mean, you can get valuable information but it's through their perspective, not necessarily mine and what I would want. And so it was nice to get that feedback. Because you won't be able to change unless someone gives you feedback.
Emotions	At the time I was so hungry for feedback because I was a brand new teacher and I realized that I play a very important role with my students. I knew you guys were coming, I was nervous. It probably was not my finest moment. Probably it's nerves. Like being nervous because they're going to watch you and sometimes to judge you even though they won't say it out loud, 'Oh, that was a bad lesson,' they might think it and then they would internalize that, 'Hmm. I just saw her teach and that kind of stinks.' I mean, it's really only one day and one time. Maybe that one thing you saw, it's the only bad thing, but it's the one thing they're going to think about. You know, like that day that Cal Case saw me. It was a bad day for me and my students. It was not a great lesson. He'd never watched me teach. He'd come into my classroom to work with my kids, but I don't think he'd ever actually seen me deliver a lesson. So even thought that was, that lesson was well over a year ago, is that what he thinks of my teaching – that one day.
Collective Efficacy	
Peer Assessment (Formative)	And then also – people were kind of questioning why I had made the choices that I made. There was a lot of time for reflection. Somebody asked me why I had made a teaching decision that I did and I think had a good reason I made the decision that I did but I think could have delivered it in a better way. I haven't noticed any changes in interactions at all. I think that… You know, they did a survey – I don't know if it was a couple months ago or a couple years ago, but one of the survey questions was 'do you feel like your colleagues are good teachers? Do you feel like they're working as hard as you are?' And one of the things the survey showed is we have a lot of faith in ourselves, that we thought we were working hard doing everything we needed to do, but that we didn't think our colleagues were doing the same thing. And so through these observations I think we were able to see that no, our colleagues are working just as hard as we are, they're doing the same things, having the same struggles. I was thinking, I felt reassured by the things I was seeing in other classrooms, both for my own skill level as a teacher, and for theirs too.

	And when I go into someone else's classroom, I'm going to be open. Maybe they're not doing the same thing as me, but they're doing it differently than I do. So I'm always looking for that. Being in other people's classrooms makes me feel a little better because I realize that I'm not the only one having this struggle. I'm not the only one who will take two days to complete a lesson. And so kind of seeing other people's imperfections makes me feel better about mine.
Peer Assessment (Summative)	There are a lot of great teachers in the building. Everybody has something. Sometimes it's a first year teacher, sometimes it's someone with three times the experience. I just felt like, it was, people were interested in my class. It just went so well there really wasn't much to say about it.