

**Classroom Walkthroughs: Impact on Student Achievement**

Benjamin D. Boothe  
B.S., Pittsburg State University, 1998  
M.S., University of Kansas, 2002

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**Dissertation Committee**

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Major Advisor

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate Kansas Learning Network (KLN) school principals' perceptions related to the classroom walkthrough process. Four research questions guided the study: (1) To what extent do principals perceive that the classroom walkthrough process has an impact on student learning? (2) To what extent do principals perceive that their school's classroom walkthrough model is an effective process for measuring the use of research-based instructional strategies? (3) To what extent do principals perceive that data collected during classroom walkthroughs are used to inform the creation of job-embedded professional development? and (4) To what extent do principals perceive that data collected during classroom walkthroughs are used to measure prior job-embedded professional development? To answer the research questions, a quantitative research method was used. The population of interest was all school principals in Kansas. The sample for this study consisted of principals in 345 KLN schools, as of September 2011. Each research hypotheses was tested using a one-sample  $t$  test to compare the mean responses in the survey regarding the principals' perceptions of the classroom walkthrough process. The results indicated that a statistically significant relationship did exist for each of the research questions. The research supports the concept that conducting classroom walkthroughs leads to increased student learning, instruction of higher quality, and more effective professional development.

## Dedication

This work is dedicated to my loving family who encouraged me to complete a program of study I never would have pursued if it were not for their support. For my wife, Carly: your love, patience, and zest for life have made me realize the importance of enjoying every moment. XOXO. For my parents, Bill and Jeannie: your love, encouragement, and support have been unfailing in every aspect of my life. Words—spoken or written—will never be able to convey the love I have for both of you.

Dad: It's finally time to slow down and be careful.

Mom: *You are my sunshine.*

God has abundantly blessed my life, and you three are the personification of his goodness in my journey. I love you.

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## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

Educators in the United States face the challenge of raising academic standards to unprecedented levels (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2010). Educators also face the reality that school improvement demands have become the single-most important responsibility of the nation and its schools as school improvement “is the process that schools use to ensure all students are achieving at high levels” (Schmoker, 2006, p. 178). Even though educators know the importance of school improvement efforts, a lack of student achievement plagues K-12 education. Students are exiting schools unprepared to pursue postsecondary dreams and aspirations (Duncan & Martin, 2010), and 40% of all first-year college students need remedial coursework before they can enroll in credit-producing courses (Parsi, 2011).

A fundamental aspect of any school improvement effort is the quality of the teacher instruction in the classroom (Stronge & Tucker, 2003). The variance in teacher quality accounts for approximately nine percent of the total variation in student achievement (Goldhaber, 2002). Even with federally supported school reform efforts such as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, students in the United States have consistently been outperformed by other nations during the course of the past two decades (Duncan, 2010). Among the 34 countries who participated in the 2009 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), United States’ high school students finished 14<sup>th</sup> in reading, 17<sup>th</sup> in science, and 25<sup>th</sup> in math (Walker, 2010). The PISA assessment indicated that students have not shown academic growth in reading and that students’ mathematical achievements have continued to lag behind those of students in other

countries since 2002 (Duncan, 2010). Approximately 30% of all American students do not graduate from high school, while students from historically disadvantaged minority groups have less than a 50% chance of graduating (Greene & Winters, 2006). More than 70% of students entering college graduated high school without the knowledge and skills that they should have gained during their time in high school (Chaplin, 2002; Green & Winters, 2006; Olson, 2006; Orfield, Losen, Wald, & Swanson, 2004).

Effective instruction by teachers, regardless of location, student demographics, and financial restraints, leads to greater student learning (Hattie, 2008; Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2004). There is a direct correlation between effective instruction provided by highly qualified teachers and increased student achievement (Colvin & Johnson, 2007). When consistently implemented, clear learning objectives, teaching, modeling and demonstrating, guided practice, and checks for understanding and formative assessments made up the common elements of effective instruction (Hattie, 2008; Marzano et al., 2004; Schmoker, 2011). Educational leaders need to create a deeper understanding of research-based instructional strategies and empower teachers to implement these strategies in order to enhance learning for students.

The current teacher evaluation system is flawed (DuFour & Marzano, 2009; Duncan, 2009). Teacher evaluation deficiencies include feedback that is: too infrequent, not focused on quality instruction, and not constructive in nature (Liu & Mulfinger, 2011). “Principal evaluation of teachers is a low-leverage strategy for improving schools, particularly in terms of the time it requires of principals” (DuFour & Marzano, 2009, p. 64). With a flawed teacher evaluation system, it is impossible to know the current quality and performance of teachers (Stronge & Tucker, 2003) which, in turn, makes it harder to

determine the next step for improvement, or which mistakes to correct (Stronge, 2006). The classroom walkthrough process was partially designed to address the deficiencies of the current teacher evaluation process (Downey et al., 2004). Classroom walkthroughs are defined as short, focused, and informal observations of students' involvement in the lesson, instructional strategies utilized by the teacher, and the climate of the classroom (Downey et al., 2004). Rather than being formal data-gathering opportunities, walkthroughs serve as a means to become familiar with a teacher's approach to making curricular and instructional decisions for later feedback. The shorter duration of time spent in each classroom and the less formal aspects of this process have encouraged administrators to observe teacher instruction and provide feedback more frequently (Milanowski, 2011). Principals who conduct classroom walkthroughs are better equipped to connect with teachers on both personal and professional levels. Additionally, instructional leaders are in a better position to understand the concerns of the staff, ultimately leading to adjusted administrator behaviors (Pitler & Goodwin, 2008).

### **Background and Conceptual Framework**

President George W. Bush and members of the United States Congress reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in the form of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001). The ESEA was first enacted in 1965 as a federal law intended to initiate educational reform for public schools (Ralabate & Foley, 2003). The primary purpose of the act was to improve the achievement of poor and disadvantaged students. The passage of NCLB legislation was a nationwide education reform effort designed to address the issues of student achievement, school accountability, and school reform (Hanson, Burton, & Guam, 2006). However,

the NCLB Act of 2001 did not improve student performance levels as shown in the PISA 2009 report and, in some cases, even damaged schools (DuFour et al., 2010). The Public Education Network (2004) found that the act led to “teacher loss, courses cut, crowded classrooms, and lack of adequate supplies” (p. 24). With the passage of the NCLB Act of 2001, states were required to develop rigorous academic standards in reading and mathematics and assessments that were aligned with the new academic standards. Additionally, states were called upon to create adequate yearly progress (AYP) standards based upon increased proficiency levels and the newly designed assessments (Dillon & Rotherham, 2009).

Upon reauthorization of the ESEA or the passage of the NCLB Act of 2001, AYP was introduced in order to determine if, according to state standards, schools were successfully educating their students. AYP became the measure by which schools, districts, and states were held accountable for student performance under the NCLB Act of 2001 (Paige, 2002). Schools that failed to make AYP for two consecutive years were classified as “needing improvement” and faced stiff consequences up to, and including, state takeover of the school (Hassel, Hassel, Arkin, & Kowal, 2010). These schools received technical assistance by the state in an effort to improve student achievement. This support was a requirement of the NCLB Act of 2001 and states were allowed to develop and implement their own technical assistance programs (Strunk, Westover, & McEachin, 2011). Technical assistance programs ranged from research-based professional development to the creation of new curriculums all in an effort to equip leaders with skills necessary to implement the required changes (Strunk et al., 2011).

The technical assistance programs resulted in a wide variety of programs across the United States.

The Kansas Learning Network (KLN) was an example of a technical assistance program in Kansas, as determined by the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) (Kansas State Department of Education, 2010). The network was an outgrowth of the significant number of Kansas schools that failed to make AYP during the 2007-2008 school year (Kansas State Department of Education, 2010). In 2007, there were 1,365 public schools in Kansas; 137 of those schools, approximately 10%, did not make AYP during the 2007-2008 school year. KSDE officials determined they were no longer able to support the number of schools not making AYP and, therefore, formed a partnership with the education policy consulting firm Cross & Joftus, LLC to receive technical support in implementing a plan to increase student achievement. The partnership was established in 2008 and aimed to provide assistance to school districts in the areas of evaluation, strategic planning, and overall improvement (Kansas State Department of Education, 2010).

In October 2008, the consulting firm began working with school districts in the state of Kansas that had failed to make AYP for two consecutive years and had been identified as needing improvement. During the first year of implementation (2008-2009), five districts agreed to pilot the KLN program and participated in a three-day district-wide appraisal led by Cross and Joftus, LLC. In addition to Cross and Joftus, LLC associates, KSDE staff also participated in the evaluation. At the conclusion of the appraisal, officials in the Garden City USD #457, Haysville USD #261, Ottawa USD



#290, Parsons USD #503, and Turner USD #202 received technical assistance and guidance in the creation of their district-wide improvement plans.

Kansas school districts in the KLN provided encouraging results, allowing the KSDE to expand the network during the 2009-2010 school year. In June 2009, all districts and schools in the state identified as needing improvement joined the KLN (Kansas State Department of Education's Learning Network, 2011). The expansion of the KLN allowed new member schools to be exposed to the rigorous appraisals and support as the first five school districts encountered in 2008. As school districts joined the KLN, they also received technical assistance and guidance in the creation of their district-wide improvement plans. The results of the appraisals were summarized into reports containing the findings of the evaluation team and included survey data, interview data, and classroom observation feedback. These reports offered general recommendations of technical assistance to be implemented by educational leaders (Cross & Joftus, LLC, 2010). Additionally, beginning in June 2009, school districts in the network were assigned a district facilitator and implementation coach, a requirement of the program. A district facilitator is a member of the Cross and Joftus, LLC team assigned to assist district leaders in developing the organization's improvement plan. An implementation coach, in turn, is appointed by the KSDE to provide assistance to district and building-level leaders to implement the recommendations made during the review.

As additional low performing districts joined the KLN, they were encouraged by Cross and Joftus, LLC (2011) to implement the use of a classroom walkthrough process. Although not required, classroom walkthrough implementation was strongly suggested by Cross and Joftus, LLC (2011) as a course of action that enabled administrators to

observe classroom instruction more frequently and provide timely and specific instruction-related feedback to teachers. Through this process, administrators mentored teachers by providing ongoing feedback and support while, at the same time, increasing overall general awareness of the development of the school's delivery of instruction to students (Thomas, 2010). District superintendents and school board members accepted the recommendation to implement the use of classroom walkthroughs. District leaders were aware they needed a method for ensuring effective instructional strategies were implemented in an accurate and consistent manner. They believed that classroom walkthroughs could provide principals with a method to accomplish this task (Cross & Jofus, LLC, 2011).

Synthesizing the components of several different classroom walkthrough models such as Data-in-a-Day, Downey Three-Minute Classroom Walk-Through, The Learning Walk, Process for Advancing Learning for Student Success (PALSS), and UCLA School Management Program (SMP) Classroom Walkthrough (Ginsberg & Kimball, 2008; Goldman et al., 2004; Kachur, Stout, & Edwards, 2009), a conclusion can be drawn that consistent aspects of the classroom walkthrough process include: observing teacher instruction, providing general feedback, creating/updating the aggregate knowledge of learning obtained during observations, and applying what was learned from the process to future instruction (Kruse & Louis, 2008). A classroom walkthrough typically involves a team of educators or the principal who are observing various elements of the classroom environment, making note of specific details regarding objectives of the lesson, instructional techniques used and whether these are appropriate to the lesson's objective, and the overall engagement of the students to the class and to the teacher. The

observation is then discussed with the team, feedback is relayed to the teacher, and eventually teacher application of their newfound knowledge is used to improve future instruction.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In an effort to ensure learning for all students, classroom walkthroughs were increasingly used in low-performing schools in Kansas during the first two years of the Kansas Learning Network. The implementation of walkthroughs allowed superintendents and principals to monitor the use of research-based instructional strategies as well as provide feedback to teachers on their instructional practices. The problem is that specific research on classroom walkthroughs is limited in its ability to demonstrate a direct cause-and-effect relationship between the use of a classroom walkthrough tool and student improvement (Kachur, et al., 2009). A second problem is that, even though the benefits of brief, informal classroom visits have been identified, it is not enough for instructional leaders to merely conduct classroom walkthroughs (Pitler & Goodwin, 2008). The observation and feedback provided by school administrators may be worthless or, even worse, damaging to educators and students if instructional leaders do not truly understand what constitutes effective instruction (Pitler & Goodwin, 2008). A final problem to consider is that research related to the use of data collected during classroom walkthroughs to develop and evaluate professional learning is almost non-existent (Ginsberg, 2001). David (2007) confirmed Ginsberg's (2001) findings when she concluded that the link between the use of a classroom walkthrough process and professional development that leads to teacher growth had not been extensively researched (David, 2007). The data collected must be used to drive job-embedded

learning for classroom walkthroughs to have an impact on teacher practice and professional development that will ultimately lead to increased student achievement (Ginsberg, 2001). Due to the lack of research related to the subject matter, this study will determine if school principals believe: their classroom walkthrough process has an impact on student achievement; the model they are using effectively measures the use of research-based instructional strategies; and classroom walkthrough data are used to design and evaluate professional development.

### **Significance of the Study**

The results of this study make a significant contribution to improved professional development, and, ultimately, the learning of all students, by addressing the lack of research on the use of instructional walkthroughs and their impact on student achievement from the perspective of school principals in the Kansas Learning Network. Specifically, the research analyzed principals' perceptions related to how classroom walkthroughs impact student achievement, how effective classroom walkthroughs are when measuring the use of research-based instructional strategies, and how the data collected during classroom walkthrough observations can be used to design and evaluate job-embedded professional development.

### **Purpose Statement**

The first purpose of this study was to evaluate principals' perceptions of the impact of classroom walkthroughs on student learning. The second purpose was to determine if principals believe their districts' classroom walkthrough processes effectively measured the use of research-based instructional strategies such as: teacher-provided feedback, metacognitive strategies, advanced organizers, and direct instruction

(Hattie, 2008; Marzano et al., 2004). The third and final purpose was to analyze participating principals' perceptions of how the collected data were used to design and evaluate professional development.

### **Delimitations**

Delimitations refer to restrictions determined by the researcher and applied to limit the purpose and scope of a study (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008). This quantitative methods study was limited to a survey of principals from 345 KLN schools, as of September 2011. Thus, the study did not include the five districts that have exited the network since its inception in 2008 or school districts that were not identified as needing improvement as of September 2011. Lastly, the study sample did not include charter schools, alternative schools, or early learning centers.

### **Assumptions**

According to Lunenburg and Irby (2008), "Assumptions are postulates, premises, and propositions that are accepted as operational for purposes of the research" (p. 135). The present study was based on the following assumptions: (a) principals who participated in the study understood the questions, (b) principals who completed the survey were truthful in their responses, and (c) all data entered into Excel and the IBM® SPSS® Statistics 21.0 Faculty Pack for Windows for analysis were accurate.

### **Research Questions**

Research questions are used to formulate and focus an investigation and should be created to evaluate the relationships among the variables (Creswell, 2009). The research questions that guided the present study were derived from a review of the research on walkthrough models, effective instructional practices, and the use of data collected during

walkthroughs to design and evaluate job-embedded professional development. The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent do principals perceive that the classroom walkthrough process has an impact on student learning?
2. To what extent do principals perceive that their school's classroom walkthrough model is an effective process for measuring the use of research-based instructional strategies?
3. To what extent do principals perceive that data collected during classroom walkthroughs are used to inform the creation of job-embedded professional development?
4. To what extent do principals perceive that data collected during classroom walkthroughs are used to measure prior job-embedded professional development?

### **Overview of Methodology**

A quantitative research study can be defined as a method for testing objective theories by analyzing the relationship among variables (Creswell, 2009). Using this type of research design, KLN districts' principals' perception data were collected via electronic surveys. The focus of the survey was principals' perceptions of the impact of classroom walkthroughs on student achievement, design of their schools' walkthrough instruments, and usefulness of the data to inform and evaluate job-embedded professional development. A one-sample *t* test was conducted to test each of the research hypotheses.

### **Definition of Terms**

The following terms are used throughout the study. Their definitions are provided here to ensure understanding and prevent misinterpretation.

**Adequate yearly progress (AYP).** The measure by which schools, districts, and states are held accountable for student performance under Title I of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (Paige, 2002).

**District consultant.** A member of the Cross and Joftus, LLC team assigned to assist district leaders in developing the organization's improvement plan (Cross & Joftus, LLC, 2010).

**Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).** The primary purpose of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was to improve the achievement of poor and disadvantaged students. Reauthorization came in the form of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (Hanson, et al., 2006).

**Implementation coach.** Appointed by the KSDE to provide assistance to district- and building-level leaders to carry out the recommendations made during the KLN review (Wehmeyer, 2011).

**Job-Embedded Professional Development (JEPD).** "Learning by doing, reflecting on the experience, and then generating and sharing new insights and learning with oneself and others" (Wood & McQuarrie, 1999, p. 10).

**No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB).** A nationwide education reform effort designed to address the issues of student achievement, school accountability, and school reform (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, P. L. No. 107-110, 115 Stat. 1440, 2001).

**Process for Learning Strategies for Success (PALSS).** A classroom walkthrough protocol developed by the Cross and Joftus, LLC team. The protocol was

designed to be a collaborative process for collecting and analyzing data and applying new learning to increase student achievement (Cross & Jofus, LLC, 2010).

**Program for International Student Assessment (PISA).** Assessment program administered every three years to 34 nations around the world that assesses the reading, mathematics, and scientific literacy of 15-year-old students. The results provide information about how well the students of a nation are prepared to perform in postsecondary education or the job market (Duncan, 2010).

**Race to the Top.** Race to the Top is a competitive grant program designed to motivate and reward states who are implementing dramatic reform in four academic areas: “standards and assessments, improving the collection and use of data, increasing teacher effectiveness and achieving equity in teacher distribution, and turning around struggling schools” (U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, 2011, p. 13).

### **Summary and Organization of Study**

This dissertation is divided into five chapters. Chapter one presented the introduction, background and conceptual framework, and statement of the problem. Additionally, the significance of the study was described along with a purpose statement and the delimitations and assumptions underlying the study. The chapter concluded with a listing of the research questions that guided the study, a brief overview of the methodology used to conduct the research, and the definitions of terms. Chapter two presents a review of the literature, including an exploration of the movement to raise academic standards in the United States, effective schools research, effective instruction, job-embedded professional development, and classroom walkthroughs. Chapter three describes the methodology used, including the research design, population, sample, and



sampling procedures. Additionally, instrumentation, measurement, validity and reliability, and data collection procedures are discussed. Lastly, data analysis, hypothesis testing, and limitations of the study are presented. Chapter four presents the results of the analysis, including the descriptive statistics and hypothesis testing. Chapter five provides a summary of the study, an overview of the problem, and a restatement of the purpose and research questions. Additionally, the methodology, major findings, literature connections, conclusions, implications for action, and recommendations for future research are presented.

## Chapter Two

### Review of Literature

In an era of educational accountability, teacher quality has become paramount in the effort to increase student achievement (Miri, 2012). Teacher effectiveness has been identified as one of the four key elements in the United States Department of Education's Race to the Top competition launched in 2009 (Darling-Hammond & Rothman, 2011). Race to the Top is a competitive grant program designed to motivate and reward states who are implementing dramatic reform in four academic areas: "standards and assessments, improving the collection and use of data, increasing teacher effectiveness and achieving equity in teacher distribution, and turning around struggling schools" (U.S. Department of Education's Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, 2011, p. 13). It is no longer acceptable for school principals to act as managers who oversee budgets, attend to student discipline, and evaluate teachers every three years using a prescribed checklist (Kruse & Louis, 2008). Principals must become instructional leaders whose primary focus is to ensure increased learning for all students. School leaders must move beyond using the traditional teacher evaluation system to provide frequent, timely, and specific feedback to teachers regarding their instruction (Hao, 1990). One tool that is now at their disposal to provide this type of feedback is the classroom walkthrough process. Various walkthrough models have been developed to design and evaluate job-embedded professional development based on data collected during brief, informal observations. When utilized correctly, the data collected during these classroom visits can enhance professional development and teacher education (Ayers, 2008). A theoretical framework on raising academic standards in the United

States, effective schools research, effective instruction, professional development, and classroom walkthroughs is provided. The review of the literature in these areas lays a foundation for the research reported in later chapters by providing a justification for the research questions, both in terms of the use of classroom walkthrough data to inform the creation of professional development but also the importance of conducting them to evaluate prior professional development.

### **Raising United States' Academic Standards**

The current emphasis on education standards is most often attributed to *A Nation at Risk* prepared by the National Commission on Excellence in Education (Gardner, 1983). *A Nation at Risk* raised concerns regarding the United States' education system's validity being endangered (Marzano & Kendall, 1998). The National Commission on Excellence in Education illustrated the need for the first education summit, held in September 1989, during which President George H. W. Bush and the nation's governors agreed upon a set of extensive goals under the title *The National Education Goals Report: Building a Nation of Learners* (National Education Goals Panel, 1993). The William J. Clinton administration reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 1994 with a standards-based vision as the centerpiece of the legislation (Shepard, Hannaway, & Baker, 2009). This new standards-based focus was designed to improve student academic achievement but did not identify consequences for low performing schools. The ESEA was redesigned under the George W. Bush administration in the form of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 and was theoretically an improvement over the ESEA of 1994 (Shepard et al., 2009). This redesign included a combination of academic requirements and consequences for schools

that were unable to achieve goals set forth by the legislation (Holmes, 2010). Additionally, the NCLB Act of 2001 provided direction for schools that were underperforming.

After seven years of implementation, 2002-2009, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 did not live up to the goals and expectations set by legislators (Duncan, 2010). The United States Department of Education's Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development (2010) found that students who graduated from high school were unprepared to proceed to college, with research suggesting that approximately 40% of all first-year college students had the need to attend remedial courses so they could enroll in credit-producing courses (Parsi, 2011). The results of the 2009 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) demonstrated that students in the United States displayed no progress in reading skills since 2000, one year prior to the implementation of the NCLB Act of 2001. American students displayed no progress in math since 2003, a year after the NCLB Act took effect (Duncan, 2010).

The PISA is a regular assessment program administered every three years to 34 nations around the world assessing the language, mathematic, and scientific literacy skills of 15-year-old students and provides information about how well the students of a nation are prepared to perform in postsecondary education or the job market (Fleischman, Hopstock, Pelczar, & Shelley, 2010). PISA results presented by the United States Secretary of Education showed that United States students had been outperformed by other nations from 1990 through 2009 (Duncan, 2010). The anticipated outcomes of the NCLB Act of 2001 were admirable but the need to demonstrate increased student performance as measured by standardized tests brought about irrational or inappropriate

decisions by educators (Holmes, 2009). The journey from *A Nation at Risk* produced in 1983 to the legislature introduced with the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, moved the national education reform effort from a focus on effective instruction and schools to improved test scores (McCaslin, 2006).

### **Effective Schools Research**

Effective schools research can be defined as research focused on: “identifying and studying the attributes of programs and personnel found in effective schools, how these schools operate, and the benefits experienced by students who attend” (Lezotte & McKee Snyder, 2010, p. 16). Effective schools research formally began in 1982 when the correlates of effective schools were identified (Edmonds, 1982). Correlates can be defined as “the leading organizational and contextual indicators that have been shown to influence student learning” (Lezotte, 2004, p. 4). The correlates originally identified as having an impact on student learning included:

principal’s leadership and attention to the quality of instruction; a pervasive and broadly understood instructional focus; an orderly, safe climate conducive to teaching and learning; teacher behaviors that convey the expectation that all students are expected to obtain at least minimum mastery; and the use of measures of pupil achievement as the basis for program evaluation. (Edmonds, 1982, p. 4)

In 1990, the correlates were updated to reflect the following:

productive school climate and culture; focus on student acquisition of central learning skills; appropriate monitoring of student progress; practice-oriented staff development at the school site; outstanding leadership; salient parent

involvement; effective instructional arrangements and implementation; and high operationalized expectations and requirements for students. (Levine & Lezotte, 1990, p. 10)

School improvement efforts often focus on a search for the quick fix, which traditionally include new programs and procedures that school leaders hope will transform a school (DuFour & Berkey, 1995). However, it is the correlates of effective schools that stood the test of time. Effective schools research continued and six principles that were associated with creating higher levels of achievement in schools were identified in 2004 (Blankstein, 2004). The principles were:

creation of a common mission, vision, values, and goals for schools and the communities they serve; ensuring the success of all students through intensive systems of prevention and intervention; professional collaboration focused on teaching for learning; data-based decision making; engaging family and community members in the educational process; and building leadership capacity that is sustainable. (Blankstein, 2004, vii)

At approximately the same time these six principles were identified, the original correlates of effective schools were refined to include the following five factors: “a guaranteed and viable curriculum; challenging goals and effective feedback; parent and community involvement; a safe and orderly environment; and collegiality and professionalism” (Marzano, 2003, p. 19).

A guaranteed and viable curriculum has been identified as the school-level factor with the most significant impact on student achievement (Marzano, 2003). A guaranteed and viable curriculum is a composite of two elements: “an opportunity for all students to

learn the critical content of the curriculum and a coherent focus that ensures the content can be adequately addressed in the time available” (Marzano, 2003, p. 34). Balanced assessment systems are also dependent on clear academic standards (Stiggins, 2008).

Learning goals and the associated assessments are most effective when they are:

focused on the most important concepts of the subject; clearly and coherently aligned throughout the learning progression across all grades; explicitly defined so that all educators interpret them in the same manner; created at developmentally-appropriate levels for the students who encounter them; created to be manageable given the teacher’s time and resources; and completely understood by the teacher. (Stiggins, 2008, p. 6)

If instruction is to be effective, educators must have a clear understanding of the instructional objectives they intend for students to master (Westerberg, 2009).

### **Effective Instruction**

“Effective practice transforms procedural knowledge that must be laboriously executed to procedural knowledge that is executed fluently” (Marzano, 2007, p. 79). The Teacher Decision-Making Model, a form of direct instruction, was introduced in 1977 and has been utilized extensively in schools across the United States (Reyes, 1990). The following seven elements make up the Teacher Decision-Making Model: “anticipatory set; objective statement; teaching; a check for understanding; guided practice; closure; and independent practice” (Hunter, 1994, p. 3). Even though this model has been heavily relied upon by educators since its inception, it was never designed to be a strict set of instructional steps that a teacher must follow; instead, it was created to provide educators

with a set of common elements that were specific to effective instruction and could be used to improve current practices (Barlow, 2003).

Teaching functions is another model of pedagogy related to direct instruction (Rosenshine, 1983). Teaching functions can be defined as a set of instructional procedures that include: “review of previous learning; presentation of new materials; feedback and corrections; independent practice; and periodic reviews” (Rosenshine, 1983, p. 3). Similar to the Teacher Decision-Making Model, the teaching functions method is made up of categories of certain elements of effective instruction.

This model is best applied to structured disciplines such as reading, mathematics, and science. A regimented approach to these subject areas produces the best results and considerable forethought on the part of the instructor is required for this model to be most effective. (Biermann, 2010, p. 31)

The eight ways of teaching were introduced in 1992 and based on Gardner’s (1983) theory of multiple intelligences (Lazear, 1999). The eight ways of teaching model differed from direct instruction models as it included activities that aligned with the following intelligences: linguistic; logical-mathematical; spatial; bodily-kinesthetic; musical; interpersonal; intrapersonal; and naturalist (Gardner, 2011). This theoretical approach implies that the most effective way to start the learning process is to utilize a wide variety of instructional strategies as there is no one particular method that works best for all students (Gardner, 2011). “Some individuals may exhibit the potential to utilize a number of these strategies, depending upon their heredity, early training, or constant interaction between the factors” (Biermann, 2010, p. 37). As a result, educators



are responsible for understanding these principles and utilizing instructional strategies aligned to a student's unique learning styles (Armstrong, 2000).

Instructional strategies are teaching methods used by classroom instructors in order to lead students to the acquisition of content knowledge and skill (Marzano, 2003). The purpose of using an instructional strategy is to introduce students to content matter and the opportunity to practice declarative and procedural knowledge (Marzano, 2003; Mayer, 2008). Learning experiences can be delivered in a variety of formats; however, the ultimate goal of education is for students to effectively transfer general knowledge to specific cognitive tasks (Mayer, 2008). Even though effective instructional models should be considered when planning, there is no one specific strategy that can be used to effectively teach all students (Gardner, 2011; Marzano, 2003; Mayer, 2008). As a result, it is imperative that teachers have a thorough understanding of a variety of instructional strategies that have a positive impact on student learning. A meta-analysis completed in 2001 reviewing 30 years' worth of studies related to effective instructional strategies included nine instructional strategies that were determined to have the most significant impact on student learning: "identifying similarities and differences; summarizing and note taking; reinforcing effort and providing recognition; homework and practice; nonlinguistic representations; cooperative learning; setting objectives and providing feedback; generating and testing hypothesis; and cues, questions, and advance organizers" (Marzano et al., 2004, p. 7) (see Appendix A). These instructional strategies are effective methods for increasing student achievement when applied to subject matter and student learning experiences (Marzano, 2003).

Successful teaching is teaching that brings about effective learning. The decisive question is not what methods or procedures are employed, and whether they are old-fashioned or modern, time-tested or experimental, conventional or progressive. All such considerations may be important but none of them is ultimate, for they have to do with means, not ends. The ultimate criterion for success in teaching is—results! (Mursell, 1946, p. 1)

In this spirit, a meta-analysis of instructional strategies related to effective instructional strategies was completed in 2008. "A total of about 800 meta-analyses, which encompassed 52,637 studies, and provided 146,142 effect sizes...these studies are based on many millions of students" (Hattie, 2008, p. 15). Through this analysis, nine instructional strategies were determined to have the most significant impact on student learning: reciprocal teaching; feedback; teaching students self-verbalization; meta-cognition strategies; direct instruction; mastery learning; challenging goals; frequent testing; and behavioral organizers (Hattie, 2008) (see Appendix B).

### **Job-Embedded Professional Development**

Well-designed professional development is capable of increasing educators' knowledge of academic content as well as their instructional abilities (Moran, 2005) and is more effective when the training occurs during the work day when teachers become the focus of study and inquiry (Althausser, 2010). When providing professional development, school leaders must create experiences for teachers that are situated in practice (Putnam & Borko, 1997).

Professional learning embedded into educators' workdays increases the opportunity for all educators to receive individual, team, or school-based support

within the work setting to promote continuous improvement. Dedicated job-embedded learning time elevates the importance of continuous, career long learning as a professional responsibility of all educators and aligns the focus of their learning to the identified needs of students they serve. (Dumas, 2011, p. 8)

The likelihood that newly learned theories, principles, and skills will be implemented is increased when teachers are allowed to test these practices during instructional time with students (Franke & Kazemi, 2001; Schifter, 1998).

Job-embedded professional development (JEPD) can be defined as teacher learning that occurs during day-to-day practice and is created to enhance teachers' content-specific pedagogy with the purpose of improving student achievement (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Hirsh, 2009). This type of professional development is collaborative and ongoing and is designed to create opportunities in which teachers can apply their learning during daily practice (Hawley & Valli, 1999). Job-embedded professional development is traditionally school-based and conducted throughout the work day to solve problems teachers face in their current reality (Hawley & Valli, 1999). JEPD has become a more common method for delivering professional development to teachers in schools across the United States (Elliott, 2010). Through a synthesis of studies related to job-embedded professional development, 12 activities were determined to be forms of JEPD: "action research; case discussions; coaching; critical friends groups; data teams/assessment development; examining student work/tuning protocol; implementing individual professional growth/learning plans; lesson study; mentoring; portfolios; professional learning communities; and study groups" (Croft, Coggshall, Dolan, Powers, Killion, 2010, pp. 6-7). When professional development occurs during

the work day, teachers are more likely to sustain the use of newly gained knowledge during instruction (Pate & Thompson, 2003; Sparks, 2002).

Measuring the success of professional development is a key component of enhancing the learning experience for adults and ensuring sustained implementation of new learning (Guskey, 1999). Professional development is most effective when it is monitored in intentional ways to ensure consistent results (Rausch, 2012). Effective evaluation of professional development provides “information that is sound, meaningful, and sufficiently reliable to use in making thoughtful and responsible decisions about professional development processes and effects” (Guskey, 1999, p. 1). Instructional leaders responsible for planning and implementing professional development must possess the ability to assess and evaluate the effectiveness of the opportunities provided to teachers that are intended to enhance their instruction (Guskey & Suk Yoon, 2009).

This means that discussions about the specific goals of professional development, what evidence best reflects the achievement of those goals, and how that evidence can be gathered in meaningful and scientifically defensible ways must become the starting point for all planning activities. (Guskey & Suk Yoon, 2009, p. 498)

Schools must have a process to ensure each of the following four criteria are in place when designing and monitoring the effectiveness of professional development: “all teachers experience high-quality professional development; the professional development successfully increases teachers’ knowledge and skills; teachers use their newly gained knowledge and skills in the classroom; and the new instructional practices lead to improved student learning” (Desimone, 2009, p. 184).

Professional development opportunities that are well-designed and effective are essential to school improvement efforts (Joyner & Reed, 2005). These types of learning opportunities should be ongoing, coherent, occur during the school day, and focus on teacher and student improvement (Wei, Darling-Hammond, Andree, Richardson, Orphanos, 2009). Just as utilizing formative assessments of student learning is a crucial part of the instructional process, evaluation is a critical component of the professional development process. Gathering and analyzing evidence of instructional practices must become a primary component in the design and evaluation of professional development (Guskey, 1999).

### **Classroom Walkthroughs**

Classroom walkthroughs are brief, focused observations of teachers that provide data for follow up conversations related to teaching and learning (Kachur et al., 2009). The concept of frequent, informal observations conducted by supervisors originated in 1970. Executives at Hewlett Packard implemented a management system titled Management by Wandering Around (Peters & Waterman, 2004). The purpose of this management system was to make business leaders more visible and accessible to employees. Management by Wandering Around (MBWA) was viewed as an interactive and interpersonal approach to leadership and managers who operated within its parameters were more likely to foster an environment of collaboration, trust, and involvement (Fraser & Hertzler, 1990). Once school leaders began to recognize the positive impact this management style was having on the business sector, they came to the conclusion that the fundamental values of the MBWA model were applicable to the world of education. As educators implemented this management style in schools, the

purposes of the process were identified and included: increasing the visibility of principals throughout the school; collecting data focused on teaching and learning; improving student behavior; and ensuring facilities were safe and orderly (Kachur et al., 2009).

**Characteristics of effective classroom walkthrough models.** School Management by Walking Around, introduced in 1990, was the inaugural classroom walkthrough model (Frase & Hertzal, 1990). Evolutionary development of the walkthrough has led to a variety of models, such as “learning walks, instructional walks, focus walks, walk-about, data walks, data snaps, learning visits, quick visits, mini-observations, rounds, instructionally focused walkthroughs, collegial walkthroughs, reflective walkthroughs, classroom walkthroughs and just walkthroughs” (Kachur et al., 2009, p. 1). The characteristics of an effective classroom walkthrough model include:

- components that are informal and brief;
- involving the principal and/or other administrators, other instructional leaders, and teachers;
- quick snapshots of classroom activities (particularly instructional and curricular practices);
- not intended for formal teacher evaluation purposes;
- focused on “look-fors” that emphasize improvement in teaching and learning;
- an opportunity to give feedback to teachers for reflection on their practice;
- having the improvement of student achievement as its ultimate goal.

(Kachur et al., 2009, p. 3)

In addition to these characteristics, classroom walkthrough models should be built around specific instructional foci, commonly referred to as “Look fors” (Frase & Hertzell, 1990). “Look fors” are specific descriptors of conditions that when present in classrooms enable students to improve their achievement and learning levels. They emphasize the guiding principles that teachers believe produce student learning” (Graf & Werlinich, 2008, p. 4). “Look fors” on a walkthrough instrument may include: the clarity of the objective of the lesson; instructional strategy being used; appropriateness of the strategy in relation to what is being taught; and safety factors and condition of the room (Hopkins, 2008).

**Addressing deficiencies in the teacher evaluation process.** Teacher quality is the most important factor related to how much students learn (Colvin & Johnson, 2007). As a result, teacher supervisory models need to be developed based upon the reality that quality teaching has a significant impact on student achievement (Rossi, 2007). “Quality instruction and student achievement are highly connected, continuous improvement of instruction should be the aim of teacher supervision” (Rossi, 2007, pp. 44-45). The traditional teacher evaluation process is flawed (DuFour & Marzano, 2009; Duncan, 2009). Feedback from administrators is often said to be too infrequent, not focused on quality instruction, and not constructive in nature (Liu & Mulfinger, 2011). Formal observations traditionally involve a pre-observation conference, a scheduled observation, and a post observation conference (Cogan, 1972). These observations typically occur one or two times during the course of a school year and are not always an effective method for improving instruction (Skretta, 2008). School principals who formally observe teachers’ instruction once a year are completing evaluation reports based on limited information that only represent a snapshot of the teachers’ overall ability (Marshall,

2005). Additionally, when school principals offer infrequent and inconsistent feedback to teachers, the information may not be well-received by the teacher and actually impede the adult learning process (McGill, 2011).

The classroom walkthrough process was partially designed to address the inefficiencies of the current teacher evaluation process (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996). In schools that have principals who conduct classroom walkthroughs, teachers have improved attitudes regarding the formal teacher evaluation process, instruction is of higher quality, and student achievement has increased (Keruskin, 2005). Conducting classroom walkthroughs provides teachers and principals with more frequent and valuable information about the schools' overall effectiveness as it relates to increasing student achievement than does the traditional evaluation system (Payne, 2010). Patterns and concerns related to instruction can more easily be identified, school principals can demonstrate their interest in what is occurring in the classroom, and a basis for reflective dialogue can be established through the use of an informal observation process (Waite, 2007). "The classroom walkthrough is one means of energizing teachers around improved instruction through consistent, ongoing feedback via an informal method" (Skretta, 2008, p. 17). Teachers have higher perceived levels of school success when their principals conduct routine walkthroughs that are non-evaluative and are focused on instruction and curriculum (Frase, 2001).

**Additional purposes of the classroom walkthrough process.** Monitoring instruction, identifying common practices occurring in classrooms, observing the level of student engagement, determining future professional development needs, and seeking to



determine if prior professional development has been implemented are also purposes of the walkthrough process (Finch, 2009).

Walkthroughs may serve as a tool for district level or school-based instructional supervision. Purposes include verifying implementation of district initiatives, evaluating student progress and teacher needs, focusing on school-determined issues, and helping administrators act as instructional leaders. Schools and districts use data gathered from walkthroughs for school improvement, identifying staff professional development needs, building collaboration among staff members, improving teacher practices, and, in some cases, as a tool for teacher evaluation. (Payne, 2010, p. 39)

The classroom walkthrough process was designed to look for school-wide patterns with respect to the quality and substance of instruction and students' level of engagement (Schmoker, 2006).

A visible symbol of the principals' commitment to teaching and learning is supported by the use of a classroom walkthrough model (Johnston, 2006). School principals utilize a classroom walkthrough model to become more actively involved in the instructional process and collaborative reflection after a lesson has been taught with the purpose of improving student achievement (Frase, 1992).

The ultimate goals of classroom walkthroughs are to monitor the implementation of curriculum and to improve instruction and student learning; however, the protocols used to reach these goals differ greatly among models. Some models are utilized by schools to monitor instruction for the purpose of evaluating the implementation of professional learning and assessing future professional learning

needs. Other models are designed to promote teacher reflection on instructional decisions being made and the impact those decisions have on student learning.

(McGill, 2011, p. 46)

Teachers desire feedback about not only their students' academic progress but about their instructional practices as well (Tucker & Stronge, 2005). The classroom walkthrough process is one method for providing ongoing and timely instruction-related feedback to teachers. The data collected during informal observations can enhance instruction, professional development, and teacher education (Ayers, 2008; Payne, 2010).

### **Effective Walkthrough Models**

Five examples are presented as effective classroom walkthrough models that may be employed in schools and school districts to elicit higher levels of instruction. These models were chosen as they have been comprehensively detailed in books related to their purpose, benefits, and instructions for use. All five models provide instructional feedback that is timely and focused on strategies that emphasize improvement in teaching and learning with improved student achievement as the ultimate goal (see Appendices C and D).

**Data-in-a-Day (DIAD).** Data-in-a-Day walkthroughs are conducted school-wide by a team made up of a teacher, parent, and student. Observers visit every classroom and walkthroughs are usually completed over the course of one to two days, dependent on the size of the school. Once the process is complete, the team convenes to provide feedback to the entire staff about identified instructional strengths and areas in need of professional development (Ginsberg & Kimball, 2008). The model may be used by a school to focus on self-defined study areas such as use of a specific instructional strategy, student

engagement, deep levels of learning, school environment, student behavior, and English language learner support” (Blum & Shaughnessy, 2000).

**The Downey Three-Minute Classroom Walk-Through.** The Three-Minute Classroom Walk-Through model was popularized in 2004 when Downey et al. compiled and published over 30 years of research in *The Three-Minute Classroom Walk-Through: Changing School Supervisory Practice One Teacher at a Time*. The model consists of five key characteristics: observations are brief, focused, and informal; teachers are provided with areas to reflect upon; there is a focus on curriculum and instruction; reflective conversations do not happen after every visit; and observations are not evaluative and should be discussed in a collaborative manner. The process is not meant to be stressful but rather to provide meaningful feedback that will improve instruction (Downey et al., 2004).

**The Learning Walk.** The Learning Walk was developed at the Institute for Learning at the University of Pittsburg (Goldman et al., 2004). In a school that conducts Learning Walks, the first step is to assemble members of the observation team (which may consist of both building-level and external observers) and determine the focus of the Learning Walk. Once the focus is established, the team collaborates to identify what evidence will be observed to support the focus. A team of two typically spends 10 minutes each in five classrooms on a weekly basis and then provides feedback to staff members related to their findings. This model is not used in an evaluative manner, and the focus is not on individuals. Instead, the walkthroughs are intended to be brief and provide an overview of the how the school is progressing towards its pre-established goals.

**Process for Advancing Learning Strategies for Success (PALSS).** Evans, creator of the Process for Advancing Learning Strategies for Success (PALSS), developed the initial concept of her classroom walkthrough model in 1976 (J. Evans, personal communication, August 17, 2011). Over the past 35 years, she has refined three elements, which have come to define the PALSS process: use of systematic classroom observation procedures to identify research-based effective educational practices; calibration of observation data by collaborative cadres of educators and provision of feedback to the learning community; and use of a consistent protocol for determining the extent of implementation of research-based teaching/learning practices in order to recommend future professional development priorities based on the classroom observation data (Evans, 2011).

**UCLA School Management Program (SMP).** The UCLA SMP classroom walkthrough protocol serves as a process for providing schools with the occasion to gather real-time data. “It starts with a school’s commitment to build an inquiry model that assumes the capacity for extraordinary learning on the part of students, teachers, administrators, and families” (Cervone & Martinez-Miller, 2007b, p. 1). This model is unique in that it attempts to answer teachers’ own questions about their practice and effectiveness. The model is not intended to be evaluative. Teachers determine what observers will look for and, once the data have been collected, utilize the evidence to drive a cycle of continuous improvement (Cervone & Martinez-Miller, 2007b).

### **Impact of an Effective Walkthrough Process on Student and Teacher Learning**

Effective classroom walkthrough models can be utilized to increase student achievement (Skretta, 2008). Even though differences exist in the design and

implementation of various walkthrough models, “the goal remains the same: instructional improvement that leads to increased learning opportunities for students to reach high levels of achievement” (Scott, 2012, p. 23). Data collected during brief, informal observations can be analyzed by teams of teachers to enhance their understanding of instruction in order to ensure students master the intended outcomes (Cervone & Martinez-Miller, 2007b). The walkthrough process supports teacher collaboration and reflection focused on effective instructional practices that lead to improved student learning (Waite, 2007).

When implemented correctly, the classroom walkthrough process can also serve as a method to increase teacher learning as it creates a framework for designing and evaluating school wide professional development (Cervone & Martinez-Miller, 2007b). “The walkthrough strategy has proven to be an effective professional development tool in itself. It focuses principals on their primary task—the improvement of instruction” (Maloy, 1998, p. 17). Conducting informal observations allows school administrators to evaluate job-embedded professional development initiatives, collect evidence related to curricular programs, and identify trends in instructional practices (Kachur et al., 2009). The process provides teachers with feedback necessary to evaluate their effectiveness in implementing previous professional development designed to enhance instruction that leads to improved student learning (Hopkins, 2008).

School principals who use an informal observation model to provide instruction-related feedback empower teachers to make informed decisions about their practice (Cervone & Martinez-Miller, 2007a). “No matter how schools tailor the process, the essentials are the same—teachers learning from others in a non-evaluative way, talking

about their craft, and developing lessons that will improve student achievement” (Blatt, Linsley, & Smith, 2005, p. 2). When implemented effectively, classroom walkthroughs lead principals to evaluate and refine professional development provided to teachers (David, 2007) and monitor the effectiveness of instruction intended to improve student learning (Skretta, 2007).

### **Summary**

Chapter two provided an overview of the research currently in existence that is relevant to this dissertation’s research questions. It began with an overview of the research on the movement to raise academic standards in the United States of America. Effective schools research, as well as effective instruction, was discussed to provide a deeper understanding of why classroom walkthroughs are a relevant method for collecting data. In addition, job-embedded professional development and the classroom walkthrough process were reviewed and documented. Chapter three describes the methodology of the study.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Methods**

The primary purpose of this study was to analyze Kansas school principals' perceptions related to how classroom walkthroughs impact student achievement. The research also examined principals' perceptions of their schools' classroom walkthrough processes to measure the use of research-based instructional strategies. Principals' perceptions of the use of classroom walkthrough data in the design and evaluation of job-embedded professional development were also analyzed. These phenomena were investigated by surveying Kansas Learning Network (KLN) school principals. KLN schools were defined as needing improvement during the period between September 2008 and September 2011.

This chapter includes an explanation of the research design, population, sampling procedure, data collection methodology, data analysis, and limitations of the research. A detailed description of the internet-based survey that was designed and used to gather information about classroom walkthroughs is provided, and a summary concludes the chapter.

#### **Research Design**

A quantitative study collects and transforms data using statistical analyses (Cozby, 2001). Given the objective of the study, a quantitative research design was selected as the most suitable method. A quantitative method allows the researcher to assess a statistical relationship between variables after data are gathered. Assigning numerical values to the variables so that a comparison could be determined completed this task. Survey instruments were used to collect and measure the data for the variables. The variables in the current study were principals' perceptions of the impact of the

classroom walkthrough process on student learning; principals' perceptions of the classroom walkthrough process as they relate to the ability to measure the use of research-based instructional strategies; principals' perceptions that data collected during classroom walkthroughs are used to inform the creation of job-embedded professional development; and principals' perceptions of whether data collected during classroom walkthroughs are used to measure prior job-embedded professional development.

### **Population and Sample**

The population of interest was all school principals in Kansas. The sample for this study consisted of principals in the 2011-2012 academic year who served as administrators in schools that were members of the Kansas Learning Network between September 2008 and September 2011. In September 2011, principals of elementary, intermediate, middle, junior high, and junior/senior high schools were selected to participate. The sample consisted of 345 school principals. The sample of this study included principals from 233 elementary schools, 57 elementary/middle schools, 13 junior highs, and 49 junior/senior high schools. Table one provides a description of each category.

Table 1

#### *School Categorization*

School Categories	Grade Compositions and Configurations
Elementary schools	Any combination of grades kindergarten through sixth grade or schools that contained fifth and sixth grade only
Elementary/middle schools	Any combination of grades kindergarten through eighth but must contain grades four, five, or six
Junior high school	Seventh grade only, eighth grade only, or both seventh and eighth grade
Junior/senior high schools	Grades seven through 12 or grades nine through 12



## **Sampling Procedures**

A purposive sampling technique was employed. This technique is used to select samples in order to fill a conscious purpose or design (Creswell, 2002; Kendall & Buckland, 1982). This study was limited to 345 principals who were serving as administrators, as of September 2011, in schools that were members of the Kansas Learning Network between September 2008 and September 2011. The list of schools was found on the KSDE website (see Appendix E). The number of schools in each KLN district varied, from a high of 83 in Wichita to a low of two in Bluestem and Satanta (see Appendix F). The sample for this study resulted in 110 principals who responded to the survey.

## **Instrumentation**

An electronic survey was developed using the tools found at [surveymonkey.com](http://surveymonkey.com) (see Appendix G). This website was used to record responses for the survey and the raw data obtained from this website were used for analysis. A 22-item survey was developed by the researcher to gather information about the use of classroom walkthroughs in KLN schools and to obtain information on the impact that classroom walkthroughs have on student learning. Content of the items were based on a thorough analysis of research conducted by experts in the classroom walkthrough and effective instructional strategies fields. The survey consists of three sections:

- 1) general demographic information;
- 2) classroom walkthrough process utilized at respondent's school; and
- 3) principal perceptions regarding the classroom walkthrough process.

Data in section one of the survey, demographic information, were collected for comparison purposes in future studies. This information will be essential for researchers in order to identify the generalizability of the conclusion from the analysis. Demographic data from the survey contained information about the school principals and the school at which they were currently employed, including number of years in current role; number of years in an administrative role, regardless of the district; placement of school in one of four categories—elementary, elementary/middle, junior high, or junior/senior high school (see Appendix F); size of student population; and if the school had made adequately yearly progress (AYP) during the 2010-2011 school year. The information obtained from section one was used to summarize the demographic composition of the principal respondents.

Data in section two of the survey, the processes school leaders engaged in when conducting classroom walkthroughs, were also collected for comparison purposes in future studies. In section two, the researcher sought to determine whether respondents conducted walkthroughs in their schools and then identified the processes each principal followed if they did conduct walkthroughs. The content of the items in section two included the number of years KLN school principals had conducted classroom walkthroughs; current process of their classroom walkthrough procedure; professional development that KLN schools engaged in as a result of conducting classroom walkthroughs; type of training principals had received as it related to classroom walkthroughs; number of classroom walkthroughs conducted each week; length of each walkthrough; practice of sharing aggregated classroom walkthrough data with the faculty in school; and determining in what form principals provided feedback after a classroom

walkthrough had been completed. The information obtained from section two was used to summarize the experiences of the principal respondents as they related to classroom walkthroughs.

The items in the third part of the survey were specifically connected to the research questions and were designed to measure principals' perceptions of the classroom walkthrough processes in their schools. These four variables included the following information: a) extent to which principals perceive that the classroom walkthrough process has an impact on student learning, b) extent to which principals perceive that their school's classroom walkthrough model is an effective process for measuring the use of research-based instructional strategies, c) extent to which principals perceive that data collected during classroom walkthroughs are used to inform the creation of job-embedded professional development, and d) extent to which principals perceive that data collected during classroom walkthroughs are used to measure prior job-embedded professional development.

**Measurement.** Items in section one of the survey primarily utilized a multiple choice response format focused on the following: number of years principals have served in their current role (item 2); number of years in an administrative role (item 3); classification of their schools (item 4); and if the school had made AYP during the 2010-2011 school year (item 6). Demographic information related to the size of the student population was measured through the use of a fill-in-the-blank response format (item 5). Items 7 through 17 in section two used a multiple-choice response format. This section was developed to obtain school principals' responses as they related to the completion of classroom walkthroughs. Lastly, section three measured the KLN school principals'

perceptions as they related to the classroom walkthrough process. The first four items in section three utilized a 5-point Likert-type scale that provided respondents with various levels of agreement: 1 = *Strongly Disagree*, 2 = *Disagree*, 3 = *Agree*, 4 = *Strongly Agree*, and 5 = *Not Applicable*. Item 18 measured school principals' perceptions of the impact classroom walkthroughs have on student learning. Item 19 measured principals' perceived effectiveness of the schools' classroom walkthrough model to measure teacher-use of research-based instructional strategies. Item 20 measured the perceptions of school principals as they related to the use of data collected during classroom walkthroughs to inform the creation of job-embedded professional development. Item 21 measured the school principals' perceptions that data collected during classroom walkthroughs were used to evaluate prior job-embedded professional development.

**Validity and reliability.** Content validity was established for the survey through the assistance of experts in school-based leadership. Content validity refers to the “extent to which the questions on the instrument and the scores from these questions are representative of all the possible questions that could be asked about the content or skills” (Creswell, 2002, p. 184). A draft form of the survey instrument was piloted using a group of 10 respondents. Participants included principals of elementary, middle, junior high, and junior/senior high school buildings not in the KLN as of September 2011 and who regularly conducted classroom walkthroughs. The feedback provided by participants was used to make modifications to the survey. There were a total of three suggestions for modification to the survey. Two respondents informed the researcher that the survey only took five minutes to complete instead of the originally suggested 15 minutes. The other suggestion from one respondent was to bullet the choices related to

the item clarifying which classification best described the KLN principal respondent's school. No feedback was provided as it related to the content of the items. Evidence of the reliability of the scores was established for the four items used to measure the variables. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient indicates a moderate-to-strong internal consistency between the items:  $\alpha = .784$ .

### **Data Collection Procedures**

Prior to collecting data, a proposal for research (see Appendix H) was submitted to the Baker Institutional Review Board on March 12, 2012. Approval was granted on March 16, 2012 (see Appendix I). Principals of elementary, intermediate, middle, junior high, and junior/senior high schools were contacted via email, inviting them to participate in the study (see Appendix J). Data collection was conducted electronically using the online survey tool SurveyMonkey (see Appendix G). The principal respondents were required to agree to participate in the study by clicking "yes" on the survey item requesting consent before being able to answer the three part survey. By answering "yes," the participants indicated willingness to voluntarily access the web address and respond to the survey. The time period for data collection started on March 27, 2012 and ended on April 12, 2012. One-hundred ten school principals responded to the survey. Data from four respondents were removed as they indicated they did not conduct classroom walkthroughs.

### **Data Analysis and Hypothesis Testing**

Each research hypotheses was tested using a one-sample *t* test to compare the mean responses in the survey regarding the principals' perceptions of the classroom walkthrough process. The *t* test tested the significance of the mean differences of the

responses of the sample. Based on the objectives of the study, the following hypotheses were proposed and tested at the  $\alpha = .05$  level of significance:

1. To what extent do principals perceive that the classroom walkthrough process has an impact on student learning?

H1: Principals perceive that the classroom walkthrough process has a statistically significant positive impact on student learning.

2. To what extent do principals perceive that their school's classroom walkthrough model is an effective process for measuring the use of research-based instructional strategies?

H2: There is a statistically significant difference in how principals perceive that their school's classroom walkthrough model is an effective process for measuring the use of research-based instructional strategies.

3. To what extent do principals perceive that data collected during classroom walkthroughs are used to inform the creation of job-embedded professional development (JEPD)?

H3: Principals perceive that the data collected during classroom walkthroughs are significantly important in the development of JEPD.

4. To what extent do principals perceive that data collected during classroom walkthroughs are used to measure prior job-embedded professional development (JEPD)?

H4: Principals perceive that the data collected during classroom walkthroughs are significantly important when measuring the effectiveness of prior JEPD.

### **Limitations**

Limitations are factors in a study that are not under the researcher's control but may affect interpretation or generalization of the findings (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008). The results of the study were limited since survey responses were self-reported and participants may not accurately or fully self-evaluate themselves. In order to fully evaluate themselves, school principals used a Likert-scale format when completing the survey.

### **Summary**

This chapter restated the purposes of the study which were to determine if Kansas Learning Network school principals believed that the classroom walkthrough process had a positive impact on student learning, examine the principals' perceptions of the ability of their schools' classroom walkthrough processes to measure the use of research-based instructional strategies, and determine whether KLN school principals utilized data collected during classroom walkthroughs to design and evaluate job-embedded professional development. The study employed a quantitative research design. Four research questions were presented, and hypotheses were formulated. The participants were principals from 345 schools within 34 KLN districts, resulting in 110 in the sample. The sampling procedure employed a purposive technique. A 22-item survey was developed consisting of three sections designed to measure the variables addressed in the four research questions. The three sections included general demographic information,

classroom walkthrough processes utilized at the respondent's school, and principal perceptions regarding the classroom walkthrough process. Data collection employed the online survey tool SurveyMonkey. Lastly, the data analysis required the use of a one-sample  $t$  test to compare the responses of participants.

Chapter three explained the research design, sampling procedures, instrumentation, and data collection procedures utilized in the study. Measurement, validity, reliability, data analysis, and limitations were described. Chapter four presents the results of the hypothesis testing.



## **Chapter Four**

### **Results**

This quantitative study was designed to evaluate principals' perceptions of the impact of classroom walkthroughs on student learning. The second purpose was to determine if principals believed their districts' classroom walkthrough processes effectively measured the use of research-based instructional strategies. The third and final purpose was to analyze participating principals' perceptions of how the collected data were used to design and evaluate job-embedded professional development. This chapter presents the data gathered regarding Kansas Learning Network (KLN) school principals' perceptions of the classroom walkthrough process. A one-sample *t* test was conducted to test each of the research hypotheses. This chapter contains a summary of the data collected, the statistical analyses regarding each research question, and the results of hypotheses testing.

#### **Descriptive Statistics**

The target population for this research was limited to 345 principals who were serving as administrators, as of September 2011, in schools that were members of the Kansas Learning Network between September 2008 and September 2011. The study did not include the five districts that have exited the network since its inception in 2008 or school districts that were not identified as needing improvement as of September 2011. The study sample also did not include charter schools, alternative schools, or early learning centers. The sample consisted of 106 school principals. The statistical program, IBM® SPSS® Statistics 21.0 Faculty Pack for Windows, was utilized to analyze the data of the study. Each of the variables for the research questions were measured using a

Likert scale. Each research hypothesis was tested using a one-sample  $t$  test to compare the mean responses in the survey regarding the principals' perceptions of the classroom walkthrough process. The descriptive statistics of the data, along with the demographics of the sample, are presented in Tables 2 through 5.

In responding to the survey, 92.5% of principals agreed or strongly agreed with the item *As a result of conducting classroom walkthroughs, I believe student learning has improved*. Only 7.5% of respondents indicated disagreement. Results are reported in Table 2.

Table 2

*Frequency Table of Principals' Perceptions that the Classroom Walkthrough Process Has an Impact on Student Learning*

Level of Agreement	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
<i>Strongly Agree</i>	22	20.8	20.8
<i>Agree</i>	76	71.7	92.5
<i>Disagree</i>	8	7.5	100.0
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	0	0.0	100.0
<i>Not Applicable</i>	0	0.0	100.0
Total	106	100.0	100.0

In responding to the survey, 86.8% of principals agreed or strongly agreed with the item *I believe our school's classroom walkthrough process effectively measures teacher use of research-based instructional strategies as identified by John Hattie (2008) and Robert Marzano (2003)*. Only 13.2% of respondents indicated disagreement. Results are reported in Table 3.

Table 3

*Frequency Table of Principals' Perceptions that Their School's Classroom Walkthrough Model is an Effective Process for Measuring the Use of Research-Based Instructional Strategies*

Level of Agreement	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
<i>Strongly Agree</i>	23	21.7	21.7
<i>Agree</i>	69	65.1	86.8
<i>Disagree</i>	14	13.2	100.0
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	0	0.0	100.0
<i>Not Applicable</i>	0	0.0	100.0
Total	106	100.0	100.0

In responding to the survey, 89.6% of principals agreed or strongly agreed with the item *I believe that data collected during classroom walkthroughs are used to inform the creation of job-embedded professional development*. Only 9.4% of respondents indicated disagreement. Results are reported in Table 4.

Table 4

*Frequency Table of Principals' Perceptions that Data Collected During Classroom Walkthroughs Are Used to Inform the Creation of Job-Embedded Professional Development*

Level of Agreement	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
<i>Strongly Agree</i>	21	19.8	19.8
<i>Agree</i>	74	69.8	89.6
<i>Disagree</i>	10	9.4	99.1
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	0	0.0	99.1
<i>Not Applicable</i>	1	0.9	100.0
Total	106	100.0	100.0

In responding to the survey, 84.9% of principals agreed or strongly agreed with the item *I believe that the data collected during classroom walkthroughs are used to evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of previous job-embedded professional development*. Only 13.2% of respondents indicated disagreement. Results are reported in Table 5.

Table 5

*Frequency Table of Principals' Perceptions that Data Collected During Classroom Walkthroughs Are Used to Measure Prior Job-Embedded Professional Development*

Level of Agreement	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
<i>Strongly Agree</i>	16	15.1	15.1
<i>Agree</i>	74	69.8	84.9
<i>Disagree</i>	14	13.2	98.1
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	0	0.0	98.1
<i>Not Applicable</i>	2	1.9	100.0
Total	106	100.0	100.0

### **Hypothesis Testing**

This study utilized one-sample *t* tests to examine Kansas Learning Network school principals' perceptions of the classroom walkthrough processes in their schools.

Table 6 displays the means and standard deviations of the *t* test analyses.

Table 6

*Descriptive Statistics of t Test Analyses*

	<i>N</i>	Mean	Std. Deviation
Positive Impact	106	1.87	.518
Measures Strategies	106	1.92	.587
Design PD	106	1.92	.613
Evaluate PD	106	2.04	.675

Research Question 1: To what extent do principals perceive that the classroom walkthrough process has an impact on student learning?

This research question examined if a significant difference existed between the categories of agreement. An analysis was performed to test Hypothesis 1: Principals perceive that the classroom walkthrough process has a statistically significant positive impact on student learning. Results, as shown in Table 7, revealed a significant difference was found in the perceptions of principals that the classroom walkthrough process has a positive impact on student learning:  $t(105) = 37.142, p < .001$ .

Table 7

*One-Sample t Test Results for Perception on Positive Impact*

	<i>t</i>	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Positive Impact	37.142	105	.000	1.868	1.77	1.97

Research Question 2: To what extent do principals perceive that their school's classroom walkthrough model is an effective process for measuring the use of research-based instructional strategies?

This research question examined if a significant difference existed between the categories of agreement. An analysis was performed to test Hypothesis 2: There is a statistically significant difference in how principals perceive that their school's classroom walkthrough model is an effective process for measuring the use of research-based instructional strategies. Results, as shown in Table 8, revealed a significant difference was found in the perceptions of principals that the classroom walkthrough model they use

is different from processes that do not collect information related to the use of research-based instructional strategies:  $t(105) = 33.564, p < .001$ .

Table 8

*One-Sample t Test Results for Perception on Measurement of Instructional Strategies*

	<i>t</i>	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Measures						
Strategy	33.564	105	.000	1.915	1.80	2.03

Research Question 3: To what extent do principals perceive that data collected during classroom walkthroughs are used to inform the creation of job-embedded professional development (JEPD)?

This research question examined if a significant difference existed between the categories of agreement. An analysis was performed to test Hypothesis 3: Principals perceive that the data collected during classroom walkthroughs are significantly important in the development of JEPD. Results, as shown in Table 9, revealed a significant difference was found in the perceptions of principals that data collected during classroom walkthroughs are used to inform the creation of job-embedded professional development:  $t(105) = 32.348, p < .001$ .

Table 9

*One-Sample t Test Results for Perception of Professional Development Design*

	<i>t</i>	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Design PD	32.348	105	.000	1.925	1.81	2.04

Research Question 4: To what extent do principals perceive that data collected during classroom walkthroughs are used to measure prior job-embedded professional development?

This research question examined if a significant difference existed between the categories of agreement. An analysis was performed to test Hypothesis 4: Principals perceive that the data collected during classroom walkthroughs are significantly important when measuring the effectiveness of prior JEPD. Results, as shown in Table 10, revealed a significant difference was found in the perceptions of principals that data collected during classroom walkthroughs are used to measure prior job-embedded professional development:  $t(105) = 31.078, p < .001$ .

Table 10

*One-Sample t Test Results for Perception of Professional Development Evaluation*

	<i>t</i>	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Evaluate PD	31.078	105	.000	2.038	1.91	2.17

### Summary

This chapter contained the results of the study, which included the frequencies of each item and the *t* test results of each research hypothesis. The results of each test indicated there was a significant difference in the principals' perceptions as related to the research questions. Chapter five provides a summary of the study, an overview of the problem, and a restatement of the purpose and research questions. Additionally, the methodology, major findings, literature connections, conclusions, implications for action, recommendations for future research, and concluding remarks are presented.



## Chapter Five

### Interpretation and Recommendations

This study examined KLN school principals' perceptions related to how classroom walkthroughs impact student learning, how effective classroom walkthroughs are when measuring the use of research-based instructional strategies, and how the data collected during classroom walkthrough observations can be used to design and evaluate job-embedded professional development. The results of this study make a significant contribution to improved professional development, and, ultimately, the learning of all students, by addressing the lack of research on the use of instructional walkthroughs and their impact on student learning from the perspectives of school principals in the Kansas Learning Network. In chapter four, the findings of the study were presented. This chapter provides a summary of the findings, and recommendations for future research related to the use of classroom walkthroughs in K-12 schools.

#### Study Summary

The following section summarizes the current study. An overview of the problem, the purpose of the study and research questions, review of methodology, the study's major findings, conclusions, and recommendations for future research are provided.

**Overview of the problem.** In Kansas Learning Network schools, principals implemented the use of classroom walkthroughs for a variety of reasons. The first reason was to ensure increased student learning. The problem is that specific research on classroom walkthroughs is limited as it relates to demonstrating a direct cause-and-effect relationship between the use of a classroom walkthrough tool and student improvement

(Kachur, et al., 2009). A second reason for implementing classroom walkthroughs in KLN schools was that principals understood there were serious flaws within the current teacher evaluation system. KLN principals were well-aware that the teacher evaluation system offered feedback that was too infrequent, not focused on quality instruction, and not constructive in nature (Liu & Mulfinger, 2011). The classroom walkthrough process was partially designed to address the deficiencies of the current teacher evaluation process (Downey et al., 2004). A third reason KLN principals began to utilize walkthroughs was to monitor teacher use of research-based instructional strategies and to provide feedback to teachers on their instructional practices. However, even though the benefits of brief, informal classroom visits have been identified, it is not enough for instructional leaders to merely conduct classroom walkthroughs (Pitler & Goodwin, 2008). The feedback provided by principals may be damaging to educators and students if instructional leaders do not have a thorough understanding of what constitutes effective instruction (Pitler & Goodwin, 2008). Finally, classroom walkthroughs were implemented in low performing Kansas schools as a means to develop and evaluate professional development. There exists a lack of research related to the use of data collected during classroom walkthroughs to develop and evaluate professional learning (Ginsberg, 2001). The link between the use of a classroom walkthrough process and professional development that leads to teacher growth had not been extensively researched (David, 2007). The data collected during walkthroughs must be used to inform job-embedded learning for the process to have an impact on teacher practice and professional development that will ultimately lead to increased student achievement (Ginsberg, 2001).

**Purpose statement and research questions.** The first purpose of this study was to evaluate principals' perceptions of the impact of classroom walkthroughs on student learning. The second purpose was to determine if principals believed their districts' classroom walkthrough processes effectively measured the use of research-based instructional strategies. The third and final purpose was to analyze participating principals' perceptions of how the collected data were used to design and evaluate professional development. To investigate these ideas, four research questions guided the study: (1) To what extent do principals perceive that the classroom walkthrough process has an impact on student learning? (2) To what extent do principals perceive that their school's classroom walkthrough model is an effective process for measuring the use of research-based instructional strategies? (3) To what extent do principals perceive that data collected during classroom walkthroughs are used to inform the creation of job-embedded professional development? and (4) To what extent do principals perceive that data collected during classroom walkthroughs are used to measure prior job-embedded professional development?

**Review of the methodology.** Using a quantitative research design, KLN school principals' perception data were collected via electronic surveys. The focus of the survey was on principals' perceptions of the impact of classroom walkthroughs on student learning, perception of their schools' walkthrough models to measure the use of research-based instructional strategies, and whether or not walkthrough data were used to inform and evaluate job-embedded professional development. The population of interest was all school principals in Kansas. This sample for this study consisted of 345 principals who were serving as administrators, as of September 2011, in schools that were members of

the Kansas Learning Network between September 2008 and September 2011. In September 2011, principals of elementary, intermediate, middle, junior high, and junior/senior high schools were selected to participate. The sample consisted of 345 school principals from 233 elementary schools, 57 elementary/middle schools, 13 junior highs, and 49 junior/senior high schools. One-hundred ten school principals responded to the survey. Data from four respondents were removed as they indicated they did not conduct classroom walkthroughs (see Appendix F).

**Major findings.** Findings of this quantitative methods study are presented with regard to the research questions. The first hypothesis in this study examined KLN principals' perceptions related to the impact of the classroom walkthrough process on student learning. An analysis of the data revealed a significant difference in the perceptions of principals that the classroom walkthrough process has a positive impact on student achievement. The majority of participants indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed ( $n = 98$ ) with the item versus disagreed ( $n = 8$ ). The results of this study suggest that principals in low performing schools strongly believe that conducting classroom walkthroughs has a positive impact on student learning.

The second hypothesis in this study examined KLN principals' perceptions related to the effectiveness of their classroom walkthrough processes to measure the use of research-based instructional strategies. The data analysis revealed a significant difference in the perceptions of principals that their school's classroom walkthrough model is an effective process for measuring the use of research-based instructional strategies. The majority of participants indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed ( $n = 92$ ) with the item versus disagreed ( $n = 14$ ). The results of this study suggest that

principals in low performing schools strongly believe that the process they are using to conduct classroom walkthroughs effectively monitors the use of research-based instructional strategies.

The third hypothesis in this study examined KLN principals' perceptions related to the use of classroom walkthrough data to create professional development. An analysis of the data revealed a significant difference in the perceptions of principals that data collected during classroom walkthroughs were used to inform the creation of job-embedded professional development. The majority of participants indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed ( $n = 95$ ) with the item versus disagreed ( $n = 10$ ). The results of this study suggest that principals in low performing schools strongly believe that data collected during classroom walkthroughs are used to inform the creation of professional development.

The fourth hypothesis in this study examined KLN principals' perceptions related to the use of classroom walkthrough data to evaluate previous professional development. An analysis of the data revealed a significant difference in the perceptions of principals that data collected during classroom walkthroughs were used to measure prior job-embedded professional development. The majority of participants indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed ( $n = 90$ ) with the item versus disagreed ( $n = 14$ ). The results of this study suggest that principals in low performing schools strongly believe that the data collected during classroom walkthroughs are used to evaluate previous professional development.

## **Findings Related to the Literature**

This section examines the study's findings as they relate to the literature connected to classroom walkthroughs. Specifically, principals' perceptions pertaining to the classroom walkthrough process are discussed through examining literature in the areas of raising academic standards in the United States, effective schools research, effective instruction, job-embedded professional development, and classroom walkthroughs.

**Impact on student learning.** In responding to the survey, 92.5% of principals agreed or strongly agreed that conducting classroom walkthroughs had an impact on student learning. This response provides information to address the problem that specific research on classroom walkthroughs is limited as it relates to demonstrating a direct cause-and-effect relationship between the use of a classroom walkthrough tool and student improvement (Kachur, et al., 2009). Principals also verify previous findings that suggest data collected during a classroom walkthrough can inform a cycle of improvement focused on the effects of instruction (Cervone & Martinez-Miller, 2007b). Similarly, responses to the survey confirm that schools led by principals who conduct classroom walkthroughs have: teachers who possess a more positive attitude regarding the formal teacher evaluation process; instruction of higher quality; and increased student achievement (Keruskin, 2005). Additionally, the responses validate the concept that high-achieving schools are led by principals who visit classrooms for purposes other than social interactions and evaluation purposes (Cotton, 2003). Finally, principals' responses verify the findings of previous studies that indicate conducting classroom walkthroughs

provide teachers and principals with valuable information about the schools' overall effectiveness as it relates to increasing student achievement (Payne, 2010).

**Measure research-based instructional strategies.** In responding to the survey, 86.8% of principals agreed or strongly agreed that their schools' classroom walkthrough is an effective process for measuring the use of research-based instructional strategies. This response confirms that principals are collecting data related to the use of research-based instructional strategies; therefore, the instructional feedback they are providing is less likely to be damaging to educators and students. "Although there's no single right way to teach, great teachers employ a variety of teaching strategies, understand the instructional purposes of each, and use each strategy intentionally" (Pitler & Goodwin, 2008, p. 9). The need to offer formative feedback to teachers related to their use of research-based instructional strategies is endorsed by the responses provided by KLN principals. "Debriefing with teachers and, in some instances, with students is a critical step in the Walkthrough process. Giving specific feedback based on firsthand observation is a powerful tool" (Graf & Werlinich, 2008, p. 9). Principals' responses to this item validate the idea that the classroom walkthrough process is a method for motivating teachers around improved instruction through consistent, ongoing feedback (Skretta, 2008). Responses also reinforce the belief that classroom walkthroughs may be used as a tool by district level or school-based leaders to supervise instruction and improve teachers' instructional practices (Payne, 2010). Finally, the responses confirm the findings that appropriately designed classroom walkthroughs allow principals to collect data related to the implementation of a guaranteed and viable curriculum

(Marzano, 2003) and effective learning goals and the associated assessments (Stiggins, 2008).

**Inform job-embedded professional development.** In responding to the survey, 89.6% of principals agreed or strongly agreed that data collected during classroom walkthroughs are used to inform the creation of job-embedded professional development. This response provides information to address the problem that research related to the use of data collected during classroom walkthroughs to develop and evaluate professional learning is almost non-existent (Ginsberg, 2001). The principals' responses confirm the concept that schools and districts should use data gathered from walkthroughs for school improvement, to identify staff professional development needs, and to improve instructional practices (Payne, 2010). The responses also substantiate previous findings that suggest some classroom walkthrough models are utilized by schools to assess future professional learning needs (McGill, 2011). To realize the full benefit of the classroom walkthrough process, the focus should be on areas where teachers have abundant professional development opportunities and support to implement change. "When walkthroughs are disconnected from larger improvement efforts, teachers tend to dismiss them as drive-bys or gotchas" (David, 2007, p. 82). The responses from KLN principals support these ideas. Finally, the principals' responses indicate that classroom walkthroughs truly are being used to monitor instruction and determine future professional development needs (Finch, 2009).

**Evaluate job-embedded professional development.** In responding to the survey, 84.9% of principals agreed or strongly agreed that data collected during classroom walkthroughs were used to measure prior job-embedded professional



development. This response validates the idea that some classroom walkthrough models were designed to promote teacher reflection related to instructional practices and evaluate the implementation of professional learning (McGill, 2011). The responses also confirm the concept that monitoring instruction, identifying common practices occurring in classrooms, and seeking to determine if prior professional development has been implemented are all purposes of the walkthrough process (Finch, 2009). An expanded awareness of current practice may lead principals to make changes in existing professional development initiatives. It is apparent from the principals' responses that they possess this expanded awareness and are utilizing the data collected to evaluate previous professional development. Finally, the principals' responses align with the idea that walkthroughs may serve as a tool to verify implementation of district initiatives (Payne, 2010).

## **Conclusions**

This section provides conclusions drawn from the current study. Implications for action, recommendations for future research, and concluding remarks are provided.

**Implications for action.** This research can be used by schools or districts that are considering the use of a classroom walkthrough process or are evaluating current practices. The results of all four research questions revealed a significant difference was found in the perceptions of principals who conduct classroom walkthroughs. These data indicate that classroom walkthroughs are thought of in a positive manner by school principals. KLN principals believe the process does have a positive impact on student learning, effectively monitors the use of research-based instructional strategies, informs the creation of job-embedded professional development, and measures prior job-

embedded professional development. Analysis of the data can provide information that may be utilized by school districts planning to implement a classroom walkthrough program or that already have a classroom walkthrough program.

**Recommendations for future research.** The present research was unique in that the study consisted of 345 principals who were serving as administrators, as of September 2011, in schools that were members of the Kansas Learning Network between September 2008 and September 2011. Additional research is necessary to determine the effectiveness of the classroom walkthrough process across the state of Kansas and the United States as it relates to student learning, measurement of the use of research-based instructional strategies, creation of job-embedded professional development, and measurement of previous professional development. The first recommendation is to extend the current study by expanding the sample to include principals from districts across the state of Kansas and the United States who were not identified as needing improvement. Principals could be surveyed to determine if perceptions related to the classroom walkthrough process are consistent, regardless of demographics or academic achievement levels of students. The second recommendation is to extend the study by conducting a study with a mixed-methods research design. A mixed methods study combines the elements of quantitative and qualitative methods (Creswell, 2009). A qualitative approach would allow a researcher to capture the principals' perspectives of the pros and cons of the classroom walkthrough process. School principals could be interviewed after data from the walkthrough survey has been collected to determine if their perceptions align with the entirety of the sample. The results could be analyzed by the researcher to determine if one classroom walkthrough model is superior to the others.

These findings could be used by school districts that are considering implementation of the walkthrough process or are evaluating the effectiveness of their current processes. Finally, based upon the findings of this study which indicate support for the use of classroom walkthroughs to enhance student achievement and provide meaningful feedback to teachers, a researcher could determine the extent of the correlation between student achievement data and schools whose principals conduct classroom walkthroughs. State assessment data could be analyzed to determine if student achievement is higher in schools where walkthroughs are conducted.

**Concluding remarks.** This study examined Kansas Learning Network principals' perceptions related to their beliefs that: the classroom walkthrough process had an impact on student learning; the model they are using effectively measured the use of research-based instructional strategies; and classroom walkthrough data were used to design and evaluate job-embedded professional development. Study results provided evidence that a statistically significant difference existed for each of the research questions. Statistically significant differences were found in the perceptions of principals that the classroom walkthrough process had a positive impact on student learning, their school's classroom walkthrough model is an effective process for measuring the use of research-based instructional strategies, data collected during classroom walkthroughs were used to inform the creation of job-embedded professional development, and data collected during classroom walkthroughs were used to measure prior job-embedded professional development.

Conducting classroom walkthroughs in an effort to improve student achievement appears to be a worthwhile endeavor. Teachers want feedback about their instructional

practices and the classroom walkthrough process is one method for providing ongoing and timely instruction-related feedback to teachers. The research supports the concept that conducting classroom walkthroughs leads to: increased student learning, instruction of higher quality, and more effective professional development. School principals must continue to monitor the use of research-based instructional strategies and the effectiveness of prior job-embedded professional development. The classroom walkthrough process provides a means to do both in schools where increased student learning is the ultimate goal.

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## Appendices

## Appendix A

*Instructional Strategies, Attributes, and Average Effect Size*

Instructional Strategy	Attributes	Average Effect Size (ES) <sup>a</sup>
Identifying similarities and differences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear directions/instruction provided</li> <li>• Students working independently</li> </ul>	1.61
Summarizing and note taking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities that delete, substitute AND keep information</li> <li>• Goes above recall of previously learned material/activities</li> </ul>	1.00
Reinforcing effort and providing recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timely</li> <li>• Specific to what student did well (skill vs. knowledge)</li> </ul>	.80
Homework and practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports objective posted</li> <li>• Purpose of activity identified/explained</li> </ul>	.77
Nonlinguistic representations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activity deepens understanding/learning</li> <li>• Students can identify patterns/relationships</li> </ul>	.75
Cooperative learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students using best practice strategies within groups</li> <li>• Clear roles provided</li> </ul>	.73
Setting objectives and providing feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written in student-friendly terms</li> <li>• Reflects what students will learn, not do</li> </ul>	.61
Generating and testing hypotheses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forming predictions/ drawing conclusions</li> <li>• Students can explain thought process</li> </ul>	.61
Questions, cues, and advance organizers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher-order thinking skills (analysis, synthesis, evaluation)</li> <li>• “Wait Time”</li> <li>• Use of graphic organizers (not worksheets that provide visual information)</li> </ul>	.59

*Note.* Adapted from Marzano et al., 2004.

<sup>a</sup> Average effect size from the various studies that were examined. An effect size of 1.0 is equivalent to a percentile gain of 34 points—one standard deviation.

## Appendix B

*Instructional Strategies, Attributes, and Average Effect Size*

Instructional Strategy	Attributes	Effect Size ( $d$ ) <sup>a</sup>
Reciprocal teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher enables students to learn and use cognitive strategies</li> <li>• Students take turns of being the “teacher” to demonstrate their mastery</li> </ul>	0.74
Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback from student to teacher is more valuable than the other way around</li> <li>• Provided by a teacher, parent, etc. about aspects of another person’s performance</li> </ul>	0.72
Teaching students self-verbalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serves as a form of self-regulation</li> <li>• More beneficial in the early to intermediate phase of skill acquisition</li> </ul>	0.67
Meta-cognition strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Thinking about thinking”</li> <li>• Planning how to approach a learning task or monitoring one’s own comprehension</li> </ul>	0.67
Direct instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is NOT didactic teaching</li> <li>• Seven step process—Define outcomes, determine success criteria, build engagement, presentation of lesson, guided practice, closure, independent practice</li> </ul>	0.59
Mastery learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires numerous feedback loops based on small unites of well-defined outcomes</li> <li>• Learning is held constant, time is the variable</li> </ul>	0.57
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the nature of the link between the past and the future</li> <li>• Difficult goals lead to a clearer notion of success</li> </ul>	0.56
Frequent/effects of testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance is increased with more testing as it makes the learning intentions more transparent</li> <li>• Improvement in achievement diminishes as the number of tests increases</li> </ul>	0.46

Behavioral organizers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Intended to bridge old information with new</li><li>• Used to assist the learner organize and interpret new information</li></ul>	0.41
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*Note.* Adapted from Hattie, 2008.

<sup>a</sup> An effect size of  $d = 1.0$  indicates an increase of one standard deviation in the outcome and is typically associated with advancing children's achievement by two to three years.

## Appendix C

*Comparison of “Look Fors”*

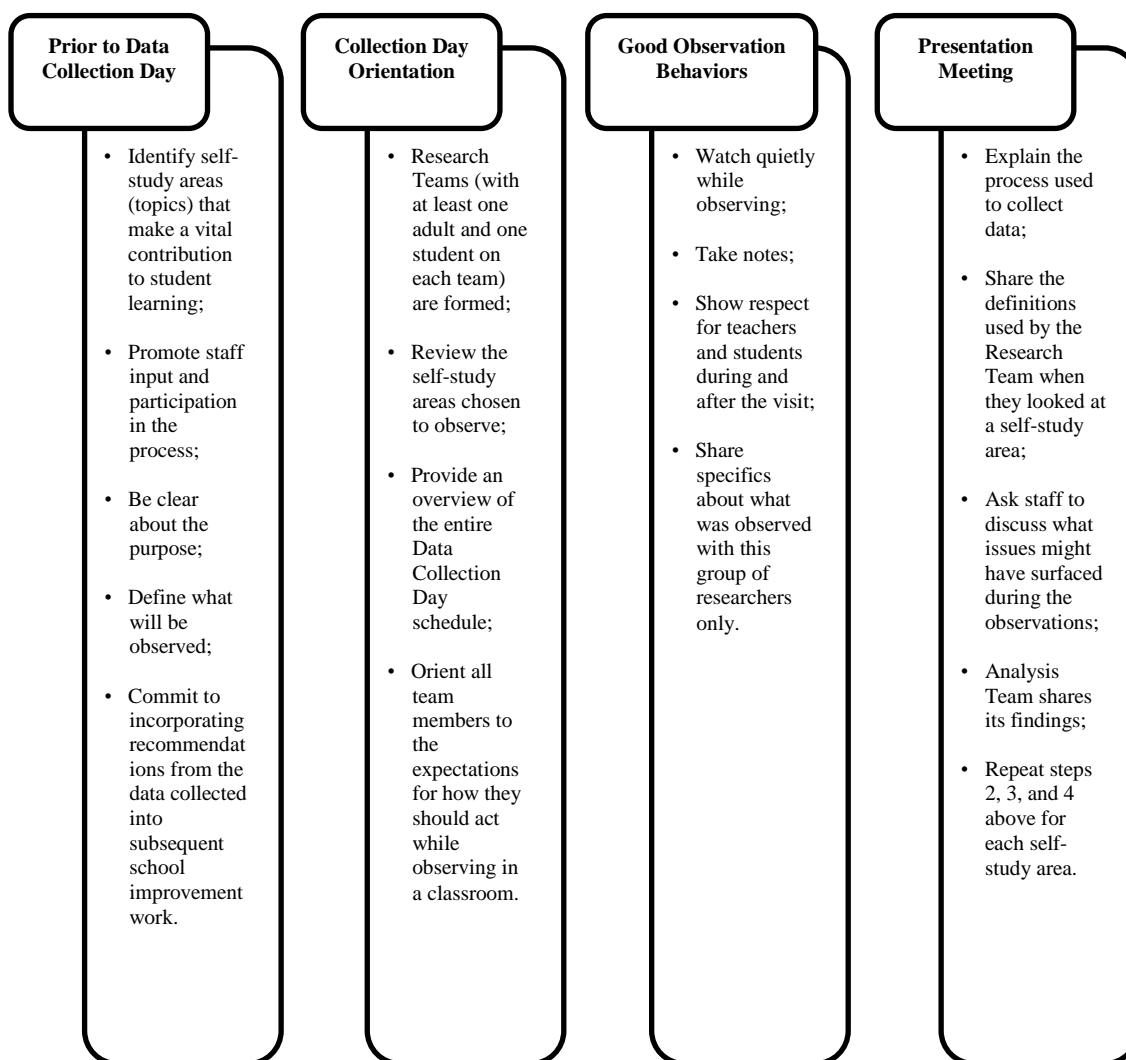
Walkthrough Model	Teacher Name	Objective of Lesson	Instructional Practices	Student Engagement	General Feedback
Data-in-a-Day	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Downey Three-Minute	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
The Learning Walk	No	Determined by team	Determined by team	Determined by team	No
PALLS	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
UCLA SMP	No	No	Determined by team	Determined by team	Yes



## Appendix D

**Commonly Utilized Classroom Walkthrough Models**

## Data-in-a-Day Process



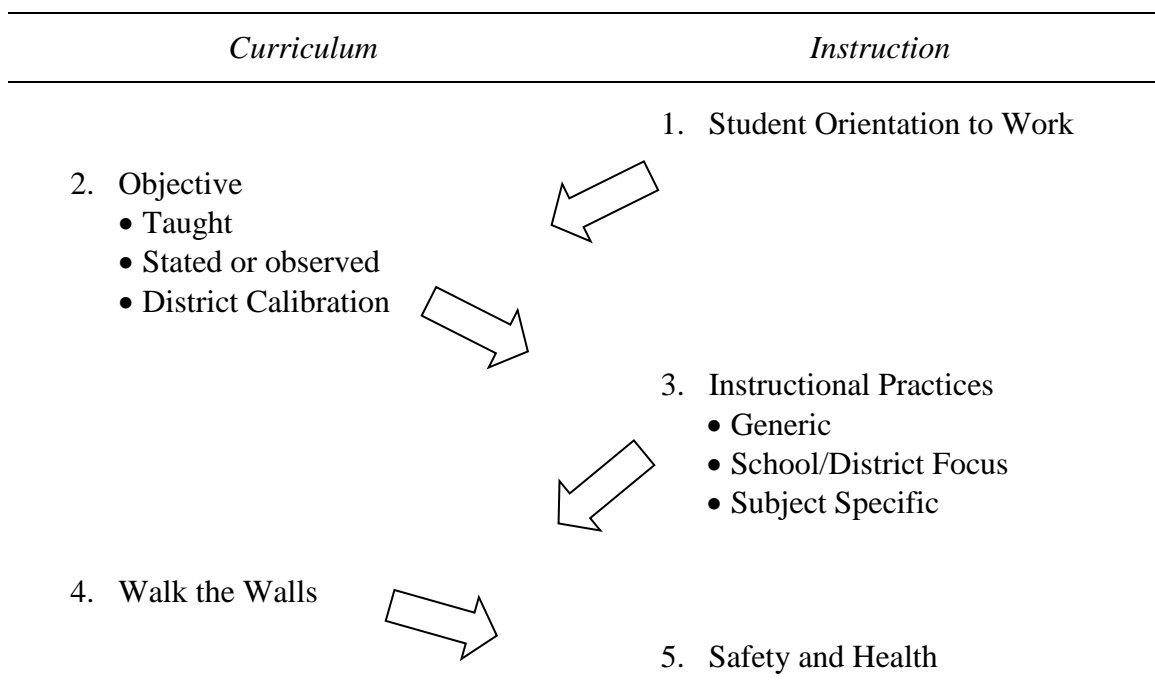
*Note.* From Blum & Shaughnessy, 2000.

### Data-in-a-Day Observation Form

<b>Data-in-a-Day Observation Form</b>	
Grade level _____	What is being taught _____
Research team _____	Brief description of classroom _____
Observation number 1 2 3 (circle one)	_____ (if helpful, sketch room layout on back)
<b>Observation for the practice of:</b> _____	
Number of examples of this practice:	
Strengths:	
Concerns/questions:	
<b>Observation for the practice of:</b> _____	
Number of examples of this practice:	
Strengths:	
Concerns/questions:	
<b>Observation for the practice of:</b> _____	
Number of examples of this practice:	
Strengths:	
Concerns/questions:	

*Note.* From Blum & Shaughnessy, 2000.

### Three-Minute Classroom Walk-Through Process



*Note.* Five-step walk-through observation structure. Adapted from Downey et al., 2004, p. 41.

### Three-Minute Classroom Walk-Through Observation Form

#### Three-Minute Classroom Walk-Through Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Hour: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Student orientation to the work: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Curriculum Decision Points

#### Part I: Actual Observed Taught Curriculum

A. Content of the taught objective—Skill, knowledge, process, concept to be learned:

\_\_\_\_\_

B. Context of the taught objective—Conditions under which a student demonstrates the content:

• Givens: \_\_\_\_\_

• Nature of student response: \_\_\_\_\_

• Vocabulary specific to the content: \_\_\_\_\_

• Cognitive Type—K, C, Ap, An, S, E \_\_\_\_\_

#### Part II: Stated or Observed Objective, if Easily Observed

**Part III: District Calibration** (If you have your district curriculum, use it here.)

3. Instructional Practice Decision Points

**Part I: Generic Practices** \_\_\_\_\_

**Part II: School/District Focus** \_\_\_\_\_

**Part III: Subject Area Practices**

*Note.* From Downey et al., 2004.

## Learning Walk Protocol

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### *Learning Walk Protocol*

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- Orientation of Staff
- Orientation of Walkers
- Classroom Visits
- Hall Talk
- Debrief
- Written or Oral Feedback to Staff

---

*Note.* From Goldman et al., 2004.

### The Learning Walk Form

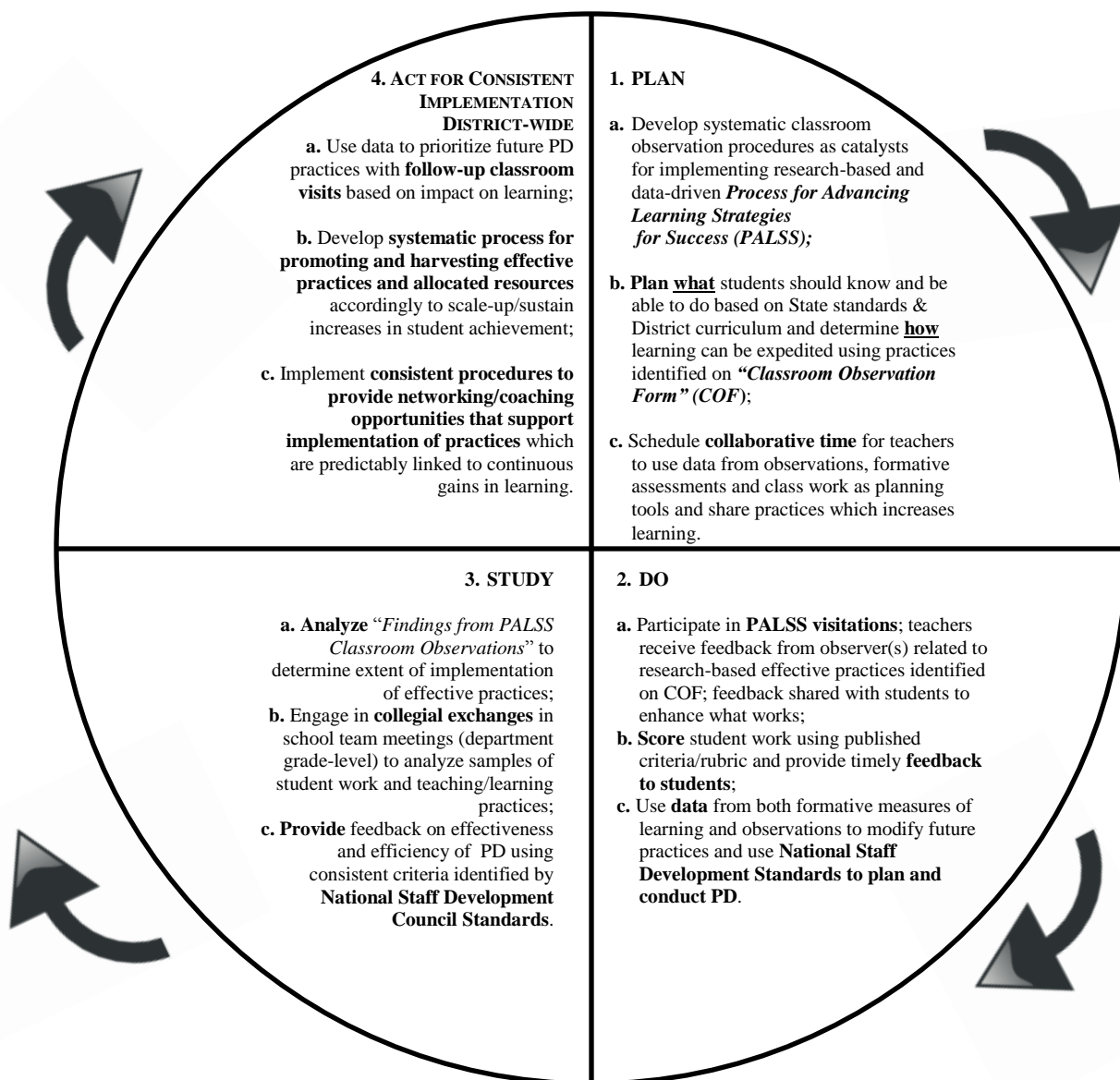
School		Date	
Participants		Time	
Grade/Subject		Observation #	
Number of Students	Type of Class: <input type="radio"/> SpE <input type="radio"/> ELL <input type="radio"/> SEI <input type="radio"/> Inclusion <input type="radio"/> Regular Ed		
Number of Teacher(s)		Licensure	Years Teaching
Standard(s)			
Objective(s)			

Focus of Inquiry	
Criteria (e.g. Elements of the Standards-Based Teaching and Learning: Continuum of Practice or other Framework, if relevant)	Related Evidence

*Note.* From Goldman et al., 2004.



## Process for Advancing Learning Strategies for Success (PALSS).



*Note.* Continuous improvement process for implementing classroom observations = professional development. From Cross & Jofus, LLC, 2011, p. 11.

**PALLS Form***(Front)***Classroom Observation Form**

District: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time In: \_\_\_\_\_ Time Out: \_\_\_\_\_ Subject/Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

No. of students: \_\_\_\_\_ Standard: \_\_\_\_\_

Observer: \_\_\_\_\_

Objective/Task students demonstrate by end of lesson (link to thinking level)

\_\_\_\_\_

THINKING LEVEL (Mark highest level):

- Knowledge (recall)
- Comprehension (interpret)
- Application (use)
- Analysis (examine)
- Synthesis (create)
- Evaluation (judge)

**PALLS Form**

*(Back)*

**Classroom Observation Form**

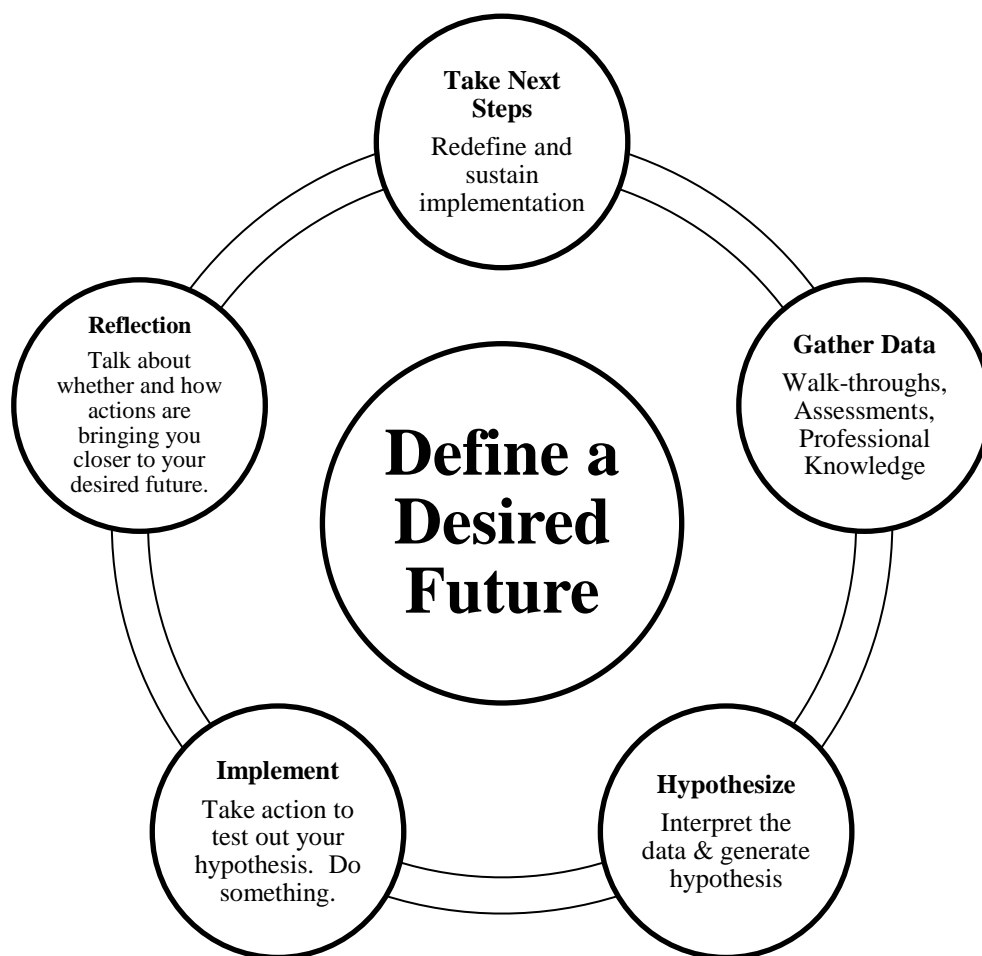
<b>TEACHING PRACTICES</b>	<b>STUDENT LEARNING PRACTICES</b>
<p><b>1. Environment/Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Orderly/Clean/Well-Managed</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Safe/Conducive to learning</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Evidence of student work is displayed</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Technology</li> </ul>	<p><b>2. Environment/Resources Used</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Textbooks</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Supplemental materials (tools)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Manipulatives</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Technology: _____</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Worksheets (circle types: multiple-choice, fill-in, open-ended)</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Designing Instructional Planning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Standards/skill-based lesson communicated</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Explicit instruction/teacher in put</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Modeling/Demonstrated expected learning</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Checking for understanding to assess skills</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Guided practice under supervision</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Independent practice/Homework</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Evaluation of learning progress</li> </ul>	<p><b>4. Design/Participation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Asks/answers questions</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Engages actively in classwork (circle extent: 0-30%; 31-69%; 70-100%)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates expected learning independently</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Receives feedback on performance</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates self-evaluation of learning progress</li> </ul>

<p><b>5. Strategies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Adjust for multiple learning styles (circle all that apply: (auditory/visual/kinesthetic)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Incorporate culturally responsive readings/perspectives/materials</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Address diverse language needs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Target research-based practices that accelerate learning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Identify similarities &amp; differences</li> <li>○ Summarize &amp; take notes</li> <li>○ Reinforce efforts &amp; provide recognition</li> <li>○ Use homework &amp; practice opportunities</li> <li>○ Represent knowledge using linguistic/non-linguistic forms of information</li> <li>○ Organize learning in groups; cooperative learning/pairs/small groups</li> <li>○ Set objectives &amp; provide immediate/continuous feedback</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>6. Strategies Demonstrated</b></p> <p>Demonstrates knowledge in multiple ways (circle all that apply):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ interpersonal, intrapersonal, verbal-linguistic, logistical-mathematical, visual-spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical-rhythmic)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Experiences differentiated instruction with modified content, processes/activities and/or products/assignments</li> </ul> <p><b>7. Comments to Teacher</b></p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Generate &amp; test hypotheses</li><li>○ Use cues, questions &amp; advance organize</li></ul>	
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*Note.* PALLS Form. From Cross & Jofstus, LLC, 2011, p. 12.

## UCLA School Management Program (SMP)



*Note.* Walk-throughs as part of a cycle of improvement. From Cervone & Martinez-Miller, 2007b.

**UCLA School Management Program****Walk-Through Graphic Organizer**

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Subject \_\_\_\_\_ Grade Level \_\_\_\_\_

Focus Question: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Observations</b>	<b>Notes, Thoughts, and Questions</b>

*Note.* UCLA School Management Program. Walk-Through Graphic Organizer. From Cervone & Martinez-Miller, 2007b.

## Appendix E

**Kansas Learning Network Timeline**

2008-2009—Five school districts became the pilot group for the Kansas Learning Network: Garden City, Kansas City Kansas, Topeka, Turner, and Wichita.

2009-2010—The Coffeyville, Goodland, Haysville, Iola, Leavenworth, Liberal, Morris County, Mullinville, Ottawa, Parsons, Peabody-Burns, and Ulysses School Districts joined the KLN bringing the total number of members to 17.

2010-2011—Ten districts joined the network and included Chanute, Columbus, Dodge City, Fort Scott, Geary County, Hutchison, Independence, Kingman-Norwich, Pittsburg, and South Brown County school districts. The Turner School District made AYP and exited the Kansas Learning Network, leaving a total of 26 districts in the network.

2011-2012—The Atchison, Blue Stem, Colby, Derby, Emporia, Ft. Larned, Lansing, McClouth, Salina, Satanta, Shawnee Heights, and Stanton County school districts joined the KLN. The Iola, Peabody-Burns, and Parsons School Districts met AYP targets and exited The Kansas Learning Network. The Mullinville district reorganized and merged with another district. As a result, they are no longer a part of the network. As of September 2011, 34 school districts made up the Kansas Learning Network (<http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=4465>).



## Appendix F

*Number of Schools by Classification in Each KLN District*

	Elem <sup>a</sup>	Elem/Mid <sup>b</sup>	Junior High <sup>c</sup>	Jun/High <sup>d</sup>	Total
Atchison	1		1	1	3
Bluestem	1			1	2
Chanute	1	1		1	3
Coffeyville	1		1	1	3
Colby	1	1		1	3
Columbus	2	1		1	4
Derby	9	1	1	1	12
Dodge City	10		1	1	12
Emporia	6	1		1	8
Fort Scott	2	1		1	4
Ft. Larned	3	1		1	5
Garden City	13		2	1	16
Geary County	14	2		1	17
Goodland	2	1		1	4
Haysville	6	2		1	9
Hutchinson	8	1		1	10
Independence	2	1		1	4
Kansas City, Kansas	30	8		5	43
Kingman-Norwich	2	2		2	6
Lansing	1	1		1	3
Leavenworth	5		1	1	7
Liberal	9		2	1	12
McLouth	1	1		1	3
Morris County	2	1		1	4
Ottawa	3	1		1	5
Pittsburg	4	1		1	6
Salina	8	2		2	12
Satanta	1			1	2
Shawnee Heights	4		1	1	6
South Brown County	1	1		1	3
Stanton County	1			1	2
Topeka	18	6		3	27
Ulysses	2	1		1	4
Wichita	56	17		8	81

Totals	230	56	10	49	345
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<sup>a</sup> Schools containing some combination of grades kindergarten through six; that did include kindergarten, first, second, third, fifth, or sixth grade. This classification included schools that were made up of only fifth and sixth grade. This classification excluded grades seven through 12.

<sup>b</sup> Schools containing some combination of grades kindergarten through eight but that did include grade four, five, or six. This classification excluded grades nine through 12.

<sup>c</sup> Schools containing some combination of grades seven through eight but that did include grade seven or eight. This classification excluded grades kindergarten through sixth and nine through 12.

<sup>d</sup> Schools with a seven through 12 or nine through 12 grade configuration.

## Appendix G

## Survey Questionnaire

**Classroom Walkthroughs: Impact on Student Achievement**

*Principals: Please click on your selected response for each item.*

**Consent to Participate**

1. I indicate my consent to participate by checking Permission Granted.
  - a. Yes
  - b. No (If “No,” survey terminates)

**Demographic Questions**

2. Including this school year, how many years have you served in your *current* administrative position?
  - a. 1-5 years
  - b. 6-10 years
  - c. 11 or more years
3. Including this school year, how many years have you served as an administrator in *this* or *any other* school district?
  - a. 1-5 years
  - b. 6-10 years
  - c. 11 or more years

4. Which classification best describes your school?
- a. Elementary—defined as schools containing some combination of grades K-6 but must include K, 1, 2, 3, 5, **or** 6. This classification includes 5-6 buildings and excludes grades 7-12.
  - b. Elementary/Middle—defined as schools containing some combination of grades K-8, but must include grade 4, 5, **or** 6. This classification excludes grades 9-12.
  - c. Junior High—defined as schools containing some combination of grades 7-8 but must include 7 **or** 8. This classification excludes K-6 and 9-12.
  - d. Junior High/High School—defined as schools with a 7-12 configuration **or** 9-12 configuration.

5. How many students are in your school?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Did your school make adequately yearly progress (AYP) during the 2010-2011 school year?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Not Applicable

**Questions Regarding the Classroom Walkthrough Process**

7. Do you conduct classroom walkthroughs in your school?
- a. Yes
  - b. No (If “No,” see Skip Pattern for Principals Who Do Not Conduct Classroom Walkthroughs)

8. How many years have you conducted classroom walkthroughs?
  - a. 1-2
  - b. 3-4
  - c. 5 or more
  
9. Which of the following statements best describes your current situation?
  - a. Classroom walkthroughs are mandated by central office administration.
  - b. I complete classroom walkthroughs through my own initiative.
  
10. What professional development have you engaged in regarding the use of a classroom walkthrough process? (check all that apply)
  - a. Read books and/or articles on classroom walkthroughs.
  - b. Attended conferences and/or workshops on classroom walkthroughs.
  - c. Participated in district-led training on the use of a specific classroom walkthrough model.
  - d. All of the above.
  - e. None of the above.

11. Which theoretical framework listed below best describes your district's classroom walkthrough process?
- a. Data-in-a-Day (DIAD)
  - b. Downey Three-Minute Classroom Walk-Through
  - c. Learning Walk
  - d. Process for Advancing Learning Strategies for Success (PALSS)
  - e. UCLA SMP Classroom Walk-Through
  - f. Other model not listed OR I use my own method as there is no district-approved classroom walkthrough process. Please describe.
12. On average, how many classroom walkthroughs do you conduct each week?
- a. 1-5
  - b. 6-10
  - c. 11-15
  - d. 16 or more
13. On average, how long does a classroom walkthrough last in your school?
- a. 0-2 minutes
  - b. 3-5 minutes
  - c. 6-10 minutes
  - d. 11 minutes or longer
14. Do you share aggregated classroom walkthrough data with your faculty?
- a. Yes
  - b. No (If "No," skip pattern will take respondents to question #16)

15. How do you share aggregated classroom walkthrough data? (check all that apply)
- a. With the entire faculty.
  - b. In smaller groups (departments and/or grade level).
  - c. With individuals.
16. How often is aggregated classroom walkthrough data shared with staff?
- a. One to two times per month.
  - b. Once a month.
  - c. Once a quarter (4 times per year).
  - d. Once a semester (2 times per year).
  - e. Once a year.
17. In what form do you usually provide feedback after a classroom walkthrough has been completed?
- a. Mostly written (email and/or hard copy).
  - b. Mostly verbal (post-observation conference).
  - c. Verbal followed up by written.
  - d. Feedback is not typically provided after conducting classroom walkthroughs.

**Items Regarding Impact on Student Learning, Measurement of Research-Based Instructional Strategies, and Use to Inform and Evaluate Job-Embedded Professional Development**

*For the questions listed below, please use the following scale labels:*

*SA = Strongly Agree*

*A = Agree*

*D = Disagree*

*SD = Strongly Disagree*

*N/A = Not Applicable*

18. As a result of conducting classroom walkthroughs, I believe student learning has improved.
19. I believe our school's classroom walkthrough process effectively measures teacher use of research-based instructional strategies as identified by John Hattie (2008) and Robert Marzano (2003). Examples include, but are not limited to, teacher-provided feedback, metacognitive strategies, advanced organizers, and direct instruction.
20. I believe that data collected during classroom walkthroughs are used to inform the creation of job-embedded professional development.
21. I believe that the data collected during classroom walkthroughs are used to evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of previous job-embedded professional development.

*Please provide additional comments in the space provided:*

22. Other comments:

Click here to submit responses.

Thank you for participating!



**Skip Pattern for Principals Who Do Not Conduct Classroom Walkthroughs**

Question 6 determined a skip pattern for the survey. Respondents who indicated they did not conduct classroom walkthroughs were diverted to this item:

7. Which of the following most accurately describes you?
  - a. I would conduct classroom walkthroughs if training was provided
  - b. I do not see the benefit of conducting classroom walkthroughs
  - c. I am not familiar with the classroom walkthrough process

[Click here to submit responses.](#)

Thank you for participating!

## Appendix H



SCHOOL OF EDUCATION  
GRADUATE DEPARTMENT

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
IRB PROTOCOL NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_  
(IRB USE ONLY)

**IRB Request  
Proposal for Research  
Submitted to the Baker University Institutional Review Board**

**I. Research Investigator(s)** Dr. Dennis King and Ben Boothe

**Department(s)** School of Education Graduate Department

Name	Signature	
1. Dr. Dennis King	_____	, Major Advisor
2. Margaret Waterman	_____	, Research Analyst
3.	_____	, University Committee Member
4.	_____	, External Committee Member
	_____	

Principal Investigator: Ben Boothe

Phone: 913-219-2967

Email: benjamindboothe@stu.baker.edu

Mailing address: 4450 Springfield Street, Kansas City, Kansas 66103

Faculty sponsor: Dr. Dennis King

Phone: 913.491.4432

Email: dennis.king@bakeru.edu

Expected Category of Review: \_\_\_\_\_Exempt Expedited \_\_\_\_\_Full

## **II: Protocol Title: Classroom Walkthroughs: Impact on Student Achievement**

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### **Summary**

#### **In a sentence or two, please describe the background and purpose of the research.**

The study is being conducted to determine if elementary and secondary principals believe classroom walkthroughs impact student achievement. Additionally, the study is being conducted to gather principals' perceptions of the effectiveness of classroom walkthrough models to measure teacher use of research-based instructional strategies. Lastly, the study is being conducted to determine if classroom walkthrough data are used to design and evaluate job-embedded professional development.

#### **Briefly describe each condition or manipulation to be included within the study.**

There was no condition or manipulation in the study.

#### **What measures or observations will be taken in the study? If any questionnaire or other instruments are used, provide a brief description and attach a copy.**

The instrument is comprised of 22 items. Please see Appendix A. The survey is divided into three parts. Part one is designed to seek information about school and principal demographics. Part two gathers information about the school district's classroom walkthrough process. Part three measures principals' beliefs towards the classroom walkthrough model on student achievement, the effectiveness of the walkthrough model to measure teacher implementation of research-based instructional strategies, and if classroom walkthroughs are used to inform and evaluate job-embedded professional development.

Respondents will be given the opportunity to submit their contact information if they wish to receive the results of the study. The survey will be created using online survey software.

#### **Will the subjects encounter the risk of psychological, social, physical, or legal risk? If so, please describe the nature of the risk and any measures designed to mitigate that risk.**

There are no risks involved in the study.

#### **Will any stress to subjects be involved? If so, please describe.**

There is no stress involved in the study.

**Will the subjects be deceived or misled in any way? If so, include an outline or script of the debriefing.**

No. Information is only being gathered via an electronic survey.

**Will there be a request for information that subjects might consider to be personal or sensitive? If so, please include a description.**

No. Only factual information regarding the demographics of participants' school district and their perceptions will be collected.

**Will the subjects be presented with materials that might be considered to be offensive, threatening, or degrading? If so, please describe.**

No. Survey questions are focused on content relating to classroom walkthroughs and perceptions towards student achievement.

**Approximately how much time will be demanded of each subject?**

The survey is comprised of 22 items and will take participants approximately 5 minutes to complete.

**Who will be the subjects in this study? How will they be solicited or contacted? Provide an outline or script of the information which will be provided to subjects prior to their volunteering to participate. Include a copy of any written solicitation as well as an outline of any oral solicitation.**

The subjects of the study are principals of an elementary, middle school, junior high, or high school in the Kansas Learning Network (KLN). THE KLN was established in 2004 by the Kansas State Department of Education in an effort to provide assistance to Kansas schools and districts in the areas of evaluation, strategic planning, and overall improvement. The network is managed by the education policy consulting firm Cross & Joftus, LLC. KLN districts were identified by reviewing the history of the program on the Kansas State Department of Education website. Participants will be contacted via email. Please see an example of the invitation to participate in Appendix B.

**What steps will be taken to ensure that each subject's participation is voluntary? What if any inducements will be offered to the subjects for their participation?**

The respondent's participation is strictly voluntary as indicated in the initial correspondence. If principals choose not to participate, they will not fill out the survey. No inducements are being offered to participate.

**How will you ensure that the subjects give their consent prior to participating? Will a written consent form be used? If so, include the form. If not, explain why not.**

Participants will provide consent by marking the permission granted option within the survey. This will be further explained in the initial email invitation.

**Will any aspect of the data be made a part of any permanent record that can be identified with the subject? If so, please explain the necessity.**

Aggregate data can be defined as combining data collected from several individuals into a statistic or sample statistics. Individual responses will be compiled into frequencies and means and answers will be anonymous.

**Will the fact that a subject did or did not participate in a specific experiment or study be made part of any permanent record available to a supervisor, teacher or employer? If so, explain.**

No record will be kept of an individual's decision to participate or decline involvement.

**What steps will be taken to ensure the confidentiality of the data?**

Responses will not be identifiable by individual respondents. Participants will not be allowed to include their name or school or district affiliation when completing the survey.

**If there are any risks involved in the study, are there any offsetting benefits that might accrue to either the subjects or society?**

No risks are involved in this study.

**Will any data from files or archival data be used? If so, please describe.**

No. The only data that will be used will come from completed surveys.

## Appendix I

**IRB Approval**

March 20, 2012

Mr. Ben Boothe  
4450 Springfield Street  
Kansas City, Kansas 66103

Dear Mr. Boothe:

The Baker University IRB has reviewed your research project application (E-0132-0319-0320-G) and approved this project under Expedited Review. As described, the project complies with all the requirements and policies established by the University for protection of human subjects in research. Unless renewed, approval lapses one year after approval date.

The Baker University IRB requires that your consent form must include the date of approval and expiration date (one year from today). Please be aware of the following:

1. At designated intervals (usually annually) until the project is completed, a Project Status Report must be returned to the IRB.
2. Any significant change in the research protocol as described should be reviewed by this Committee prior to altering the project.
3. Notify the OIR about any new investigators not named in original application.
4. Any injury to a subject because of the research procedure must be reported to the IRB Chair or representative immediately.
5. When signed consent documents are required, the primary investigator must retain the signed consent documents for at least three years past completion of the research activity. If you use a signed consent form, provide a copy of the consent form to subjects at the time of consent.
6. If this is a funded project, keep a copy of this approval letter with your proposal/grant file.

Please inform Office of Institutional Research (OIR) or myself when this project is terminated. As noted above, you must also provide OIR with an annual status report and receive approval for maintaining your status. If your project receives funding which requests an annual update approval, you must request this from the IRB one month prior to the annual update. Thanks for your cooperation. If you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Doolittle, EdD  
Chair, Baker University IRB

## Appendix J

**Survey Correspondence****1. Initial email requesting participation in classroom walkthrough study.**

**From:** Ben Boothe [mailto:benjamindboothe@stu.baker.edu]

**Sent:** Tuesday, March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2012 4:30AM

**To:** KLN Principals

**Subject:** Perceptions of the Classroom Walkthrough Process\_Survey

Good morning!

I am a candidate for a doctoral degree at Baker University. To fulfill the partial requirements of my degree, I am writing to request your participation in a brief survey about principals' perceptions regarding the classroom walkthrough process. The survey should take you no longer than 5 minutes to complete and can be found at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/F5L5J27>.

Please indicate your consent to participate by checking the "Permission Granted" option on the first screen of the survey. Your responses will be anonymous and used to complete the study. Participation is strictly voluntary.

**The survey will close at 6:00pm on Thursday, April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2012.**

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [benjamindboothe@stu.baker.edu](mailto:benjamindboothe@stu.baker.edu) or by phone at (913) 219-2967.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Ben Boothe

**2. E-Mail follow-up reminder/request to complete classroom walkthrough survey.****From:** Ben Boothe [mailto:benjamindboothe@stu.baker.edu]**Sent:** Tuesday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2012 4:30AM**To:** KLN Principals**Subject:** Survey Reminder\_Perceptions of the Classroom Walkthrough Process

Good morning!

Recently, you were invited to participate in a study because you are the principal of a public school. If you have already completed the survey, thank you for your time and effort. If you have not, please be reminded that the purpose of this study is to examine principals' perceptions of the classroom walkthrough process. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to click on a link in order to fill out a web-based survey regarding your perceptions of the classroom walkthrough process. This survey will take approximately 5 minutes and closes at **6:00pm on Thursday, April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2012.**

Please indicate your consent to participate by checking the "Permission Granted" option on the first screen of the survey. For further information about the study, please contact Ben Boothe, principal investigator, by email at benjamindboothe@stu.baker.edu or phone at (913) 219-2967.

**CLICK TO TAKE THE SURVEY**

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/F5L5J27>

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Ben Boothe



**3. Final E-Mail reminder/request to complete classroom walkthrough survey.****From:** Ben Boothe [mailto:benjamindboothe@stu.baker.edu]**Sent:** Tuesday, April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2012 4:30AM**To:** KLN Principals**Subject:** Final Reminder\_Perceptions of the Classroom Walkthrough Process Survey

Good morning!

Two weeks ago, you received an invitation to take part in a study because you are the principal of a public school. If you have already completed the survey, thank you for your time and effort. If you have not, please consider completing this survey prior to Thursday, April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Your participation will provide important information regarding principals' perceptions of the classroom walkthrough process. This survey will take approximately 5 minutes.

Please indicate your consent to participate by checking the "Permission Granted" option on the first screen of the survey. For further information about the study, please contact Ben Boothe, principal investigator, by email at benjamindboothe@stu.baker.edu or phone at (913) 219-2967.

**CLICK TO TAKE THE SURVEY**

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/F5L5J27>

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Ben Boothe