

The Effects of Teacher Confidence from Classroom
Walk-Through Observations

A Special Project

Presented to

Dr. Robert P. Kraig

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FACULTY APPROVAL

The Effects of Teacher Confidence from Classroom
Walk-Through Observations

A Master's Special Project

by

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ABSTRACT

The Effects of Teacher Confidence from Classroom Walk-Through Observations

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The researcher conducted a quantitative designed study. The purpose of the study was to determine if the data collected from the Washington Improvement and Implementation Network (WIIN) walk-through observations, was effective in increasing teacher's confidence in their classrooms. Data was collected two times during the 2010-2011 active school year. At the end of the second semester data collection period, a survey was conducted with the teachers to determine effectiveness of the observation data. The observation data itself did not show an increase in skills, or classroom changes, however, the survey showed a strong support in favor of the data collections and improved teacher confidence. Therefore, the evidence supports the hypothesis and the null hypothesis was rejected.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Jody Potter

Background for the Project

“Effective teachers matter. They matter to the school district, to the school, and, most importantly, to the student. It is difficult to deny the impact of an effective teacher.” Stated by Anne Luce; (<http://www.partnership4learning.org/resources/blog/anne-luce-attracting-developing-and-retaining-effective-teachers>)

U.S. Secretary Arne Duncan, in his news article stated that, “An effective teacher is the single most important factor in increasing student achievement.” Mr. Duncan also added, “What is the definition of an “effective teacher?” Many instructors would argue that they are effective in their classrooms, until the dreaded “evaluations” and “observations” were completed. They agreed that the key measure of an effective teacher was, “The ability to drive growth in student achievement over time.” (<http://www.partnership4learning.org/resources/newsletters/making-case-student-growth>)

Teachers have also based their credibility and self-worth against evaluations and observations, instead of considering evaluations and observations as a tool; they had become the taboo words in education.

What teachers had failed to understand was the difference between evaluations and observations. When a teacher heard either of those words, the panic set in, pulsing heart rates, and the “judgment” of their instructional methods would be at question. The difference between those two was very basic. Evaluations were subjective, observations were objective. Observations were to be used as a tool; evaluations were to be used as personal professional growth opportunity. Nevertheless, in the teacher’s minds; observations and evaluations were synonymous.

Jim Ventris stated “School districts can better support building improvement efforts via a comprehensive district-level needs assessment with a focus on student learning and involving a broad base of stakeholders. Effective leadership in improvement efforts when implementing research based strategies will lead to system-wide improvement in student performance.” (Network, 2010, Pg 10)

The ED.Gov. Blog reported this statement from Secretary Duncan’s speech at the State House Convention Center. “Recently the fervor on the topic of whether to tie student assessment data to teacher evaluations has gained national attention. We agreed that teachers generally want to be held accountable and supported by a fair evaluation system.” www.ed.gov/blog/2010/creating-fair-evaluation-systems-for-teachers

Only the prepared, knowledgeable, multi-tasking, seasoned teachers were ready for observations in their classrooms. New teachers to the field got nervous,

stressed and tried to set the stage for the observation for whenever the time was set. A well seasoned teacher was usually not concerned when the observation was conducted, because they taught the same methods throughout the day, every day to the highest quality of teaching they instructed. The new mandates that the Senate 6696 proposed, was to establish a set criteria for the observations to be standard and not personality centered. A five-leveled rating system was based on the following:

1. Focus on curriculum
2. Focus on instruction
3. Focus on the learner
4. Focus on classroom environment
5. Focus on needs of all learners

This system was based partly on the Bloom's Taxonomy. Understanding how the learner learns in combination with the objective that the learner must achieve success at the lower levels before they can master higher level thinking, was a motivator for all instructors. Bloom's hierarchy revolved around three domains; Cognitive, Affective and Psychomotor. They all played into each other in a consistent and methodical manner.

Parents had decided to take an active role in their students' academic career knowing that the fault of their child's failure in a subject area cannot be entirely the student's fault and that many factors come into play in determining a students' grade. Teacher accountability was a significant factor in most parent-

teacher conversations, and was a fact that if more than 10% of a class fails any given test; probability was that the teacher failed in their delivery of the subject matter. Parents were aware of this practice. More conversations were being directed toward teacher's abilities and credentials and less on the student's ability to understand the material. Learning techniques played a vital role in today's educational system. Teachers were required to understand and be versatile in teaching the same subject matter to multiple learners within the same classroom.

The talk at one point in time was surrounding the "students' price point". The price point discussed at what level does the student buy-in to agree that what they were learning is important to them, much as adults decided to what point they will pay for something they deem was important. Bloom's Taxonomy discussed "Valuing" in the Affective Domain for his hierarchy. Valuing was when a student attached value to a piece of information. When a student valued the information placed in front of them, the educational threshold was raised, which allowed the student to achieve a higher level of learning. In today's trends, it was leaning toward the teachers' price point, with the emphasis playing on to what point teachers used the observation as a tool or reprimand. This is in respect to the level of teacher buy-in. To some it could have been a career changing event.

Timothy Daly, President of The New Teacher Project (TNTP) felt that "measurable evidence of student learning" such as "Did students' work indicate they met the lesson objective?" be added in observations as "value-added". (Duffrin, 2011, Pg 50) In the same article, Linda Hammond, An Education

Professor at Stanford University, stated that she would like to have seen, “Is the class quiet? Are the bulletin boards neat?” components added to observations; however she rejected the value-added components from Timothy Daly as too variable from year to year and class to class to provide useful feedback. (Duffrin, 2011, Pg.50)

Statement of the Problem

Walk through observations were being used as a tool to determine a low performing teacher from a high performing teacher instead of its intended purpose of examining the classroom student’s activities and not the teachers’ personal evaluation. This was viewed as a deterrent to progressive professional development and classroom enhancement.

As a result of the spring 2010 Middle School Performance Expectations (MSPE) and the High School Performance Expectations (HSPE), Lake Quinault School had not met academic yearly progress. The school had been placed in Step 3 for failure to meet the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requirement. Improvements were required.

Lake Quinault School had struggled with its stability of enrollment and community demographics. May 2009 reported enrollment at 207 students, then reported again in January 2011 with 190 students and declining. At the beginning of April, enrollment was reported to be 191, 100 males and 91 females.

Employment and economy played a part in the reduction of student body. One quarter of the student body was reported to be Hispanic with the need of English as Second Language (ESL) needs. Many of these families left in the spring and moved east for harvesting employment, which reduced the student body count even further.

Lake Quinault School had limited community resources. The school was located without access to local agencies and partnerships that most other schools had contact. Limited medical, mental and early child education programs were not readily available which required contact with outside entities.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this study was to determine if the statistics based on the walk-through observations conducted at the beginning of the year to those conducted throughout the year including end of year, encouraged a change in teaching methods. This would result in a confident instructor and a positive change in the classroom, promoting a constructive learning environment for all.

Delimitations

This project was delimited to certified teachers that were employed at the Lake Quinault School (LQS) in grades Kindergarten through 12th grade over the four school quarters in the 2010-2011 school year. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) State Report Card for the Lake

Quinault School stated enrollment was 207; K-12 for the May 2009 child count. Ethnicity of the LQS was 27.7% Native American, and 41.8% Caucasian, 0.5% Black and 25.9% Hispanic. Lake Quinault was a public school that resides within a Native American Reservation. The free and reduced lunch percentage was at 83.6% and 12.1% of the student body was classified as Special Ed. The Report detailed that there were 20 certified teachers and 55% of those had at least a Master's degree. LQS did not meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

www.reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/

An observation template created by the Washington Improvement and Implementation Network (WIIN) department at OSPI was the instrument chosen to measure activities in the classrooms. Walk-through observations were limited to three-minute random visits continuously with every certified teacher K-12 grades throughout the active school year. Visits were conducted when the scheduled teacher was instructing. Substitute teachers were not observed for this study.

Assumptions

For this study, the main assumption was given that all teachers wished to instruct well. Secondly, that the students could and were willing to learn. Finally, it was also assumed that the results of the study played a key factor in teacher self-improvement.

Hypothesis

Teachers who received the WIIN walk-through observation training and data from their actual walk-through observations will show significant increase in application strategies compared to their beginning walk-through observations. As a result of participating in the WIIN walk-through training, teachers will report a greater sense of confidence and teaching skills in their classrooms.

Null Hypothesis

Teachers who received the WIIN walk-through observation training and data from their actual walk-through observations will not show significant increase in application strategies compared to their beginning walk-through observations. As a result of participating in the WIIN walk-through training, teachers will not report a greater sense of confidence and teaching skills in their classrooms.

Significance of the Project

The significance of this project was to provide a factual base of information regarding the walk-through observation process and results at LQS. By providing a statistical overview of the observations to the teachers, they were better prepared to be a change agent for their own instruction, which resulted in higher performing students and classroom structure. The data collection and study results were presented to the LQS School Board and staff at the end of the

2010-2011 school year. The study examined whether or not the WIIN walk-through observations had an impact on teachers' ability to strengthen their own methods of instructing, impact the observations played in their classrooms and whether the observations were of any assistance to the school administration.

Procedure

For the purpose of this project, the following procedures were implemented:

1. Permission to conduct research at Lake Quinault School was granted by Superintendent Mr. Rich DuBois (see Appendix A).
2. A review of selected literature was conducted at Lake Quinault School, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and internet search engines.
3. Permission to use statistics gathered from the Washington Improvement and Implementation Network (WIIN) walk-through observations used at LQSD by Superintendent Rich Dubois. (see Appendix A)
4. 2010-2011 Certificated Employees Walk-through Observation form per WIIN. (see Appendix B).
5. Statistics gathered from the WIIN observation form data collected at LQSD was tabulated and disaggregated by topic. (see Appendix C)
6. All Certificated teachers participated in the walk-through observations.
7. End of study survey conducted with all certificated staff. (see Appendix D)
8. Statistics gathered from the end of study survey was tabulated and disaggregated by topic. (see Appendix E)
9. Results from the Observations were evaluated and conclusions drawn.

10. Meetings were conducted with the School Superintendent and the teachers of LQS in January 2011 and again in April 2011 to determine the effectiveness of walk-through observations and to determine the need for possible future professional development in-services to promote the changes that were needed.

Definition of Terms

Academic Yearly Progress:

The students learning progress measured by a yearly test called the MSPE and HSPE. School ranking depended on these yearly scores.

Washington Improvement and Implementation Network:

The Washington Improvement and Implementation Network (WIIN), managed by OSPI to assist schools not meeting AYP.

No Child Left Behind:

Federal Act created "To close the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility, and choice, so that no child is left behind."

Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction:

State appointed office that oversaw the K-12 public education system in Washington State.

The New Teacher Project:

A nonprofit organization established by teachers to assist fellow teachers.

Acronyms:

AYP – Academic Yearly Progress

HSPE – High School Performance Expectations

LQS – Lake Quinault School

MSPE – Middle School Performance Expectations

NCLB – No Child Left Behind

TNTP – The New Teacher Project

OSPI – Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction

WASL – Washington Assessment of Student Learning

WIIN – Washington Improvement and Implementation Network

CHAPTER 2

Review of Selected Literature

Introduction

This chapter has been organized around the following topics:

(a) Observation data, (b) Washington Improvement & Implementation Network (WIIN), (c) Senate Bill 6696, (d) No Child Left Behind (NCLB), (e) Bloom's Taxonomy and (f) Summary.

Observation Data

“Given strong empirical evidence that teachers are the most important school-based determinant of student achievement, it seems increasingly imperative to many education advocates that teacher evaluations take account of teachers' effects on student learning.” As stated by Jennifer L. Steele, Laura S. Hamilton, Brian M. Stecher of Center of American Progress @ www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/12/student_teacher_eval.html.

“Teachers contributed to student learning in ways that were largely observed and measured. Through focused rigorous observation of classroom practices, it is possible to accurately distinguish effective teaching from ineffective teaching from analysis of students' work and assessments. Great teachers vary widely in their instructional style and approaches, but they all shared a powerful ability to nurture student academic growth.” This was also stated by The New Teacher Project (TNTP) in the School Information and

Research Services (SIRS) quarterly publication, www.tntp.org. The TNTP also reported that typically 40% of teacher performance was weighted in classroom observations which include student engagement, professionalism and analysis of instructional practices. (2010, October SIRS)

The primary purpose of classroom observations was to determine if the focus was on curriculum, instruction practices, group formats, student actions and classroom engagement as well as the classroom environment as a whole and to determine the effectiveness of the teacher. By using these measures, the concentration of how learning was taking place played a tremendous role in moving the school forward toward a more positive learning culture for all. Data from the observations showed objective information demonstrating whether the goals to be met were evident, and if the levels of student works were meeting the six (6) methods of the learning continuum set in the Bloom's Taxonomy.

These methods were demonstrated in section 3 (c) on the observation form. This form was produced as a part of the Washington Improvement and Implementation Network program.

Section 1 focused on curriculum. The two components of this section that were utilized were Parts 1 (b); if the learning objectives were evident to the student and 1 (c), if the learning objectives on target for the grade-level standards. Part 1 (a) was not used for this research.

Section 2 of the form focused on instruction. Two criteria were Part 2 (a) which identified instructional practices via modeling, discussion, lecture, testing, etc. Part 2 (b) was identifying grouping format, i.e.: whole group, individual, paired, etc. Part 2 (c)-(d) of section 2 was not used for this research project.

Section 3 focused on the learner. All four parts were used. Part 3 (a) identified student actions during the observation. Part 3 (b) identified instructional material that were used during the observation. Part 3 (c) determined the level of student work. This area was the indicator for the Bloom's hierarchy of student learning. Part 3 (d) determined the level of classroom engagement. Section 4 and Section 5 was not used for this research.

The same format was used for all grades observed kindergarten through 12th grade. Observers varied due to the fact that there was an observation team implemented at the start of the school year when the teachers were introduced to the observation tools.

The Washington State Education Board and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) created the Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALR's) and the Grade Level Expectations (GLE's) to assist teachers in what they taught; it was expected that how they taught was learned in college. How a teacher taught affected the way students learn. This changed with every instructor that a teacher had in college that influenced their teaching abilities. Standards were in place as a guide to what students should

have learned in any given timeline, as set from OSPI, but not how to teach them. From classroom to classroom the theory of learning was different dependent upon when the teacher themselves graduated college and if any professional development courses had been taken. If a teacher was unwilling to learn new methods themselves on how students were learning, the learning remained as stagnant as the teacher, and learning was constricted to how the teacher believed students should have learned in their classroom.

Students have learned in many ways, and had been defined to five (5) ways of learning; listening, reading, speaking, hands-on and writing. An effective teacher must have been able to teach across the spectrum to all learner types. The observation tool allowed the recorder to witness these learner types providing insight to the teacher after the class to implement necessary changes as needed.

Washington Improvement and Implementation Network

“The Washington Improvement & Implementation Network (WIIN) offered educators a unique opportunity to create and sustain conditions and systems essential to substantially improve and accelerate the achievement of all students. The WIIN emerged as a result of increasing demands for high-quality professional development from leaders of districts and schools in improvement across Washington State. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, (OSPI) department of District and School Improvement Accountability (DSIA) determined it could most effectively respond to those demands by providing district/school teams with centralized technical assistance focused on evidence-

based practices and other innovations.

www.k12.wa.us/Improvement/WIIN/FAQ.aspx

The Washington Improvement and Implementation Network (WIIN) was a department within the OSPI frameworks assisting schools who did not meet AYP and were in jeopardy of funding loss and state incorporation. This step allowed schools to make changes without interference from outside agencies to gain progress toward meeting AYP and to get off the “danger list”.

The school enlisted to assistance of the Washington Implementation and Improvement Network (WIIN) through the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). The WIIN department working with Lake Quinault School District (LQSD) decided to implement the walk-through observations to help improve overall teaching by giving the teachers the ability to review their own classroom statistics. By implementing changes in the classrooms, it was hoped that student scores improved through improved teaching methods and theories. It was fundamental that change occurred at the basic level of classroom observations and what was observed to be taken seriously since the documentation proved to be a valuable tool.

The theory behind the observations was multi-leveled. At the elementary level, the purpose was to determine the balance of literacy aligning to the district initiative and plan. Middle school was to identify instructional strategy

development. Overall grades kindergarten through grade six was to improve instruction. For the high school level, it was to determine study skill practices. The data collected was used for the school improvement plan and professional growth of the teachers. Student engagement was the highest priority next to student health and safety. Alignment to state standards, school improvement and teacher assessments of student learning took a close second.

“The walk-through observations were designed to be used as a tool in improving student achievement within the school setting.” This was the theory of the Washington improvement and Implementation Network.

The teachers needed to understand that the observations were being used as a tool for classroom enhancement and not as an evaluation criterion. Trust needed to be established from the teachers to the evaluators. The initial observations conducted in the beginning of the year were listed as “Art” and the grade band such as elementary, middle or high school and teachers were not identified. As time went on and trust was established, the listing of the subject and grade level became noted with fairness amongst teachers that not any one teacher was being singled out. The evaluators were being met with a welcome smile and willingness to improve. Because this basic hurdle was overcome, observations became second nature and the students were oblivious to the observer as time went on. Instructors seemed to be comfortable with the observers as well.

Senate Bill 6696

Per the Senate Bill 6696 Sec. 202. Page 17 line 29 indicated that “all classroom teachers and certificated support shall be observed for the purpose of evaluation at least twice in the performance of their assigned duties.” This is what has caused a suggestion that observations conducted in a “snapshot” were being used in the teachers’ evaluation. Teachers had been nervous of random observations in their classrooms because there had not been any established guidelines for snap shot observations vs. evaluation observations. Senate Bill 6696 addressed the observations as a tool for evaluations.

No Child Left Behind

The “No Child Left Behind” (NCLB) was a Federal Act created January 3, 2001 in Washington, D.C. “To close the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility and choice, so that no child is left behind.” This Federal mandate was to ensure that all children have the same availability to learning regardless of their background, ethnicity, financial status or risk level. This mandate also incorporated all school staff especially teachers to a higher standard as mentors. Not abiding by the NCLB Law imposed drastic federal funding cuts, teachers losing certifications, school closing permanently. The Law applied to every school nation-wide.

Bloom's Taxonomy

Benjamin Bloom first introduced the taxonomy in 1956. Since then, many educators have used his theories to support funding, professional development and instructional platforms. For this study, the researcher concentrated the focus in the cognitive domain.

To comprehend, understand and to think critically were the founding points for the Cognitive domain. This domain had six components, that, when mastered at each level, would assure a well taught individual for that particular topic. Categories in the domain were Knowledge, Application, Synthesis, Comprehension, Analysis and Evaluation. The researcher compared and contrasted each category.

Knowledge was the first and foremost of the categories in the Cognitive domain. It relied on the basic knowledge of specifics such as terminology, facts, generalizations, theories and structures. To remember, recognize identify and be able to ask questions such as; who, what where, when why and how was the foundation for the rest of the information for any given topic. Teachers had spent most of their time in the knowledge area of the pyramid. This limited students to not reach higher-level thinking.

The second category was Application. Using the new knowledge to problem solve and apply the information to produce a result was the goal.

Usually this domain required the answers to questions such as, “How does this...?” or, “Why is this...?”

For a student to have taken a subject matter and view it a different way and then to understand its similarities was called Synthesis. This was the third category. Questions such as, “What would happen if you did this...instead of...?” were the guidelines of this level. It was also known as evaluating information.

The fourth category was Comprehension. In this area, the students already had the basic information and was now organizing, comparing, interpreting, and describing the topic in their own words correctly. This area was also called recalling or understanding information.

Analysis was the fifth category toward the top of the seven layer pyramid. This area required the students to find evidence and break information into parts to be able to compare and contrast, outline and diagram. To identify something into its simple parts then to reconstruct it was mastering this level.

The highest point on the Cognitive pyramid was the Evaluation component. This demanded judgments of information to make decisions. To master this area, the student could teach the subject to someone else.

Mastery of the topics taught was the ultimate level of student achievement. This process was usually thought of as problem-based learning or performance-based learning.

The No Child Left Behind act in 1994, tied federal dollars to these standards in the reform. In 1993, Washington was already a head of the game by creating the Washington Assessment of Student Learning, also known to Washingtonians as the WASL. The standards could be varied for the state itself; however, reporting in math and reading scores for all was the basic requirement.

Summary

The focus of this chapter was to address the available evidence to the topics of (a) Observation data, (b) Washington Improvement & Implementation Network (WIIN), (c) Senate Bill 6696, (d) No Child Left Behind (NCLB), (e) Bloom's Taxonomy and (f) Summary. The purpose of the summary was to highlight the walk-through observations on teacher confidence and self-improvement. The methodology and treatment of the data were reported in Chapter 3.

The New Teacher Project stated, "Teachers contribute to student learning in ways that were largely observed and measured." With the focus highly weighted with the Academic Yearly Progress (AYP), and the Lake Quinault School not meeting this criterion, The Washington Improvement and Implementation Network (WIIN) allowed the school to implement changes that would provide critical information for teachers to adequately change their methods with confidence and mentor-peer support. This methodology would

prove vital in better understanding the teacher's techniques of teaching and areas of concern.

The teachers needed to understand that the observations were being used as a tool and not an evaluation criterion. Trust was needed to be established.

Helen Ladd stated, "It is neither fair nor constructive to try to hold them (teachers) accountable for factors over which they have little control, using statistical measures that are based on a narrow range of outcomes, and that are subject to large amounts of random variability." This thinking was one of the main worries of many teachers at the Lake Quinault School. Wondering what type of outcomes and what that would mean for them personally, was a fear for many. Over time, this fear was met with respect and overcome to constructive conversations and professional development. The data would show where their teaching centered, so that they themselves could counteract their own instruction without reprisal. (August, 2009) www.boldapproach.org

CHAPTER 3

Methodology and Treatment of the Data

Introduction

This chapter has been organized around the following topics: (a) Methodology, (b) Participants, (c) Instruments, (d) Design, (e) Procedure, (f) Treatment of the Data, (g) Summary. Lake Quinault School had the Washington Implementation and Improvement Network (WIIN) in place prior to the 2010-2011 school year. The researcher gathered data from the walk-through observations conducted throughout the school year. Data was compiled into two distinct time periods; December 2010 and April 2011. Data from these collections in conjunction with the final survey would prove that the walk-through observations instilled more confidence and better teaching strategies which enhanced student learning.

Methodology

The methods for this special project began with a review of selected observation data literature. This review of literature was conducted through the use of internet search engines which included the Heritage on-line data base, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and various other search data bases. Permission to conduct the study was granted from Lake Quinault School (LQS). Information was also gathered from the evaluations conducted at LQS. The research was considered quantitative as defined by “*Educational*

Research: Competencies for Analysis and Applications, by Gay, Mills, and Airasian”.

For this study, data was collected and analyzed from classroom walk-through observations that were assigned numerical identities. The data gathered was from the Washington Improvement and Implementation Network (WIIN) walk-through observations to prove or not prove the hypothesis.

The descriptive research was conducted through the initial walk-through in September 2010 compared to the final walk-through in April 2011. All Lake Quinault School certified teachers were participants in the study. The walk-through observations were designed on the concepts set forth in the WIIN walk-through observation template. All observation data were tabulated and graphed.

Participants

The participants for this study consisted of 20 certificated teachers, 55% held at least a Master’s degree or higher. All students in grades Kindergarten through twelfth grade were also observed. The student body started in September 2010 with an enrollment of 226. However, April started after spring break with enrollment at 191 this number divided males and females to 100 and 91 respectively. Ethnicity of the LQS was 27.7% Native American, and 41.8% Caucasian, 0.5% Black and 25.9% Hispanic. Lake Quinault was a public school that resides within a Native American Reservation. The free and reduced lunch

percentage was at 83.6% and 12.1% of the student body was classified as Special Ed.

Instruments

There were two instruments used to gather data for this study. The first of these were the observations conducted in the first half of the 2010-2011 school year; September – December 2010. The second set of observations were obtained throughout the second half of the school year; January – April 2011 at Lake Quinault School (LQS).

Before the first observations of the school year, participants were informed of the criteria they were rated against with the walk-through evaluators. Observations for the first graphing were performed September through December 2010. The results of the evaluations were tabulated and graphed.

The second set of observations were conducted in January through May 2011 was the second instrument used for this study. From the final observations, data was also collected, numerically calculated and graphed against the results of the first set of observations. Both sets of the observation criteria remained constant.

A closing survey was conducted with all 20 teachers. This was a tool to gather information from the teachers on confidence building, personal comfort and understanding of expectations during the past year of classroom walk-through

observations. The survey was conducted to determine staff rejection and /or acceptance of the data and information presented with the WIIN walk-through observation template. This survey assisted the researcher to support the hypothesis.

The internal validity issue for this study was the selected participants. In the study, the participants had already existed. Personnel had not changed at any time in the course of this study, therefore, the factor for consistency remained intact and the possibility of any pre-existing differences was eliminated.

The instrument validity in this study was not an issue. The same observation tool was used consistently throughout the school 2010-2011 school year.

Design

Each participant had approximately an equal number of walk-through observations per semester. A descriptive survey was conducted of the teaching staff at the conclusion of the school year to investigate individual attitudes toward the survey process and self reflection.

Procedure

The Washington Improvement and Implementation Network (WWIN) provided the template that was used at the Lake Quinault School. An initial lead

teacher team was established prior to any observations. Training and a thorough understanding of the tools were completed before school began in August 2010.

Summer meetings were conducted and continued through the school year by the WIIN training group. This was able to be funded through a grant at the OSPI Academic Yearly Progress (AYP) School Improvement department. Once teachers had returned for their required pre-school starting staff meeting, they were introduced and instructed to what the new observation tool was going to be and how it was able to assist administration to develop professional development. The researcher wanted to determine if the walk-through observations would increase teacher confidence and improve student learning. The researcher began by collecting data from the first semester walk-through observations and the second semester data. A descriptive survey was developed and given to each teacher at the end of the second semester to determine perceptions of attitudes and understanding of the walk-through process from that school year.

The data was determined and comparative information was created into graphs from both the first and the second observation data collections. Results from the study were evaluated and conclusions drawn.

Treatment of Data

Raw data from the first semester and second semester observations were calculated and graphed in comparative graphs. That data was the focus used to support the hypothesis.

Summary

This chapter was designed to review the methodology and treatment of data related to the study to determine if teachers who received the WIIN walk-through observation training and data from their actual walk-through observations will show significant increase in application strategies compared to their beginning walk-through observations. As a result of participating in the WIIN walk-through training, teachers will report a greater sense of confidence and teaching skills in their classrooms. The analysis of data and findings from this study are reported in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

Analysis of the Data

Introduction

Chapter 4 has been organized around the following topics: (a) description of environment, (b) hypothesis, (c) results of the study, (d) findings, and (e) summary. The purpose of this study was to determine if teachers who received the WIIN walk-through observation training and data from their actual walk-through observations will show significant increase in application strategies compared to their beginning walk-through observations.

Description of the Environment

This project was delimited to certified teachers that were employed at the Lake Quinault School (LQS) in grades Kindergarten through 12th grade over the four school quarters in the 2010-2011 school year. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) State Report Card for the Lake Quinault School stated enrollment was 207; K-12 for the May 2009 child count. Ethnicity of the LQS was 27.7% Native American, and 41.8% Caucasian, 0.5% Black and 25.9% Hispanic. Lake Quinault was a public school that resided within a Native American Reservation. The free and reduced lunch percentage was at 83.6% and 12.1% of the student body was classified as Special Ed. The Report detailed that there were 20 certified teachers and 55% of those had at least a

Master's degree. LQS did not meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

www.reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/

An observation template created by the Washington Improvement and Implementation Network (WIIN) department at OSPI was the instrument chosen to measure activities in the classrooms. Walk-through observations were limited to three-minute random visits continuously with every certified teacher K-12 grades throughout the active school year. Visits were conducted when the scheduled teacher was instructing. Substitute teachers were not observed for this study.

Hypothesis

Teachers who received the WIIN walk-through observation training and data from their actual walk-through observations will show significant increase in application strategies compared to their beginning walk-through observations. As a result of participating in the WIIN walk-through training, teachers will report a greater sense of confidence and teaching skills in their classrooms.

Null Hypothesis

Teachers who received the WIIN walk-through observation training and data from their actual walk-through observations will not show significant increase in application strategies compared to their beginning walk-through observations. As a result of participating in the WIIN walk-through training,

teachers will not report a greater sense of confidence and teaching skills in their classrooms.

Results of the Study

The data collected was disaggregated into three categorical groups of Elementary, Middle and High School Students. Then it was further disaggregated into First and Second Semesters. Comparisons between the grade level bands demonstrated definite trends in teaching methods, modalities and theories.

In Figure 1, Instructional Practices demonstrated a definite trend from the beginning of school through the first semester. This was to determine where the teachers were currently spending most of their teaching energy. It was obvious that practice teaching was the most prevalent, with giving direction a high second in middle and high school.

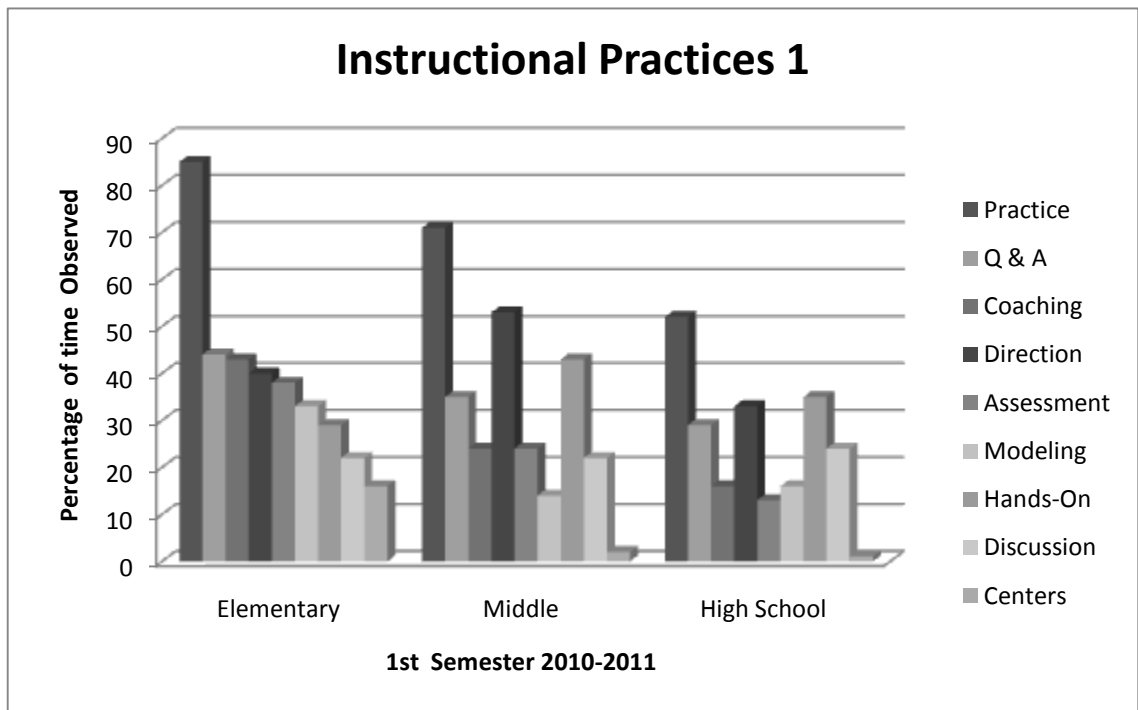


Figure 1

During the second semester Figure 2 showed a change in practices. The shift was observed to more Q & A, Assessments and less modeling in the Elementary. Whereas, less Direction, and more Assessments were completed in the middle school, the high school dropped Modeling from 13 % the first semester, to approximately 3% the second semester. This told the researcher that instructional practices were changing from kindergarten through 12th grade, however, not stabilizing in the areas of need.

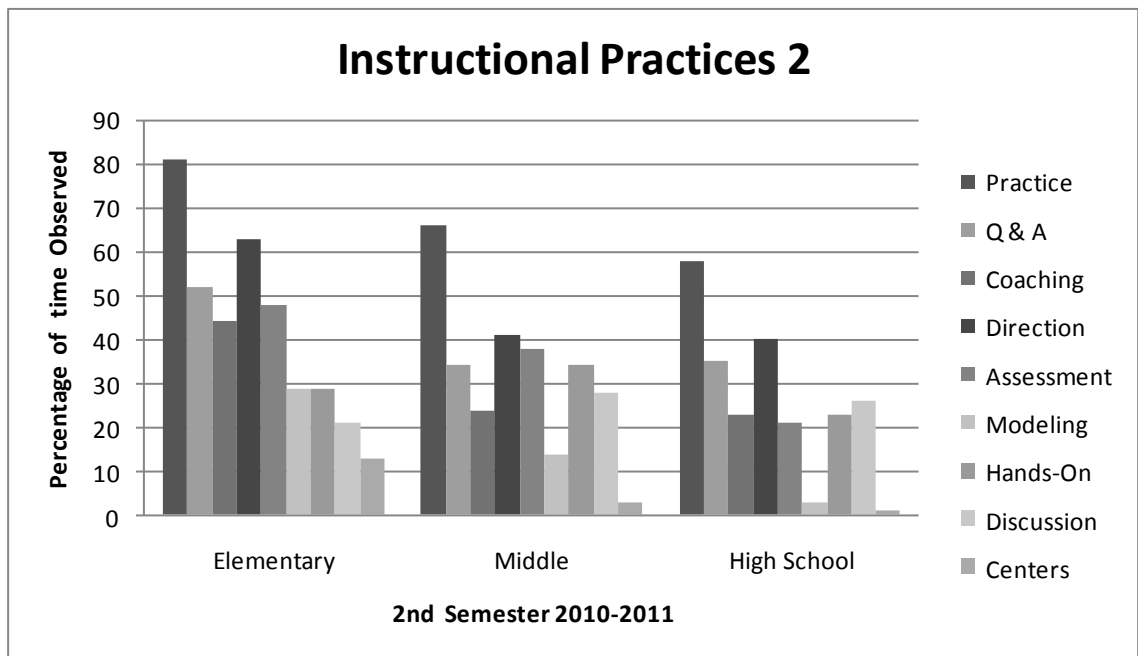


Figure 2

Figure 3 illustrated Student Actions for the first semester. Most of the emphasis was displayed in the Listening category, with Reading, Writing and Speaking following fairly evenly in the elementary grades. Listening, and low levels of Writing was observed in the middle school and Reading, Writing, Speaking and Hands-On were fairly consistent in the high school.

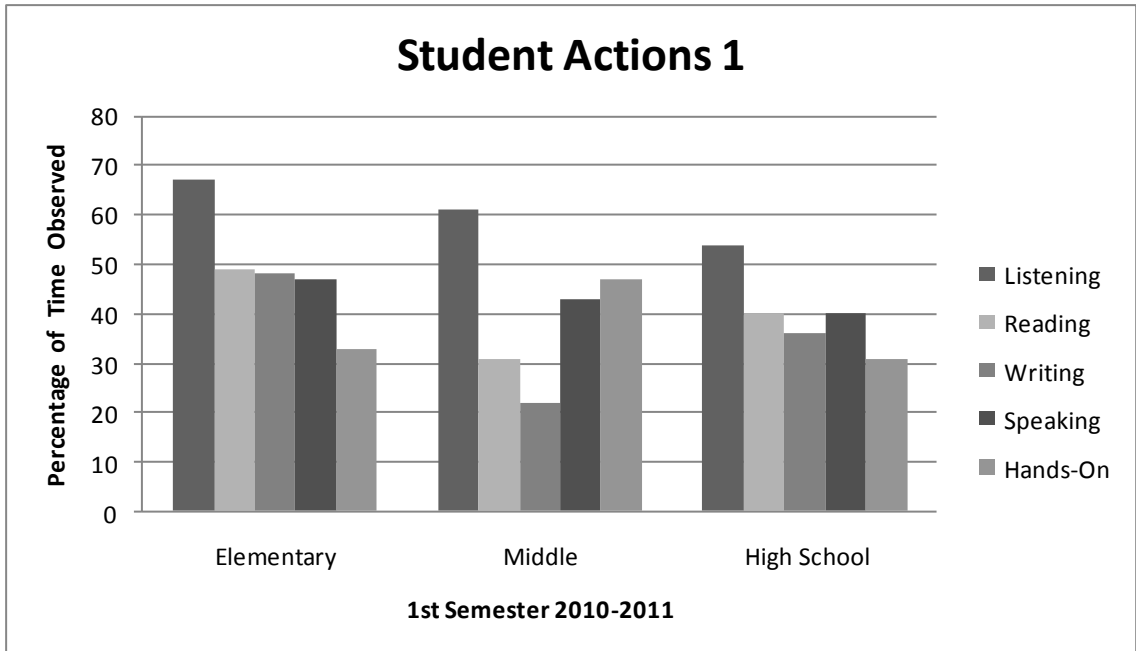


Figure 3

Figure 4, demonstrated a definite change in all grade bands in all areas, except Listening in the elementary level remained consistent. High school spiked from 55% to 72% in Listening, however dropped 10% in writing. Speaking jumped in high school from 32% to 55%, while middle school Writing jumped from 21% to 41%. Middle school did increase the use of Hands-on techniques from the first semester to the second semester.

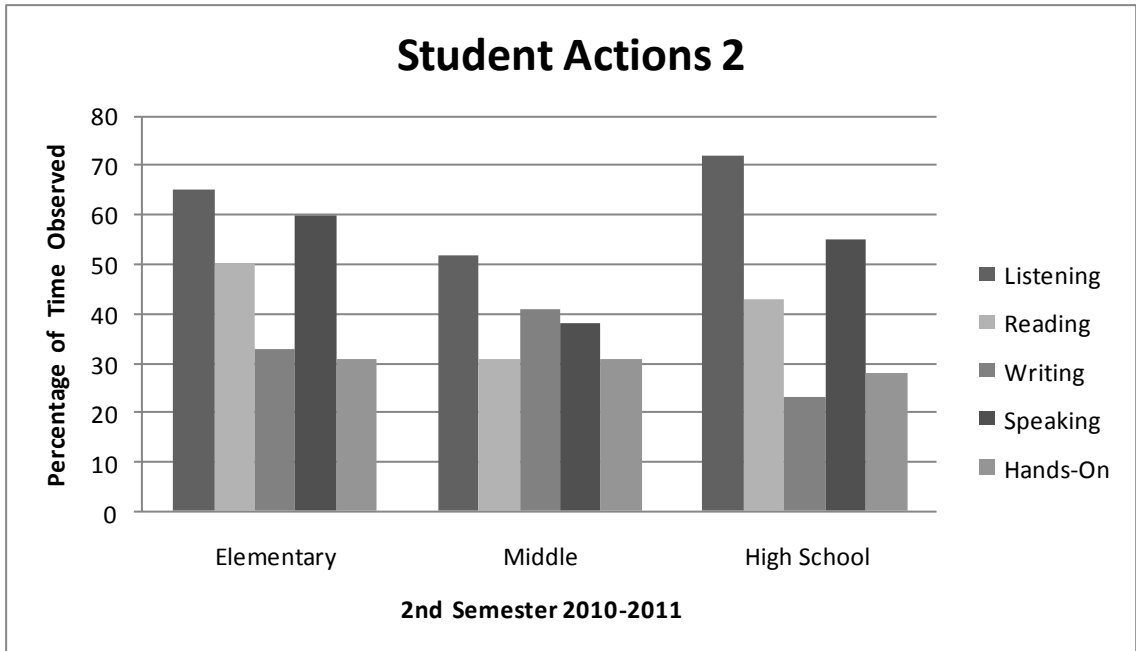


Figure 4

Student Engagement was another area that was observed. Figure 5 depicted students Engaged, Compliant or Not Engaged. To be Engaged, the student must have been on task, paying attention and working on the subject matter. This was only observed an average of 40% of the time from kindergarten through 12th grade. In contrast, Compliant meant that the student was well-managed and engaged for the most part. This was interestingly observed 53% of the time, k-12 grades the first semester.

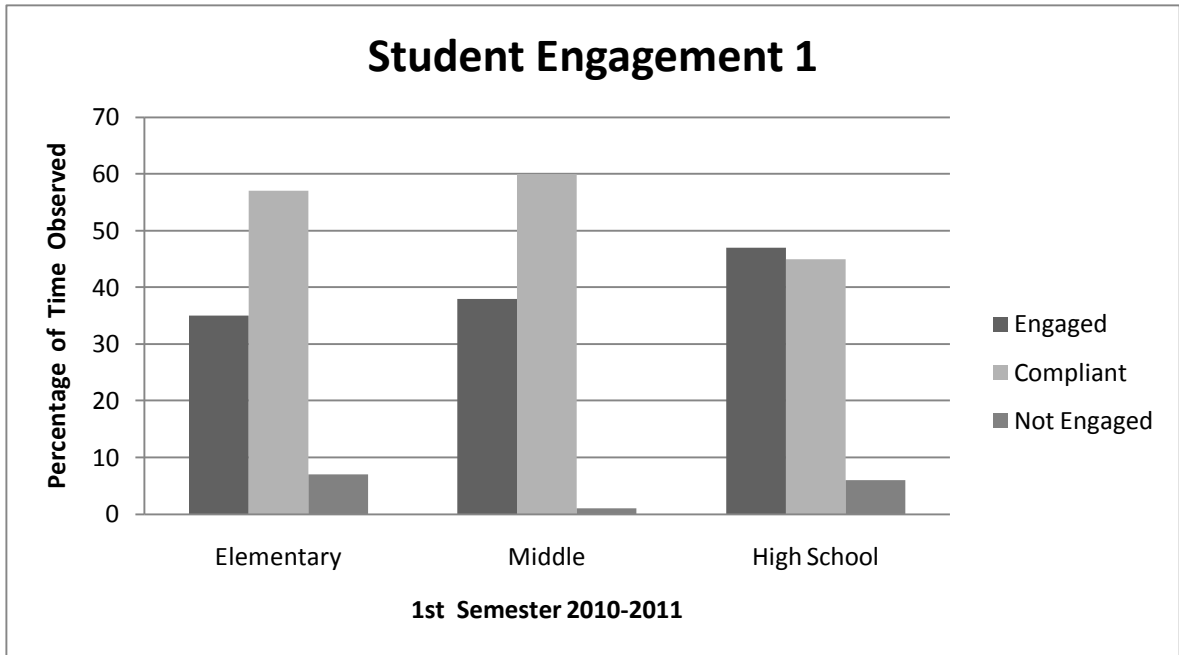


Figure 5

Figure 6 demonstrated an opposite effect of the same data for the second semester. Students were fully Engaged 31% of the time, whereas, 65% of the time observed, students were Compliant.

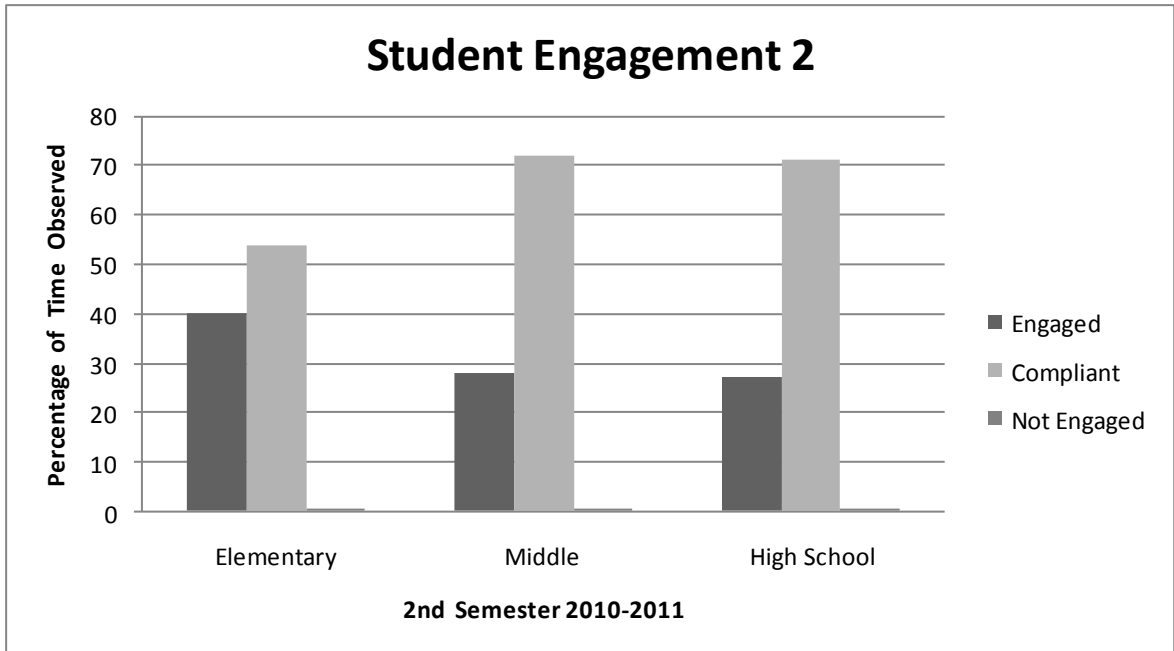


Figure 6

However, it should be noted that the researcher did find that during the first semester, 2% of the time, students were Not Engaged at all, and during the second semester, zero students were observed Not Engaged.

Grouping Format was also observed as a part of the researchers study. This area demonstrated the format of teaching the instructor found most useful in their classrooms. During the first semester, it was observed that most teachers taught in the Whole Group format or Individual format as shown in Figure 7. Small Group was utilized 25% to 31% of the time observed, however, less than 10% of the time in high school.

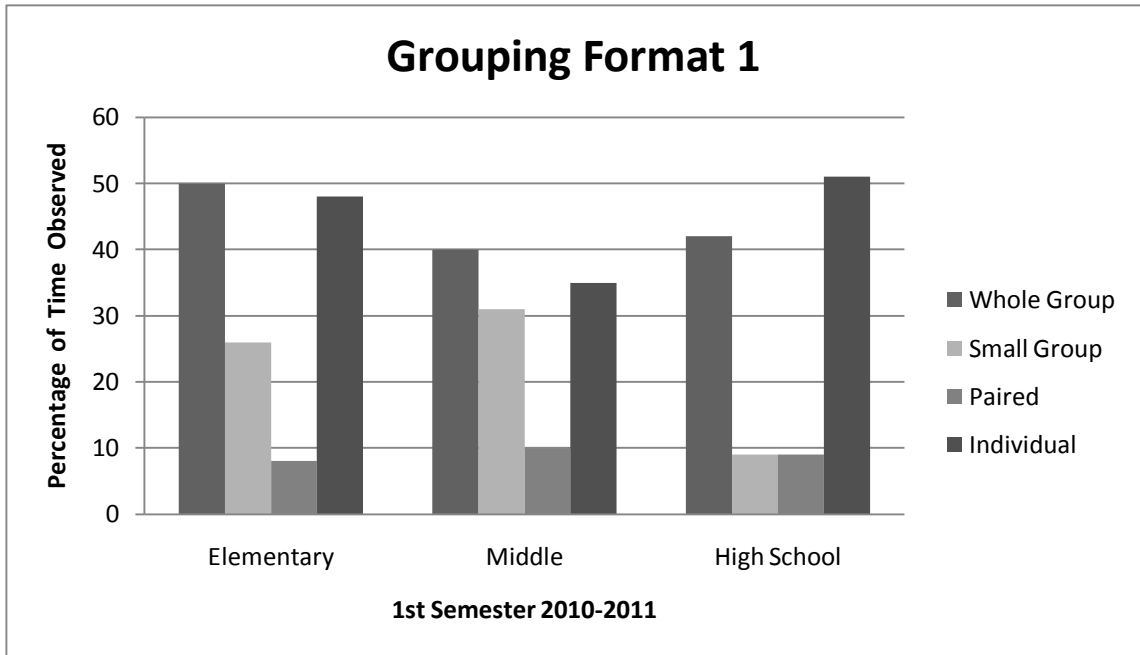


Figure 7

Statistics demonstrated that the data did not change much from the first semester to the second semester that was observed in Figure 8. It was noted that the Whole Group and Individual format did switch in strength; however the two remained the top two formats out of the four choices and Small Group and Pairs dropped in the middle school.

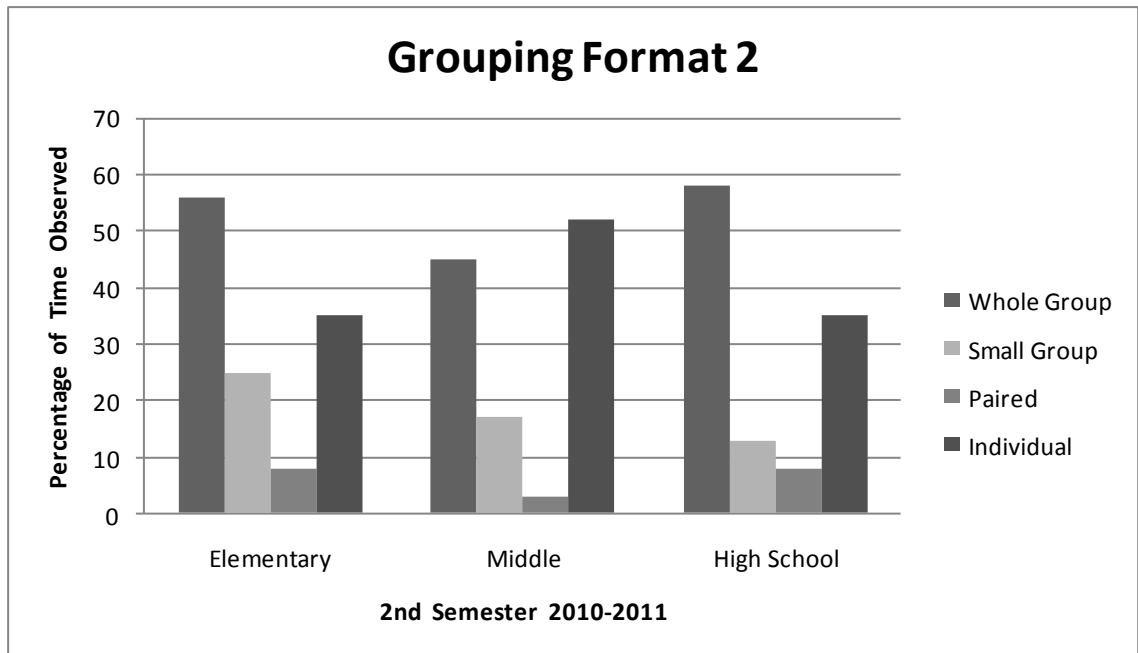


Figure 8

Figure 9 was the most documented of all the focuses during the observations. This demonstrated to the observer the taxonomy level the student was working at. This was previously discussed in Chapter 2; Bloom's Taxonomy. Students started at the Knowledge level working their way up to the top of the pyramid to the Evaluation to make their own judgments and justifications. Comprehension followed Knowledge, then Application, Analysis and Synthesis to the Evaluation. To understand where the student was in the learning pyramid at the beginning of the year was crucial, so instructors could guide them to the next levels. Observations were the tools used to help determine overall student's level of work. The data observed that most students' comfort level was held in the Knowledge and Comprehension areas. Statistics dropped tremendously to the Application, then a further drop to the remaining areas of Analysis, Synthesis and

Evaluation. However, Evaluation was two percent higher than Synthesis in the high school observations for the first semester.

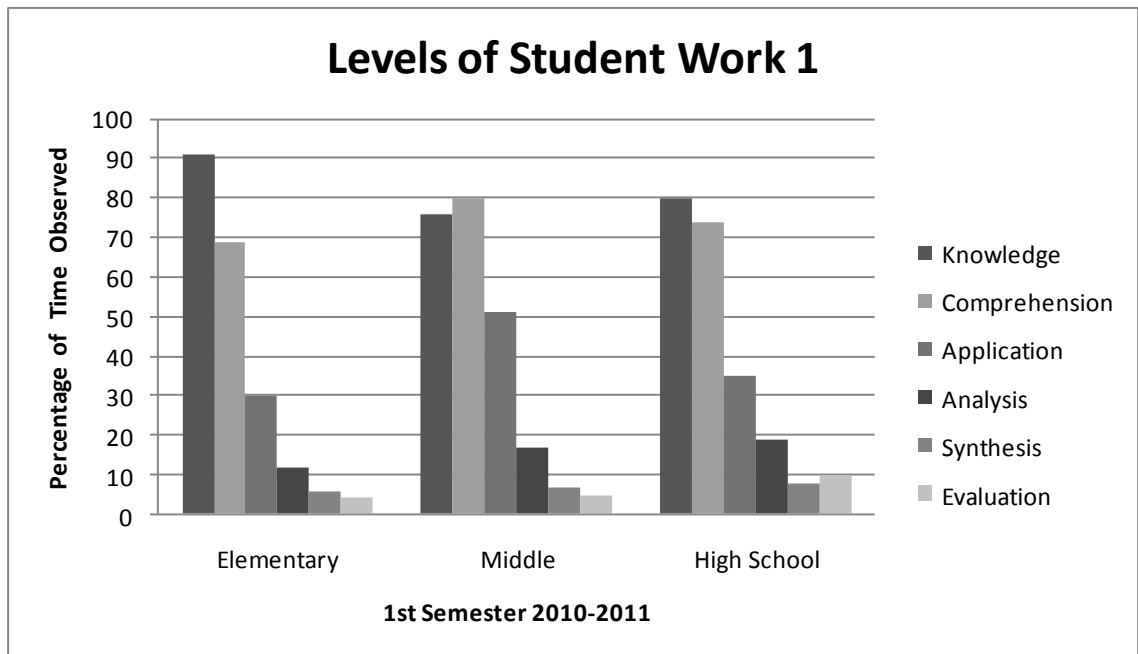


Figure 9

Figure 10 depicted the relatively same data with minor influxes in Evaluation in the elementary and middle school learners. More emphasis was placed in Comprehension in middle school as well. Analysis jumped from 12% to 19% in the elementary. Application dropped from 51% to 31% in the middle school. Improving Knowledge took a jump in the middle school from 75% to 85% the second semester.

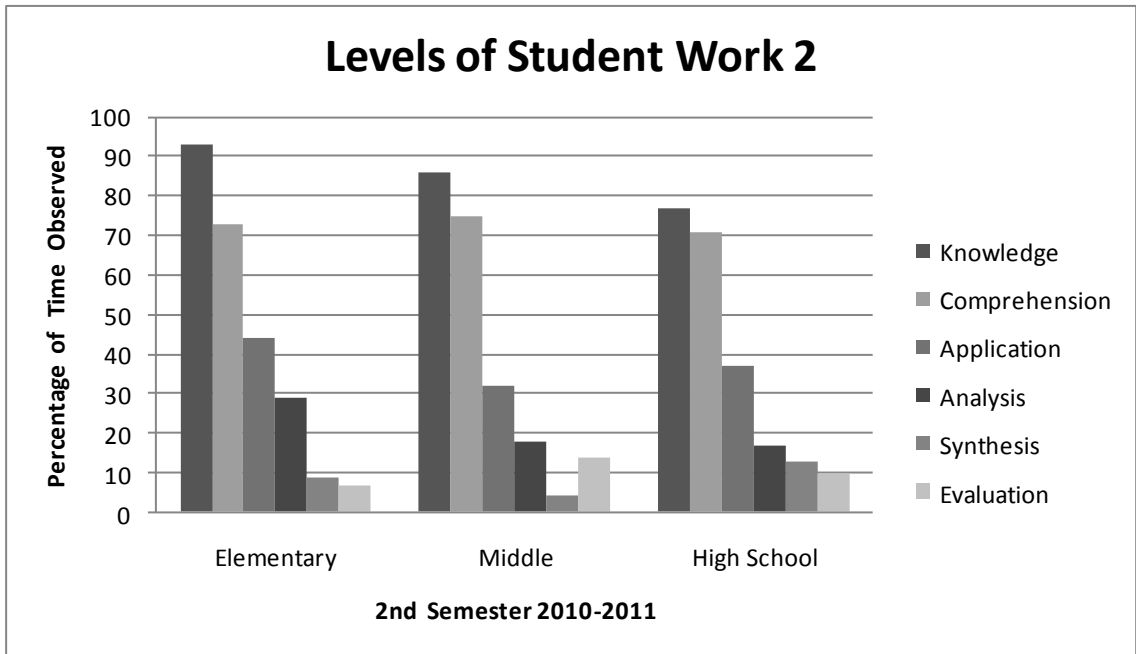


Figure 10

Findings

The researcher analyzed the data using compare and contrast. The hypothesis group who received the WIIN walk-through observation training and data from their actual walk-through observations demonstrated a minimal increase in application strategies compared to their beginning walk-through observations. As a result of participating in the WIIN walk-through training, teachers reported a greater sense of confidence and teaching skills in their classrooms. Support of the null hypothesis was not observed by the researcher and therefore, rejected.

Discussion

This study was delimited to the teaching staff at the Lake Quinault School District No. 97, located in Amanda Park, Washington. The project was conducted during the 2010-2011 school year with 20 teaching staff members. Lake Quinault

had an enrollment for 207 students for the May 2009 child count. The ethnicity of the Lake Quinault School was 27.7% Native American, and 41.8% Caucasian, 0.5% Black and 25.9% Hispanic. Lake Quinault was a public school that resided within a Native American Reservation. The free and reduced lunch percentage was at 83.6% and 12.1% of the student body was classified as Special Ed. The Report detailed that there were 20 certified teachers and 55% of those had at least a Master's degree. LQS did not meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

Observations, consisting of certain criterion created by the Washington Improvement and Implementation Network were the assessment instrument chosen to measure teacher confidence and improvement. Each teacher from grade Kindergarten through 12th grade was observed several times throughout the active school year. Data was collected throughout the school year.

The study investigated if an increase in application strategies, and if teachers reported a greater sense of confidence and teaching skills in their classrooms. Although the comparative data did not show a tremendous increase in classroom strategy changes, teacher confidence did increase and they became aware of using different teaching strategies that enhanced their classroom environment.

The study had limitations including a small sample size and limited duration of the treatment period. A larger sample size may have shown that the

classroom walk-through observations would display a broader range of statistics that would have made an obvious larger increase or decrease in the data collected.

Summary

This chapter was designed to analyze the data and identify the findings. From the data, the hypothesis was supported and the Null Hypothesis was rejected. Chapter 5 will summarize the study, draw conclusions, and make recommendations.

CHAPTER 5

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

This chapter has been organized around the following topic: (a) Introduction, (b) Summary, (c) Conclusions and (d) Recommendations.

Summary

After the decline of the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) and the High School Performance Expectations (HSPE), OSPI placed the Lake Quinault School on Step 3 for failure to meet Adequate Yearly Progress. Lake Quinault looked critically at options to raise the learning expectations and define characteristics of teaching across the grade-level bands from Kindergarten through 12th grade.

Anne Luce of Partnership 4 Learning stated, “It is difficult to deny the impact of an effective teacher.” Secretary Duncan’s speech at the State House Convention Center reported, “...teachers generally want to be held accountable and supported by a fair evaluation system.”

The focus of this study was to determine if teachers who received statistics from the walk-through observations were able to improve their teaching methods resulting in a more positive classroom environment. With that in mind, the school

implemented the use of the OSPI assistance program for schools not meeting AYP.

The main theory behind the Washington Improvement and Implementation Network (WIIN) program was to build an educational system that promoted student growth and an educational environment to nurture student achievement. The template that the WIIN trainers provided to the Lake Quinault School assisted the teachers with an accurate observation tool for their professional growth.

Numerous articles and research artifacts was reviewed by the researcher to gather information about walk-through observations. The information was gathered to assist the researcher in understanding whether the data collected was in fact a demonstration of teacher abilities and if the data gathered would prove or disprove if teachers gained confidence to change their teaching to become more productive within their own classrooms. Upon visually inspecting the data collected and comparing the data between semester one and semester two, it was determined that the growth of the student did not change much, however, the teacher gained confidence to improve and change their methods and modes of teaching.

Conclusions

The literature reviewed showed that teachers had full intent to teach and be accountable to their students. Teachers had the capability to strengthen and improve learning and achievement within their classrooms. Discussions were held regarding that the new level of evaluations that incorporated observations as a percentage of their evaluation focused most of the criterion on curriculum, learner, environment and needs of all types of learners.

Assumptions were that the results of the study would play a key role in teacher self-improvement. In Figure 11 below, it was evident that the questions regarding the perceptions of the teachers during the walk-through observations ranked fairly high on the one to four rating scale survey. The survey was conducted at the end of the second set of observation data collections at the end of April 2011. Teachers were all given a ten question survey that was to determine if the walk-through observations were of assistance to enhance their own teaching methods to promote a safe and productive learning environment for all students from kindergarten through 12th grade. Figure 11 demonstrated that all teachers surveyed felt that more than 50% of the time, they did feel more confident, understood the observation protocol and were accessible to Professional Development opportunities. The strengths demonstrated were in the areas of understanding the purpose of the observations, being comfortable during

observations, talking with the administrator regarding the data and finally understanding that the observations were not tied to their personal evaluations.

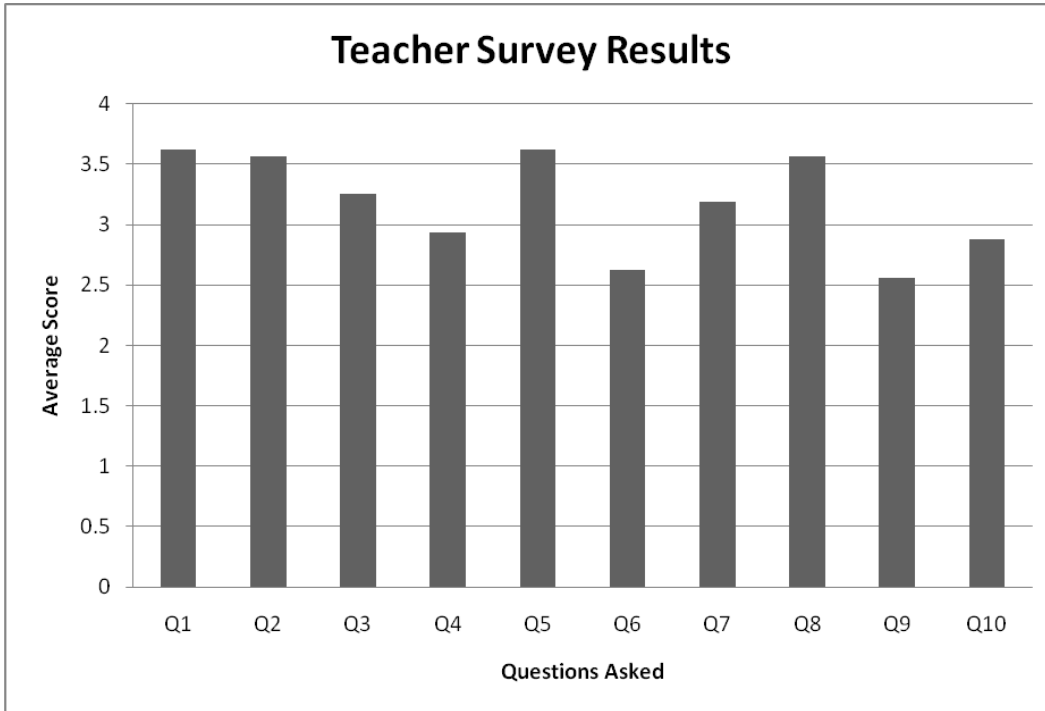


Figure 11

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions, it would be beneficial to have an all-staff data carousel meeting to review all data collected, form a clear and concise working action plan as to how to address the issues found in the data and to form a team to assist in the Professional Development of the Plan to action. Since the researcher found no definitive drops or increases in the data from the first semester to the second semester, it would be advantageous to create the team to carry the action plan as a group representing all grade bands from kindergarten through 12th grade, and to incorporate Special Education in this teaming.

The researcher also recommends conducting another study for a longer period of time. It would be constructive to do the study after the implemented Professional Growth opportunity has been attended to see if that had an impact on the teacher's methods and modes of teaching. This study group was very new to the walk-through observation protocol and therefore the researcher believes that data could potentially be different at a later date when the observation system is not new to the school.

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Lake Quinault School Walk-Through Observation Survey 2010-2011

The purpose of this survey is to assist the observation team and administration to better educate the instructional staff to enhance their teaching methods to promote a safe and productive learning environment for all students from kindergarten through 12th grade.

Please choose one for each question that best describes your answer. All answers will be confidential.

1. I understand the purpose of the walk-through observations.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. I felt comfortable being observed by my peers.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. I know what is being observed in my classroom when a walk-through is conducted.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. I feel the statistics gathered are an accurate "snapshot" of my classroom.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. I am comfortable talking with my administrator regarding the data gathered from my classroom walk-through observations.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. The statistics I have received from the observations has helped me improve my instruction.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. Training and Professional Development opportunities are available to me to enhance my teachings.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. I understand the walk-through observations are not tied to my evaluations.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. I have peer mentors to discuss teaching strategies and methods to enhance my classroom and instruction.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. I am familiar and understand the Lake Quinault School Action plan.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Thank you for your input. All answers will be confidential.