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How one school implements and experiences Ohio's Value -added model: A case study

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HOW ONE SCHOOL IMPLEMENTS AND EXPERIENCES OHIO'S VALUE-ADDED
MODEL: A CASE STUDY

David Quattrochi

Dissertation submitted to the
College of Human Resources and Education
at West Virginia University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Doctor of Education
in
Educational Leadership Studies

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ABSTRACT

How One School Implements and Experiences Ohio's Value-Added Model: A Case Study

David Quattrochi

Ohio made value-added law in 2003 and incorporated value-added assessment to its operating standards for teachers and administrators in 2006. Value-added data is used to determine if students are making a year's growth at the end of each school year. Schools and districts receive a rating of "Below Growth, Met Growth, or Above Growth" on the state report card.

Value-added data produces valuable information that can be utilized by teachers and administrators for school improvement efforts. This case study examines how one school implemented and experienced Ohio's Value-added model. Few, if any, case studies exist on this topic. The study included teacher, principal, and stakeholder interviews, observations, and document analysis. The Constant Comparative Method (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994) was used to code and compare data collected from the following four questions: (1) How is value-added assessment being implemented and what does that mean to teachers, principals, and stakeholders? (2) What is the context of Ohio's Value-added model at the school level? (3) What are the types of services and training received by administrators and teachers? and (4) What are the effects of Ohio's Value-added model?

Results from this study show that twelve themes emerged from the research collected at one rural elementary school in Ohio. It was also determined that no established framework for Ohio's Value-added model existed. Therefore, four guiding principles of the model were founded on selected and pertinent research. They include: (1) Student Achievement, Student Growth, and Student Success; (2) Teacher and Administrative Quality and Professional Development; (3) Leadership of the Model; and (4) Stakeholder Enlistment and Support.

Results from the study can be used: (1) to give administrators a ground-view of what it is like to experience and implement Ohio's Value-added model at the building level; (2) to examine other teachers' perceptions of the model; (3) to provide information to parents on the model; and (4) to give policymakers further insight to how schools and districts can meet Adequate Yearly Progress. Findings suggest that effective school leaders have the ability to influence and motivate teachers to carry out change in a culture that is based on trust. This type of culture allows teachers time to collaborate and discuss how teaching and learning can be improved by examining student data. However, findings from this study indicate that value-added data should not be used to evaluate teachers; rather, it should be used to improve the instructional process so all student academic levels are met.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Dolores, who suddenly passed away while taking my first graduate class at West Virginia University. I never got to thank you enough for the love, support, and encouragement you have given me. I thank you for the strength to continue this endeavor. I know you are looking down from heaven and smiling at me. I love you.

I also want to dedicate this research to my son Angelo, who has endured a lot during this grueling process. I appreciate your patience and I am very blessed to have you as my son.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

All students deserve a free and appropriate public education (Rehabilitation Act of 1973). I work with educator's everyday with the intentions of wiping out obstacles that surround socio-economic status. It is my belief that strong leaders are artists who have the ability to inspire others toward excellence. Continued teacher and student learning must be at the forefront of education in order to improve student growth and success. It is a passion of mine to understand how we can work with students to help them grow. Thus, value-added assessment is one way to measure student growth and success.

In my introduction, I discuss the research topic, the problem in context, why I propose to study one rural elementary school in Ohio, my reasons for conducting this qualitative study, and the research questions. I conclude the chapter with a brief summary.

The Research Topic

In 1966, Sociologist James L. Coleman conducted research on the effects of family and schooling in the United States. Coleman's report suggested that 90 percent of the variance in student achievement was a result of student background characteristics (Marzano, 2003). On the other hand, William Sanders, who created the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment Model, argued that teachers are the most important influence on student achievement, regardless of the child's socioeconomic status (Archer, 1999).

Value-added assessment is a complex statistical method used to measure a school's impact on students' rates of academic progress from year to year. The Ohio State Department of Education (ODE) revised its operating standards in 2006 to include value-added assessment. According to Ohio's Operating Standards (2006), all public schools will "... implement a value-

added progress dimension for school districts and buildings...” and “...incorporate the value-added progress dimension into the report cards and performance ratings issued for districts and buildings...”(Section 3302.021 [A]). Students begin school at different places and progress at different rates. Thus, Ohio’s Value-added model takes into account that schools must have a metric that provides reliable feedback on the work schools produce.

The incorporation of value-added assessment to Ohio’s operating standards impacts teacher and administrator decision-making at the district and building level. Value-added data can be used to make informed decisions about curriculum, instruction, assessment, and goals. Based on the literature, this researcher’s definition of the Ohio value-added model is founded on the following four principles: (a) student achievement, student growth, and student success; (b) teacher and administrative quality and professional development; (c) leadership of the model; and (d) all stakeholders enlistment and support. To round out the chapter, two case studies have been set in place as a forward to the method of research. Since all citizens who function in a school district are stakeholders of what the school is doing, they should have an interest in the success of all students.

Student achievement, Student Growth, and Student Success

In the state of Ohio, standardized testing is one of several ways to measure student achievement. All students in grades three through eight attending a public school must take the Ohio Achievement Test (OAT). Each year, the ODE publishes a report card for the state and for each public school system and school in the state. The report card provides a summary of student performance. The performance level shows how well students did on a test. For example, there are five levels (from highest to lowest) for reading: Advanced, Accelerated, Proficient, Basic, and Limited. Students must pass the test with at least a proficient score. Thus, summative assessments alone are not enough to determine how much a student is learning. Stiggins (2005)

contends that teachers who solely rely on summative assessments are unable to transform standards into high-quality classroom assessments.

Bloom's research in the early 1960's concentrated on the explanation of variation in regards to student achievement. Bloom's work suggests that teachers have a strong effect on student growth:

Learning is a process which can be observed and evaluated as it is taking place.

Formative evaluation can be used to make the process more effective long before the summative evaluation. Recognition of the interactions among formative evaluation, teaching, and learning, and summative evaluations can do much to improve teaching and learning before it is too late. (Bloom, 1976, p.176)

The measurement of student growth is a key component of value-added assessment. Thus, the Ohio value-added model focuses on how much "gain" or "growth" a student or groups of students make over time.

Because students are the primary stakeholders in the learning process, it is important for educators to "...ensure that every student leaves school with the knowledge and skill to continue learning and achieving at high levels" (Danielson, 2002, p.xiii). Thus, student success is getting all students to become productive citizens in our society. Administrators and teachers play a critical role in promoting high-level learning skills that are transferable in our global economy.

Teacher and Administrative Quality and Professional Development

Quality teachers have a thorough understanding of their content area, use research-based instructional strategies, and implement various assessment strategies to raise student achievement (Standards for Staff Development, 2001). According to the Standards for Ohio Educators (SOE, 2005), quality teaching involves aligning lessons to the Ohio Academic Content Standards, having high expectations for all students, creating positive learning environments,

collaborating and communicating with other teachers, parents, and stakeholders, and assuming responsibility for professional growth. These qualities fall under the seven standards for Ohio teachers, which include students, content, assessment, instruction, learning environment, collaboration and communication and professional responsibility and growth.

With the implementation of Ohio's Value-added model, teachers now can obtain important student diagnostic information not previously available with traditional achievement reporting. This information can be used to make important pedagogical decisions at the classroom level by using meaningful professional development. Teachers are able to use value-added data to provide appropriate intervention or enrichment or modify instruction to maximize student growth. Teachers are better able to monitor student's progress through formative benchmarks, predict students' future academic performance, differentiate instruction to address all students' needs and align professional development efforts in the areas of greatest need in a timely fashion.

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 requires the ODE to annually report the percentage of teachers who have participated in High Quality Professional Development (HQPD). This report pertains to all elementary and secondary teachers in Ohio public school districts. The SOE (2005) contends that effective professional development should "...meet the needs of educators by responding to the needs of students" (p. 61). Professional development should be an ongoing process embedded in the school day. Job-embedded professional development gives all educators the opportunity to systematically plan, implement, reflect, and maintain HQPD. There are three levels of performance for teachers. They include Proficient Level, Accomplished Level, and Distinguished Level. All teachers are expected to reach both a proficient and accomplished level during their career. Teachers are not the only educators who must participate in HQPD. The SOE holds that, "...principals should use the Ohio teacher

standards as they seek ways to develop, support, and retain high-quality teachers. The standards create a common language for coaching and mentoring purposes” (p.9). Principals must facilitate, collect, and analyze data about the school’s progress toward attaining established goals using job-embedded professional development. For administrators to achieve excellence in their work, they must be instructional leaders that support the implementation of high-quality standards-based instruction that results in higher levels of student achievement and success.

Leadership of the Model

According to the OSE, principals should be leaders who create a shared vision, support the implementation of research-based standards for instruction, allocate resources and manage school operations, establish and sustain a collaborative learning community, and engage parents and stakeholders in the educational process. Research suggests that transformational leaders must have a working knowledge of Ohio’s Standards for Principals. Ubban, Hughs, and Norris (2001) define transformational leadership as a principal who “...inspires others toward collaboration and interdependence as they work toward a purpose to which they are deeply committed” (p.14). Fullan (2002) contends that effective leaders commit to a compelling vision that drives the learning organization toward higher performance levels for sustained student improvement.

The implementation of value-added assessment allows district and building administrators to use value-added diagnostic reports to make informed, data driven decisions about where to focus resources to help students make greater progress and perform at higher levels. Also, administrators can benchmark progress against other districts and schools, which directly impacts the school, community, and other stakeholder relationships.

Stakeholder Enlistment and Support

Student-level reports provide parents important information about their child. Parents can use this information, along with the results from homework and other class assignments, to talk

to teachers and others about the best ways to support their child learning. Hord and Sommers (2008) report that parents and community members help make up a professional learning community. A professional learning community encompasses school professional learning, stakeholder involvement, and collaboration for stakeholders to give and receive feedback that supports the goals of the learning organization. It is a two-fold process because the community member and stakeholders are enlisted due to their shared vision and support, which becomes an abundant outflow of the leadership and communication effort. The four guiding principles that support Ohio's value-added model and the SOE will provide a background for conducting a case study of one elementary school in Ohio.

This research is based on one elementary school, and the focus is on how the teachers and administrators of a rural elementary school implement and experience the Ohio value-added model. Sanders and Wright (2001) believes that teachers should be adding at least one year of academic growth to their students' learning in one year's time. The term "value-added" can be reduced to a fundamental question; "How much has a school added to a student's learning?" (Doran, 2003, p.4). To date, few qualitative studies exist on this topic. Vaishnav (2005) reports that all questions pertaining to value-added assessment have not been answered. The value-added statistical calculations are very technical and the predictions of student progress can be misleading. Because little is known about principals' views and experiences on value-added assessment in Ohio, a descriptive case study employing multiple strategies will be used to investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context.

Statement of the Problem

In 1992, legislators in Tennessee passed the Education Improvement Act to hold educators accountable for their performance. During this period, Sanders (2001) began studying the effects of value-added assessment for the state of Tennessee. The Tennessee Value-Added

Assessment System (TVASS) or *Sanders Model* is a statistical mixed-model methodology comprised of a multivariate and longitudinal analysis of student data. Between 1991 and 1995, Sanders used a database exceeding 5 million records of Tennessee students in second to fifth grade to determine teacher quality. The teachers, who were in the fifth quintile or most effective category, raised their students' achievement test scores by 39 percentile points when compared to the first quintile or least effective category (Crane, 2002). Effective teachers have the ability to increase test scores regardless if it is a heterogeneous or homogeneous classroom.

Mendro's findings were comparable to Sanders Tennessee studies. Student data from the fourth grade test scores were compared to their seventh grade test scores three years later. The findings suggest that when students had three consecutive years of effective teaching, virtually all students passed the seventh grade achievement test. However, only 42 percent of the low-achieving students passed the seventh grade achievement test with an ineffective teacher. Three years in a row of ineffective teachers had less impact on the middle-and high achieving students (Bracey, 2004). However, other researchers have criticized the validity and short falls of value-added assessment. Few researchers have depicted a clear qualitative picture of what value-added assessment looks like at the ground level. Educators across the board need to have a clear understanding of what is actually going on in these schools.

Kupermintz (2004) raises important questions regarding the Tennessee studies and its accurate estimates of teacher effectiveness. The TVASS model does not take into account how students were grouped for Sanders' study. In addition, the studies failed to explain why certain teachers outperformed others. Olson (1998) believes that some educators have serious questions regarding the complexity of the model. Therefore, there is a good chance that the public will criticize the model for using language and statistical formulas that are too complex and confusing.

Ohio has adopted the model because it shows promise and has trained teachers and administrators in the value-added model. No one has told the story of how Ohio's value-added model affects the people experiencing and implementing this model. Therefore, data from this in-depth case study of one elementary school will provide educators, parents, stakeholders, and policymakers an up close and personal view of Ohio's value-added model and its effects on everyone involved.

Studying One Elementary School

In 2002, Battelle for Kids, a non-profit organization located in Columbus, Ohio, created Project Schools' Online Assessment Reports (SOAR). This statewide pilot, in conjunction with ODE, introduced value-added analysis to 42 districts in Ohio. Participating schools received professional development and tools to support this initiative. In 2003, legislators passed Ohio House Bill 3, which made value-added part of Ohio law. It is evident that Ohio is committed to implementing value-added assessment as an accountability tool to measure student yearly growth.

Quantitative studies depict one view of the value-added assessment model as it relates to determining teacher effectiveness. Doran and Fleischman (2005) contend there is no empirical research that backs the assertion claiming value-added models can accurately identify effective teachers. Because value-added is a new area of assessment, a case study will provide a more in-depth understanding of Ohio's value-added model. "The purpose is to gather comprehensive, systematic, and in-depth information about each case of interest" (Patton, p 447, 2002).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to give a detailed description of how one school experiences and implements Ohio's value-added model. The following are four research questions I want to answer:

1. How is value-added assessment being implemented and what does that mean to teachers, principals, and stakeholders?
2. What is the context of Ohio's value-added model at the school level? The background of this question involves how school culture is impacted by the use of value-added data for school improvement efforts.
3. What are the types of services and training received by administrators and teachers?
4. What are the effects of Ohio's value-added model?

There are four reasons for conducting this study. The first is to give school administrators a detailed perspective of how principals are affected by Ohio's value-added model. The second is to provide pertinent information to teachers regarding the implementation of Ohio's value-added model. The third is to provide parents information on the value-added model. The fourth is to give policy makers an added view of how Ohio's value-added model impacts administrators, teachers, and parents.

The following are a list of important terms used in this study:

1. Adequate Yearly Progress is one of four criterion used by the Ohio Department of Education that focuses on test participation and proficiency rate goals.
2. District Value-Added Specialists are both selected teachers and building administrators who were trained in Ohio's Value-added model.
3. High quality professional development is meaningful and structured professional development that is aligned with the schools goals and vision using data to analyze student and teacher learning.
4. Job-embedded professional development is teacher professional development that takes place during the school day.

5. Ohio Achievement Tests are standardized tests given to public school students in grades three thru eight.
6. Ohio's Value-added model is a growth accountability measurement reported on the state report card to determine yearly student growth.
7. Professional learning communities have distinct characteristics that involve the collaboration of teachers, parents, and stakeholders both inside and outside the classroom to improve student performance.
8. Stakeholders are individuals who have a vested interest in the school.
9. Student achievement is the measurement of students using both summative and formative assessments.
10. Student growth is the amount a student progresses each year based on Ohio's Value-added model.
11. Student success is ensuring that all students leave school with the necessary knowledge and skills to be productive citizens in society.
12. Teacher quality is defined as teachers who use a well-articulated curriculum, plan for delivery, vary assessment, and give criterion feedback. (Pollock, 2007)
13. Transformational leadership is defined as a school leader who has a vision and the ability to inspire others toward a common goal, with an emphasis on instructional leadership.
14. Value-added assessment is a statistical model that measures student yearly growth.

A clear description of how one school has implemented the Ohio Value-added model presents a more detailed view of how administrators, teachers, and parents perceive and experience the implementation. This type of information, if acted upon, could improve administrative work, teacher work, and parent receipt of the model.

Inform School Administrators

All public schools in Ohio are participating in the value-added model beginning in 2006-2007. Information obtained from SOAR Districts can help other administrators make better decisions about how to implement and use value-added assessment in the schools. School leaders will need to understand the concept of value-added assessment and use value-added reports for school improvement efforts. “Value-added performance data can play an important role in aligning policies, resources, and instructional strategies” (Drury and Doran, 2003). A detailed description of how administrators and teachers perceive the implementation of value added assessment will augment the statistical analysis.

This study will give administrators a ground-view of what it is like to experience and implement value-added assessment at the building level. This single case study will, “...represent a significant contribution to knowledge and theory building. Such a study can even help to refocus future investigations in an entire field” (Yin, 2003, p. 48). The school administrator can also benefit greatly from teacher and parent perceptions on the value-added model. Their beliefs and assumptions in this case study can provide principals with a more holistic understanding of the model.

Inform Teachers

Haycock (2006) holds that teachers are the most important factor contributing to student achievement. One early study indicated that “...all else being equal, children who had a particularly good teacher in second grade continued to outperform their peers in third, fourth, and fifth grade” (Kidder, 2005, p3). Teacher quality is of great importance because students who have an ineffective teacher fall farther behind academically compared to those students with effective teachers.

According to the value-added model, the teacher is responsible for adding at least a year's value to student learning. The statistical formula used to predict student growth is based on multiple factors, such as prior achievement, ethnicity, and socio-economic status. Unfortunately, the research indicates that high-achieving students show the least growth from year to year (Wright, Horn, and Sanders, 1997). Surprisingly, even effective teachers were more likely to have more of an impact on low-and middle-achieving students. "Value-added does not prescribe remedies – teachers and principals must draw from their own knowledge and experience to create a plan to address the problems" (Evergreen Freedom Foundation, p.8).

Teachers can benefit from examining other teachers' perceptions of this model. The concept behind value-added assessment is not only to measure student yearly growth, but also to examine teacher quality in the classrooms. An in-depth study of teachers' perceptions of value-added assessment will give teachers an opportunity to gain valuable knowledge of this model. Thus, improving teacher quality will lead to improved student achievement. After all, Ohio's Value-added model is law, which means that all public school teachers as well as parents and other stakeholders must have working knowledge of this model.

Inform Parents

Each year, the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) publishes a report to each parent whose child attends a public school. According to the 39th Annual Phi Delta Kappa Gallup Poll on public's attitudes toward public schools, 52% of public school parents in the United States believe that there is too much emphasis on standardized testing (Rose and Gallup, 2007). Thus, the newly adopted value-added data on the state report card may alter parents' perceptions since standardized testing will not be the only measure of student achievement.

Information gathered from this study will be used to add to existing data on parent perceptions toward standardized testing. Because value-added assessment is new, parents should

have a basic understanding of its underlying principles. Research suggests that people are afraid of change. For instance, Kottler (2001) lists several reasons why individuals resist change. Some people may not recognize the need for change. Some people have a fear of the unknown. They prefer the security of the status quo to the uncertainty of what change may bring. They also may not believe the proposed change is an improvement to the current situation. Others may have low tolerance to change due to some personal predisposition or a previous bad experience with change. Therefore, it is imperative that parents have a solid understanding of how Ohio's Value-added model will affect their child's education. This study will provide a clearer picture of value-added assessment and ease any fears that parents may experience with its implementation.

Inform Policymakers

With the implementation of our current accountability system, there have been disagreements as to how improvements in student achievement should be accomplished (Sanders, 2000). In 2001, legislators passed the NCLB, which put an emphasis on high-stakes standardized testing. Policymakers are concerned with holding schools and districts accountable for student achievement.

In 2007-2008, value-added assessment will be used as one criterion in meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Ohio. Many at-risk students may make great strides, but still labeled deficient at the end of the academic school year because they cannot pass the achievement test. Thus, schools that fail to meet AYP two consecutive years are identified as needing improvement. Sanders (2003) agrees that the federal definition of AYP needs to be expanded to include value-added assessment. Multiple Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) do not rely on a single test score to determine student achievement and success. The NCLB Act has made state standards and high-stakes testing a priority for educational reform. However, Black and Wiliam (1998) believe that educational reforms are missing a key ingredient. This key ingredient is

multiple assessments. “A high-quality assessment system relies on a variety of assessments to provide timely and understandable information to all who need it, so they can make the instructional decisions that maximize student success” (Stiggins et al., 2004,p.28). Thus, descriptive information on Ohio’s value-added model can give policymakers further insight to how schools and districts can meet AYP on the state report card. Ohio’s Value-added model provides educators another way of assessing students. The information gathered would be used to inform policymakers at the state level.

Overview of the Method

My interest in value-added assessment began in October 2007 when I was principal of a rural elementary school in Ohio. As principal, I was trained as a District Value-Added Specialist (DVAS). The information I learned from this five-day training afforded me the opportunity to work directly with district value-added data and share my learned knowledge with staff. I implemented a value-added team at the building level, which consisted of one teacher from second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth grade. This team also received additional training from the Regional Value Added Specialist (RVAS). The value-added team has helped me to analyze data and brainstorm strategies for student and teacher improvement.

As a building administrator and DVAS, I believe a case study that includes direct observation of a SOAR school, interviews with a principal, teachers, and parents, and document analysis will add valuable insight for everyone involved in the educational process. Maykut and Morehouse (1994) contend that participant observations, in-depth interviews, and document analysis provide the researcher with relevant data used for inductive category coding. The *Constant Comparison Method* of data was used to code and compare data (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994).

Organization of Dissertation

The structure of this dissertation is as follows: (a) the research topic, problem in context, and purpose of the study in chapter 1; (b) the related literature pertinent to this study in chapter 2; (c) the methodology in chapter 3; (d) the research results in chapter 4; and (e) the discussion in chapter 5.

This study is unique because no one has told the story of how one school experiences and implements Ohio's value-added model. The research conducted in this study will provide educators, stakeholders, and policymakers a clearer picture of Ohio's value-added model.

Summary

Research indicates that value-added assessment can be used as an accountability tool to measure student yearly growth and to support better teaching in the classroom. (Zurawsky, 2004). Using a single KPI to measure student achievement is a human fallacy. The concept of value-added assessment brings another dimension to measuring student growth and success, rather than relying on one high-stakes standardized test. In addition, value-added is also designed to measure teacher quality. Creating a descriptive picture of Ohio's value-added model will give educators, parents, and policymakers a more meaningful in-depth view of what it is like to implement and experience value-added assessment.

Many researchers have established a framework for this particular study. However, this study is important because it gives an in depth view of how one school experiences and implements value added assessment. Although it is not a longitudinal study, it is a snapshot of Ohio's value-added model.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

My definition of the four guiding principles that support Ohio's value-added model are as follows: (a) student achievement, student growth, and student success; (b) teacher and administrative quality and professional development; (c) leadership of the model; and (d) stakeholder enlistment and support. A summary of what this research means and how it relates to the study will be included in this chapter. Using these four guiding principles, I synthesize and analyze the selected and pertinent literature to give a better understanding of Ohio's value-added model. The model currently does not have an established framework outlining the four guiding principles.

Chapter two relates the relevant research on the four guiding principals that supports Ohio's value-added model. The selected literature in Chapter two provides a common thread for linking the guiding principles to the Ohio's value-added model.

Student Success

Schools play an instrumental role in determining student success. However, many internal and external factors contribute to student success. Research suggests that schools are "...integral in helping students form their character, make decisions, and acquire lifelong assets" (Reeves, 2006, p. 93). According to Reeves, there are consistent themes that emerge in response to student success. These themes are as follows: (a) having a teacher who challenges the students; (b) supportive parents or relatives that boost self-esteem and set high expectations; and (c) having a positive, stimulating, and safe educational experience. Effective schools are powerful learning organizations that have the ability to contrast the *Pygmalion* effect. "These students clearly do not believe the myth that their destiny lies in their demographics" (p. 94).

Student success outside the classroom is measured by how productive graduates function in our high-tech global economy. Thus, schools in the 21st century must focus on high quality teaching and learning that challenges all students. Above all, educators must instill a culture of success in every aspect of the school. If this occurs, student success will lead to higher student achievement (Danielson, 2002).

Student Achievement

Beginning in the 1990's, accountability efforts by the federal government were enacted to improve student achievement. President Clinton enacted Goals 2000 in 1994. Funds were provided to states to develop standards and assessments. In 2001, the reality of attaching standardized testing to student achievement came true.

The NCLB Act is an educational initiative of President George W. Bush. It mandates states to implement yearly testing that is aligned with state academic standards in grades 3-8. The NCLB of 2001 mandated high stakes testing for all students; however, there have been disagreements as to how improvements in student achievement should be accomplished. The purpose of this legislation was to hold schools accountable for raising student achievement. The NCLB does not measure individual student growth and relies heavily on summative assessments.

The use of high-stakes tests to drive instruction does not improve student achievement. The NCLB testing requirements assumes that rewards and consequences imposed on districts will motivate learners toward higher achievement. Quite the opposite is true. Researchers have found that when rewards and sanctions are attached to standardize testing, students become less motivated and use less critical thinking skills in the classroom (Amrein and Berliner, 2002).

Although standardized tests provide districts with valuable student data, Danielson (2002) found the following:

...they can measure only a relatively small percentage of desired learning, and they are notoriously ill-suited to measuring higher-order skills, such as writing fluency and expressively, formulating and testing hypothesis, recognizing patterns, evaluating information, designing experiments, and solving complex problems (p. 7)

State-mandated standardized test should be only one of several ways to measure student achievement.

Lambert (2003) contends that the term “student achievement” means much more than the required achievement test students take at the end of the school year. There are multiple measures of student achievement. In addition to student test scores, student achievement can be measured by using developmental and other performance measures, such as portfolios and rubrics. Research conducted by Reeves (2006) suggests that letter grades alone do not accurately portray student achievement. Grading systems that rely on summative assessments fail to measure true student performance. Grading systems should allow for student feedback that is both accurate and effective in the learning process. Therefore, both formative and summative assessment practices should be an essential component in raising student achievement.

Student Growth

Bloom’s research indicates that there is a need for systematic evaluations, feedback and correctives, and the use of formative evaluations by both students and teachers. By recognizing student differences in learning and altering teacher instruction to meet the diverse needs of the learner, Bloom believes that the achievement gap between low and high functioning students will close, or reach a “vanishing point”. (Guskey, 2005).

Bloom’s (1956) Cognitive Domain is one of three types of learning identified as domains of educational activities. Cognitive domain includes the objects that directly relate to a student’s ability to recall or recognize which deal with the recall or recognition of knowledge and the

development of intellectual abilities and skills. The Cognitive Domain of Bloom's Taxonomy is critical in today's standards-based classroom. Bloom's work provides teachers with a valuable tool that can be used to measure student success and growth. Bloom's cognitive domain is segmented into six categories as follows:

1. Knowledge: The recall of specifics and universals, the recall of methods and processes, or the recall of a pattern, structure, or setting.
2. Comprehension: It refers to a type of understanding or apprehension such that the individual knows what is being communicated and can make use of the material or idea.
3. Application: The use of abstractions in particular and concrete situations.
4. Analysis: The breakdown of a communication into its constituent elements or parts such that the relative hierarchy of ideas is made clear and/or the relations between the ideas expressed are made explicit.
5. Synthesis: The putting together of elements and parts so as to form a whole.
6. Evaluation: Judgments about the value of material and methods for given purposes. (p.205)

Bloom's Affective Domain measures human growth. The affective domain concentrates on the attitudes, feelings, values, and motivations of the learner. The five levels in the affective domain include: (1) Receiving; (2) Responding; (3) Valuing; (4) Organizing; and (5) Characterizing. According to Bloom (1956), teachers do not regard the students' performance on affective objectives, such as attitude, interest, or character development. Thus, "...the failure to grade students' achievement on affective objectives accounts for a large portion of the erosion" (Bloom, p. 16). Bloom contends that teachers place too much emphasis on graded assessments and fail to recognize the importance of the affective domain characteristics.

It is imperative that the school leader understand and develop a culture of growth that focuses on effective classroom assessment practices. According to Black and Wiliam (1998), the use of formative assessments in the classroom can raise the growth of a student. Student expectations can be raised if schools develop an assessment system that builds student self-esteem, provides an opportunity for student feedback and reflection, and allows students to use higher level thinking skills.

Stiggins (2005) defines assessment for learning as the diagnosing of student needs that provides the teacher with valuable information to make sound curricular decisions. On the other hand, assessment of learning determines if students are meeting state, district, or classroom standards. These assessments may include state achievement tests, college entrance exams, and district-wide tests. Summative assessments take place after instruction has occurred to determine if and how much learning was achieved. Research suggests that both formative and summative assessments contribute to student growth, which in return, raises student achievement.

What does this mean for the educational leader? First, it means that educational leaders must establish a teamwork-based learning culture that supports student growth through job-embedded professional development. Stiggins (2005) believes a professional learning community is essential for endorsing professional growth. Schools that have a professional community enable teachers and leaders to work as teams in order to develop sound classroom assessment practices. Secondly, schools are more accountable today for raising test scores than in previous years. As a result, leaders must step up and take an active role to ensure all students are making positive academic and affective growth gains. This means that student assessment must be a major priority for leaders. Summative assessments alone do not address the following: (a) analyze, understand, and deconstruct standards, (b) transform standards into high-quality classroom assessments, and (c) share and interpret results together (p.82).

Stiggins, Arter, Chappuis, & Chappuis (2004) believe that assessment for learning resembles formative assessment. Like formative assessment, assessment for learning is ongoing and actively engages students in their own learning. “A high-quality assessment system relies on a variety of assessments to provide timely and understandable information to all who need it, so they can make the instructional decisions that maximize student success”(p.28). The following are seven strategies of assessment for learning that can be utilized in the classroom to improve student growth and success:

1. Provide a clear and understandable vision of the learning target.
2. Use examples and models of strong and weak work.
3. Offer regular descriptive feedback.
4. Teach students to self-assess and set goals.
5. Design lessons to focus on one aspect of quality at a time.
6. Teach students focused revision.
7. Engage students in self-reflection, and let them keep track of and share their learning. (p.232)

It takes both summative and formative assessments at the building level to improve student success, student achievement, and student growth. Collaboration among teachers occurs when leaders have a solid knowledge base in assessment. Leaders should have a vision for what a well-balanced assessments looks like at the building level. Most importantly, leaders should know where the district is in relation to assessment, understand the research on classroom assessment, and allocate the necessary resources needed to remove barriers (Chappuis, Stiggins, Arter, & Chappuis, 2004).

Teacher Quality

“Good teaching requires four types of knowledge and skills: (1) basic academic skills, (2) thorough content knowledge of each subject to be taught, (3) knowledge of both generic and content-specific pedagogy, and (4) hands-on teaching skills” (Education Testing Service, p. 10). High-quality teachers have a substantial effect on student achievement, especially when assigned to work with low socioeconomic status students. Teacher quality “is a variable that educational leaders and policymakers can influence” (Reeves, 2006, p. 18).

Pollock (2007) holds that teachers are the most important factor that determines student success and student achievement. Quality teachers use a well-articulated curriculum, plan for delivery, vary assessment, and give criterion feedback. In our standards-based society, it is critical for classroom teachers to identify and incorporate the state standards into the curriculum. Pollock stated that:

A standards-based curriculum connects each of the grade-level documents to one another by a common set of general statements – or standards – that define parameters of a subject area domain; the teacher’s curriculum is a link in a chain connected by standards.
(p. 31)

Thus, teachers must be concerned with aligning the curriculum to state standards. Although the curriculum must match the state standards, quality teachers have the ability to use a variety of supplemental resources to enrich lessons that provides both horizontal and vertical articulation. In addition to using supplemental resources, Tomlinson (2001) believes that quality teachers have the ability to differentiate instruction in order to meet the needs of all learners. Differentiated instruction consists of flexible grouping, using qualitative assessment practices, and providing multiple approaches to content, process, and product.

Danielson (1996) discusses a framework for professional practice in her book *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Learning*. “An important step to enhancing the stature of educators in the family of professions is defining clearly what constitutes excellence in teaching” (p. 7). Four domains of the framework are based on the PRAXIS III criteria developed by Educational Testing Service. They are as follows: (a) Planning and Preparation; (b) Classroom Environment; (c) Instruction; and (d) Professional Responsibilities. Each Domain consists of components that have different levels of performance. The performance levels are unsatisfactory, basic, proficient, and distinguished. High quality teachers have a “distinguished” understanding of the domains and can successfully implement them at the classroom level. This framework provides all teachers with research-based strategies on how to improve instructional methods, classroom management, and professional responsibilities. These domains are present in high-quality teaching.

Collison (1999) examined teacher quality in a study that consisted of 81 exemplary schools across the United States. Participants included teachers from urban, suburban, and rural school districts. Conclusions from this study suggest that quality teachers possess professional knowledge, interpersonal knowledge, intrapersonal knowledge, and emotional knowledge. Quality teachers care about their students, instruct beyond the scope of the curriculum, and “...solicit formal and informal evaluative feedback from their students in order to make appropriate changes to enhance student learning” (p. 8).

Schmoker (2006) states that teachers have the most influence on raising student achievement. “Teaching needn’t be exceptional to have a profound effect; continuous commonsense efforts to even roughly conform to effective practice and essential standards will make a life-changing difference for students across all socioeconomic levels” (p. 9). In addition, principals must also be prepared to assume the role of instructional leader with their colleagues.

Learning organizations that excel in raising student achievement have high-quality principals who develop a collaborative, structured, and consistent culture conducive to high teacher and student expectations.

Administrative Quality

In today's standards-based era, principals are expected to seek, develop, and implement strategies that reflect school improvement efforts. According to the SOE, effective principals have the capability to collect, share, and analyze data for improving student growth, student success, and student achievement. Creating a shared vision and establishing clear goals is critical with school improvement efforts. "In order to be successful in this context, principals must understand the complexities of change and use strategies to lead change effectively" (p. 43).

Fullan (2002) holds that school leaders are instrumental in sustaining large school reform. Sustained improvement is not possible unless the entire learning organization is moving forward. Thus, principals must understand the change process, improve relationships with students, staff, and stakeholders, and serve as an instructional leader who can foster sustained education improvement efforts that are aligned with the school vision. "Probably the most important--and the most difficult--job of an instructional leader is to change the prevailing culture of a school" (Barth, 2002, p. 6). Thus, principals must not only understand the concept of change, but must also lead the change in a learning organization.

School leaders must understand that achievement data comes in forms other than standardized test data. High quality administrators understand and encourage staff to use data for improving the level of student achievement. "Principals must have extensive knowledge about curriculum, instruction and assessment and regularly collaborate with staff to improve the performance of all students" (OSE, p. 46). In addition, collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data for instructional decision-making is helpful in attaining established goals. Schmoker (1999)

contends that data helps school leaders to monitor, measure, and assess school success. “Just as goals are an essential element of success, so data are an essential piece of working toward goals” (p. 35). The following are guidelines for school leaders regarding the use of data according to Schmoker:

1. Do not use data primarily to identify or eliminate poor teachers.
2. Try to collect and analyze data collaboratively and anonymously by team, department, grade level or school.
3. Allow teachers, by school or team, as much autonomy as possible in selecting the kind of data they think will be most helpful.
4. Inundate practitioners with success stories that include data (p. 41).

Using data correctly makes the invisible visible. Strengths and weaknesses can be revealed much more easily. Therefore, school leaders should use pertinent data to drive school improvement efforts. Without data, school leaders cannot accurately measure school goals. Thus, school improvement efforts will fail.

Without quality teachers, student learning will suffer. As a result, the retention of quality teachers is essential for school leaders. For many reasons, some teachers burn out or decide to change districts and in some cases, their occupation. Lambert (2003) holds that teacher leadership sustainability can often be exhausting. However, teachers need to support each other and have the support from the building principal. Teacher mentoring is a proven method for retaining quality teachers. Danielson (1996) believes that mentors should use a framework for professional practice to help novice teachers. “Without a framework, the structure is reduced to something the mentor, coach, or supervisor has in her head, and thus reflects the personal beliefs that individual holds about teaching...” (p. 7). As a result, an effective mentoring program is critical for the growth and development of new teachers. School leaders play an instrumental role

in recruiting and keeping quality mentors that demonstrate excellent pedagogical and leadership skills. Quality mentors have the potential to create quality teachers with the support from the school leader.

High-Quality Teacher and Administrative Professional Development

NCLB mandates require teachers to participate in High Quality Professional Development. Most teachers and administrators contend that professional development is a critical component to raising student achievement (Benton and Benton, 2008). According Benton and Benton, NCLB quality professional development is focused on the following four pillars from NCLB: (a) stronger accountability for results; (b) more freedom for states and communities; (c) proven educational methods; and (4) more choices for parents. How does a district or school address these requirements? Each district and school has different needs based on demographics, geographic location, and economic base. However, the training of teachers and administrators is a necessary component for delivering and developing high quality professional development. High quality professional development consists of three categories: planning, implementation, and assessment.

The planning of professional development "...should take place at the building level, not the central office. Building needs cannot be generalized, and those directly involved know best what is necessary" (p. 26). School leaders and teachers need to collaborate in designing relevant, meaningful, and research-based professional development activities. Professional development short and long-range goals also need to be addressed at the beginning of each school year. Principals should be instructional leaders and teachers "...should specify their specific professional development needs and set goals for achievement" (p. 26).

Benton and Benton (2008) discuss the implementation of high quality professional development. They believe that the presenter should do the following: (a) think about who will

be attending the training; (b) consider how the content will be delivered to the learners; (c) ensure the environment is suitable and comfortable for the audience; and (d) allow sufficient time to check over the facilities to ensure everything is working.

High quality professional development also includes an assessment component for gathering feedback from the audience. This evaluative feedback gives school administrators valuable information that measures the overall effectiveness of the professional development session. Effective professional development reflects the goal's of the school in terms of raising student achievement.

Murphy and Lick (2001) supports the notion that professional development is a "...holistic practical process of facilitating major school-wide change and for enhancing student learning in schools" (p. xi). The authors use the term "Whole Faculty Study Group" (WFSG) to identify a team-oriented approach to professional development. The guiding principles that support the WFSG are: (1) Students are first; (2) Everyone participates; (3) Leadership is shared; (4) Responsibility is equal; and (5) The work is public (p.12). In order for this model to work effectively, school leaders must be actively involved in these groups. The main goal of getting teachers together is to improve teacher and student learning. The WFSG model breaks down teacher isolation at the building level. "Teachers rarely meet together to examine student work. Looking at student work in a study group gives teachers the opportunity to benefit from multiple perspectives" (p. 22). When teachers bring student work to group meetings, it provides them with valuable information about student needs and weaknesses. As a result, the WFSG model helps the school leader in school improvement efforts and engages the entire staff in meaningful and effective professional development.

Effective professional development that attends to both teachers and principals is referred to as the "reciprocal process" of constructivists learning (Lambert, 2003). There is mutual and

interactive learning taking place, which helps in the growth of all staff members. The process is as follows:

1. Surfacing of ideas, assumptions, histories, and prior knowledge.
2. Engaging in inquiry (e.g., examining student work, conducting action research and observations, and reading and discussing relevant research).
3. Entering into dialogue and reflection that we can understand.
4. Reframing actions and plans to account for what we know and understand. p. 22

According to Lambert, leadership teams have guidelines for dialogue and establish roles for its members. The concept of job-embedded professional development gives school leaders the chance to work with teachers during the school day. Skills are learned on the job rather than outside the building. Effective school and districts utilize the job-embedded approach to develop teacher leadership skills. Effective school leaders work collaboratively with staff, use data to improve student achievement, encourage staff to try new strategies, and create a team of teacher leaders.

Leadership of the Model

The Standards for Ohio Educators reports that effective “...principals support the implementation of high-quality standards based instruction that results in higher levels of achievement for all students” (p. 40, 2005). Principals are instructional leaders that ensure teachers are using instructional practices to meet the needs of all students. Similarly, the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) contends that education leaders should advocate and sustain a school culture where instructional leadership links to student achievement and professional development. Research from the 1970’s and 1980’s has helped define effective leadership characteristics that facilitate school reform in today’s educational system.

Burns (1978) defined transformational leadership as a leader who inspires others toward collaboration and motivation. Everyone in the organization is working toward a common goal. Leithwood (1992) argues that the term “transformational leadership” should also include the school administrator as instructional leaders. In other words, instructional leadership focuses on the principal closely monitoring teacher and student’s work. The purpose of this practice is to help teachers become better classroom leaders by getting them to use different instructional strategies to reach all students. Ubban, Hughes, and Norris (2001) list instructional improvement and curriculum development as essential functions for the transformational principal. Effective principals have the ability to lead, manage, and adjust to internal and external forces that exist in our educational system. Unlike the transformational leader, the transactional leader is concerned with only managing and maintaining status quo in a stable environment. Transformational principals have the ability to both lead and manage a learning organization toward sustained improvement. Bass (1997) supports the notion that effective leaders possess both transactional and transformational leadership skills. “Thus, the transactional leader works within the constraints of the organization; the transformational leader changes the organization” (p. 132). However, both types of leadership skills are essential in the effective learning organization.

Hoy and Miskel (2005) believe that transformational leadership is comprised of four key characteristics. They are: (a) idealized influence; (b) inspirational motivation; (c) intellectual stimulation; and (d) individualized consideration. Hoy and Miskel also views transformational leadership as an extension of transactional leadership. The main difference between these two types of leadership is that transactional leaders motivate their staff by exchanging rewards for services while the transformational leader goes beyond the reward system and applies the four characteristics mentioned above.

Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) replicated a transformational leadership study that consisted of 1818 teachers and 6,490 students from 94 elementary schools in Canada. The results from the study showed that transformational leaders positively influence school conditions (.80). As a result, the improvement of school conditions leads to positive effects on classroom conditions (.62). “Together, transformational leadership and school conditions explain 17% of the variation in classroom conditions, even though the direct effects of transformational leadership on classroom conditions are negative and non significant. Transformational leadership has a weak (.17) but statistically significant effect on student identification: its effects on student participation are not significant” (p. 467).

According to Hallinger (2003), several studies show that transformational leaders directly influence teachers’ perceptions of school conditions and ability to change within the organization, but not without limitations. These studies do not focus on the effects of a single leader. “Developing valid measures, as well as integrating and interpreting leadership that is distributed across a variety of people requires greater sophistication” (p. 341). However, Hallinger contends that there are distinct differences between instructional and transformational leadership models. Hallinger believes that the transformational leadership model assumes others in the learning organization will be instructional leaders. The instructional leadership model involves coordinating the curriculum, supervising and evaluating teachers, and monitoring student progress. However, both models focus on high student and teacher expectations, rewards and incentives that are aligned with the mission of the school, and high visible presence by the school leader. The transformational leader is more concerned with linking personal goals and shared goals toward school improvement.

Hallinger’s study of transformational leadership suggests that the principal is critical in supporting the commitment of teachers because some teachers can be a barrier to the

development of teacher leadership. Thus, transformational principals should encourage teachers to share leadership functions. “When teachers perceive principals’ instructional leadership behaviors to be appropriate, they grow in commitment, professional involvement, and willingness to innovate. Thus, instructional leadership can itself be transformational” (p.345).

Peilstick (1998) analyzed and synthesized research about transformational leadership. The purpose of his research was to identify patterns and connections that explain transformational leadership. Peilstick used a meta-ethnographic approach as a procedure for analyzing and synthesizing literature on transformational leadership. The pattern of descriptors from this study found seven major themes pertaining to transformational leadership. They include: (1) creating a shared vision; (2) communicating the vision; (3) building relationships; (4) developing a supporting organizational culture; (5) guiding implementation; (6) exhibiting character; and (7) achieving results (p. 4). Conclusions from this study showed that the transforming leader is involved in multiple activities that engage leaders and followers in the learning organization. Transformational leaders recognize the importance of creating a shared vision, building relationships, sustaining a positive culture and achieving results for all students. These seven characteristics lead to lasting school improvement efforts toward positive organizational conditions within the learning environment. In addition, Lambert (2003) holds that stakeholder support is necessary regarding school improvement efforts. Open communication between the school and stakeholders is a necessary component of school improvement efforts. Lambert believes “...that parents who participate in conversations about schooling develop a broad perspective that enables them to honor their own values, remain vigilant regarding their own children, and advocate for and help create successful schools for all” (p. 69).

Stakeholder Enlistment and Support

ODE devised a definition for the term “stakeholder.” According to the Operating Standards for Ohio’s Schools, “stakeholders may include, but are not limited to, colleges and universities, school district and school staff, employees, parents, students, and other individuals or groups in the community” (p. 9). The SOE addresses the need for educators to engage parents and other stakeholders in the educational process for raising student achievement. Principals need to be visionary leaders who can work with key stakeholders “...in the development and realization of a shared vision, based on challenging goals and high expectations, which guides and directs each member of the school community toward overall academic, social and emotional success” (p. 43). Like administrators, teachers also have a professional responsibility to develop positive relations with parent and stakeholders. The SOE includes collaboration and communication as a standard for the teaching profession. According to this standard, teachers should communicate and collaborate with parents, educators, students, and other members of the learning community both inside and outside the classroom.

Hord and Sommers (2008) supports the notion that a Professional Learning Community (PLC) has five distinct characteristics that drives school improvement efforts. They include: (1) Shared Beliefs, values, and vision; (2) Shared and supportive leadership; (3) Collective Learning and its application; (4) Supportive conditions; (5) Shared personal practice (p. 8-15). These characteristics are defined in the following paragraphs.

The idea of having shared beliefs, values, and vision as a PLC attribute is essential according to the authors. First, staff, administrators, students, and stakeholders, must work toward a common purpose. “How they conceive the purpose of the school, and how they describe their role in accomplishing its purpose frames how they will construct their vision of what the school should look like and how they will work together” (p. 8). Secondly, the school

leader should not be solely responsible for developing a vision for the school. Rather, the school leader needs to be involved in the creating of the mission as well as articulating the vision to all stakeholders. The focus must always be on student learning.

Shared and supportive leadership is the next attribute that school leaders must embrace in a PLC. It is the principal's responsibility to accept and implement changes in a school. A culture of collegiality, collaboration, and continuous adult learning are all part of shared and supportive leadership. The sharing of administrative power and authority can often be difficult for principals. However, administrators and teachers must work together by "...openly discussing instructional problems and exploring solutions to the problems that they identify" (p. 11).

Collective learning and its application involves staff collaborating about a topic that the PLC finds significant. Successful learning communities focus on keeping the conversation about students and instruction, which means identifying student needs and developing new instructional strategies to address those needs. Principals must challenge the staff and help them incorporate new instructional strategies in the classroom. This cycle of collaboration involves reflecting, learning, and assessment for improving student and teacher learning. Principals monitor the new teaching practices and gives constructive feedback on their efforts.

Supportive conditions encompass two types of conditions, which are physical and structural factors, and relational factors and human capacities. Physical and structural factors are extremely difficult for schools to initiate. The following is a list of physical factors "...needed in a context conducive to change and improvement: availability of needed resources; schedules and structures that reduce isolation; and policies that provide greater autonomy, foster collaboration, provide effective communication, and provide for staff development" (p. 14). The authors suggest that larger schools with staff exceeding 35 members may want to form smaller learning groups.

Secondly, relational factors and human capacities address the issue of trust. Building trust within the PLC allows its members to learn together and make pertinent decisions about how to improve staff learning. Principals contribute to this condition by creating a caring “student friendly” culture that provides social activities for staff members so they can get to know each other.

The last PLC characteristic that drives school improvement efforts is shared personal practice. Reviewing teacher practices and instructional strategies must be an ongoing process. However, this should not be used as a teacher evaluative process by principals, rather it is “...part of peers helping peers that includes teachers visiting each other’s classrooms on a regular basis to observe, take notes, and discuss their observations with the teacher they have visited” (p. 15). This sort of practice helps to break down teacher isolation and provides valuable feedback on the implementation of new strategies. In a PLC, teachers need each other’s help, support and trust. Most importantly, teachers need the support and trust from their building administrator. Because the change process in schools can be difficult and challenging, principals must step up and take an active role in demonstrating leadership skills that influence others toward a collaborative culture of learning.

DuFour, Eaker, and DuFour (2005) discuss PLCs in the book entitled *On Common Ground*. Quality educators support the PLC concept because it endorses effective professional collaboration on instructional issues, curriculum development and professional development. However, there are difficult challenges educators must confront to implement a successful PLC. The following are three PLC challenges according to the authors: (1) Developing and applying shared knowledge; (2) Sustaining the hard work of change; (3) Transforming school culture (p. 9).

Many schools and districts declare that they are a PLC, but they fail to show evidence or even an understanding of the fundamental PLC concepts. School leaders and teachers must come to a solid understanding of how to develop and apply shared knowledge in their own building. Secondly, the authors believe that a PLC is more than just adopting a mission statement, vision statement, or strategic plan. There are no short cuts for creating a PLC. Rather, it takes a collaborative effort by staff that is focused and consistent over time. Thirdly, transforming a school culture is the most difficult task to tackle, especially when traditional belief systems of the learning organization are challenged. Large school reform efforts require “...more than changes in structure – the policies, programs, and procedures of a school. Substantive and lasting change will ultimately require a transformation of culture – the beliefs, assumptions, expectations, and habits that constitute the norm for the people throughout the organization” (p. 11). Effective educators adapt to new changes and new practices. Successful PCL schools have competent principals who can overcome long-lasting traditional beliefs. Ultimately, these principals take the learning organization to a higher level of achievement and success, which means they challenge existing beliefs and practices that drive the school.

Schmoker (2006) makes the case that a PLC should involve teachers collaborating on a regular basis to discuss the curriculum standards, improved instructional strategies, and common assessment practices that focus on student and teacher learning. “Effective team-based learning communities – not workshops – are the very best kind of professional development” (p. 109).

Team-based learning communities also include a leadership component that must be present in PLC schools. Schmoker contends that successful leaders have a commitment to monitoring teacher instructional practices. These leaders examine grade books, team lesson logs, and student work to ensure instructional practices and assessments support the state standards. In other words, effective leaders look for evidence to ensure essential standards are being taught.

Reeves (2005) makes the argument that academic standards, assessments, and accountability make up a PLC framework. Standards alone do not provide a foundation for raising student achievement. Teachers must translate the standards into meaningful content that students can understand. Additionally, teachers must use common assessments that are linked to the academic standards. Despite the continued debate regarding our current accountability system, Reeves suggests "...there is a growing body of evidence that accountability can be constructive, comprehensive, and supportive of professional learning and student achievement" (p. 60). This type of accountability allows teachers and school leaders to look at quantitative data in a qualitative fashion. Thus, when staff, parents, community members, and other stakeholders are engaged and committed to a professional learning community with the school, substantial progress can be accomplished.

The Operating Standards for Ohio Schools (2006) addresses the student and other stakeholders focus standard. According to the operating standards, all schools must assess the needs of students and other stakeholders as a strategy for improving academic performance. The value-added progress reports will be used "...to make informed decisions about curriculum, instruction, assessment and goals" (p. 13). Ohio administrators are expected to do the following: (1) Consider input from stakeholders; (2) Monitor and consider the changing needs and expectations of stakeholders; (3) Conduct stakeholder satisfaction evaluations using objective, reliable methods; and (4) Compare the results of stakeholder evaluations to those of benchmark school districts or schools (p. 13). Administrators can use this data to communicate with parents on their child's attendance, conduct, academic performance and progress.

Marzano (2003) discusses the idea of parent and community involvement as a school-level factor that impacts student achievement. Three characteristics define parent and community involvement, which are communication, participation, and governance. Good communication

occurs when school leaders provide an environment that is inviting to parents. The most frequent type of school-to-home communication included newsletters, flyers, and bulletins. However, these forms of communication do not provide parents an opportunity to respond. Secondly, participation involves parents and stakeholders serving as valuable resources for the school.

Benefits from parent and community participation include:

1. Expanded expertise on specific topics and subject areas.
2. Expanded contacts for teachers and administrators with resources in the community.
3. Direct financial contributions resulting from business support.
4. Donation of equipment from business. (p. 48)

Research suggests that when schools involve parents and other stakeholders in the educational process, students have lower absenteeism, truancy, and dropout rates.

The last parent and community involvement characteristic is governance. This characteristic affords parents, community members, and other stakeholders the opportunity to have a voice in the school decision-making process. This means that parents are given the opportunity to have a stake in their child's education. This interest positively effects the achievement of their child.

Meek (1999) contends that schools must devise a communications plan that provides parents information about student progress, achievement, and other events and activities that occur throughout the year. It is imperative that teachers keep in contact with parents throughout the year to discuss student growth and achievement. However, "...report cards are often overlooked as public relations mechanisms, but they are the single-most regular way in which schools disseminate information to the home" (Ubban, Hugh, and Norris, 2001, p. 336). Report cards that only consist of letter grades are not sufficient. Rather, an effective report card should

include the following: “(1) Estimate the child’s overall ability compared to other children the same age; (2) Indicate the child’s individual progress; and (3) Describe the child’s conduct in school” (p. 336). As a result, these three recording strategies help improve communications between the home and school.

Effective principals are key communicators that have a shared vision focusing on school improvement efforts. Ubban, Hughes, and Norris (2001) suggest high-performing schools have administrators that are capable of responding to changing community and societal needs. Although community and society needs are changing, effective principals will continue to work with all stakeholders on the creation of a shared vision and continued community support for the purposes of raising student achievement, student growth, and student success.

Case Studies in Context

Coldren and Spillane (2007) conducted an in-depth case study on one large urban school district. Hillside Academy houses 1,300 mostly low-income and minority students in Grades K through eight. The purpose of this study was to “...unpack instructional leadership as a practice, paying close attention to the tools that constitute that practice, the contextual factors that help to define it, and how it affects teaching” (p. 369).

The authors define instructional leadership as a practice that involves creating an instructional vision or mission, teacher supervision, curriculum planning, monitoring student learning, coordinating programs, and promoting a learning culture that supports both student and professional learning. “Studies of instructional management should incorporate qualitative methodologies to generate richer descriptive reports about how principals manage curriculum and instruction” (p. 372). Schools for this study were selected by using a theoretical sampling strategy. The authors selected Hillside because of its poverty level, racial and ethnic student population, and variation on different measures of student improvement.

Data collection began during the 1999-2000 school year. The researchers conducted 17 teacher interviews and 21 school leader interviews, which were recorded on audiotape and transcribed. Observational data from 15 grade level meetings and four faculty meetings provided the authors with detailed field notes. Interviews were used to gain a better understanding of leadership as a practice and how teachers and leaders perceive their own practices. The principal at Hillside believed her role was to analyze student test scores with the intent to help teachers improve their instructional program. She stated:

I think my role is...also to look at children's progress over time, to look at test results, to analyze – help teachers analyze results. Where are our strengths? Where are our weaknesses? What do we need to work on? You know, when we get standardized test results back, looking at item analysis and so on and saying, “Well, we did real well in this section, we didn't [do] so well in this section. What do we need to do to make sure that we're going to be – the kids are going to be more successful?”...So trying to help people focus on areas of deficit and, you know, kind of cheering for the items that we do well on. (p. 379)

In this example, the principal uses test scores as a tool to improve teacher quality in the classroom. Student assessments, both summative and formative, help to keep track of the teaching and learning process. Thus, failing students are a result of the teacher, not the student.

The findings of this case study suggest that instructional leadership practice has a positive impact on classroom practice. The principal uses leadership tools in connecting and influencing instructional and assessment strategies. In other words, effective school leaders have the ability to tailor leadership skills to fit their school's needs, which leads to higher student achievement. Policies, such as NCLB, may lead some school leaders to concentrate solely on the state test.

“Hence, in designing leadership tools, we need to consider how they will interact with and complement policies already in place” (p. 393).

The research conducted by Coldren and Spillane provides a common link to Ohio’s value-added model. High quality administrators analyze value-added student data and help staff members use value-added information to improve student and teacher learning. The value-added model is part of Ohio’s accountability system. Rejecting current education policies is not an option. In other words, NCLB mandates must be a focus for all stakeholders. Student level data determines the rating of school and district. As a result, quality teaching plays a key role in raising student growth. Raising student growth leads to higher student achievement and higher student success. Therefore, building administrators must assume the role of an instructional leader that supervises classroom practices, promotes a culture of professional learning, and monitors student learning.

Brock and Groth (2003) conducted a state funded longitudinal case study that consisted of 50 low-income and racial, ethnic, or language minority schools. The authors selected schools where staff members perceived an opportunity to improve student learning. “Although a number of studies have outlined the characteristics of effective schools serving low-income students, few have examined the process of becoming effective” (p. 168).

Participation was based on free and reduced lunch numbers, ethnic minorities, English Language Learners, single parent households, and student mobility rate. Data collection strategies included open-ended interviews with principals, classroom observations, and informal conversations with teachers, counselors, and aides. Data collected was transcribed and shared with the evaluation team, state legislatures, and the respected schools. Evaluation team members encouraged participating schools to assess current programs and explore other comprehensive reform designs.

The findings of this four-year study indicate subtle differences between schools after the second year. However, in Years 3 and 4, six factors of organizational structure were noted in these effective schools:

1. Ongoing professional development.
2. A high degree of staff development.
3. A strong focus or vision for the school based on improving student learning.
4. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of both programs and student achievement.
5. Reallocation of resources to support the school-wide plan.
6. Strong leadership of the principal. (p. 179)

The authors define participating schools as Type I, Type II, and Type III. Type I schools have all the six characteristics mentioned above. Type II schools are missing three or more of Type I characteristics. Type III schools are missing at least five or more of Type I characteristics.

In summary, the authors identified six characteristics that positively affect school improvement efforts. “One of the most important lessons learned from this group of schools is that change is difficult but sustaining reform efforts is even more difficult” (p. 186). These schools were able to improve student learning, regardless of the myth that “...student outcomes are solely dependent on socioeconomic status-ethnic status” (p. 187).

Value-added assessment provides educators the tools needed for successful improvement school efforts, regardless of socioeconomic and ethnic status. The value-added assessment is concerned with a student’s yearly growth. Therefore, Ohio educators must not only understand the underlying principles and rationale for value added assessment, they must also understand and use value-added information in a school improvement planning and implementation process. These efforts can be achieved by providing ongoing professional development, a strong vision for improving student learning, and strong building leadership. Measuring student achievement

alone only provides a snapshot of the school improvement perspective. On the contrary, Ohio's value-added model provides educators and stakeholders valuable information and feedback on the work that schools produce. Because students are at different academic levels, relying on achievement scores is a fallacy. Educators must use more than a single test score to tell the story of a school's effectiveness.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, relevant research supporting Ohio's value-added model was reviewed and related to the four guiding principles. Standardized testing is only one way to measure student achievement. Achievement scores represent a students' performance at a point in time. However, Ohio's value-added model supports the notion that all students should make at least a year's growth before entering the next grade level. Teachers who challenge students academically play an instrumental role in contributing to student success. The underlying structure of high quality teacher and administrative professional development is linked to improving student achievement, student growth, and student success. The reason is because teacher quality is a key variable to improving the teacher and student learning process. The leadership of model was chosen because administrators must be instructional leaders who have the ability to effectively lead and inspire others toward excellence. Leadership is essential for any new initiative. Stakeholder enlistment research was also reviewed because no new initiative has ever sustained without stakeholder enlistment support. Developing a professional learning community is essential for the success of this model.

Ohio's value-added model is designed to give teachers, administrators, and stakeholders the tools needed for school improvement efforts. This valuable information can be instrumental in raising school effectiveness. It takes more than a single test score to measure student achievement. Thus, an in-depth case study is advantageous for my research.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides the framework my research design. I write about my background experiences as it relates to value-added assessment. I describe the research site and subjects participating in the study. I identify the research instruments and materials, and procedures. Last, I write about the data analysis methods and ethical considerations for conducting this study.

My research design was an in depth case study employed to answer the following questions:

1. How is value-added assessment being implemented and what does that mean to teachers, principals, and stakeholders?
2. What is the context of Ohio's value-added model at the school level?
3. What are the types of services and training received by administrators and teachers?
4. What are the effects of Ohio's value-added model?

These questions support the use of a qualitative research methodology to provide a thorough understanding of "...the meaning people have constructed, that, is, how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world" (Merriam, 1998, p. 6). Qualitative research is a powerful source of "...grounded theory, theory that is inductively generated from fieldwork, that is, theory that emerges from the researcher's observations and interviews out in the real world rather than in the laboratory or the academy" (Patton, 2002, p. 11).

Research suggests that qualitative designs have certain advantages over quantitative designs. For instance, qualitative research not only attempts to explain how events occur, but also provides a highly descriptive and detailed picture of a situation as is occurring and evolving (Patton, 2002). Creswell (1998) contends that quantitative research employs formulas and

statistical calculations to draw broad conclusions while qualitative studies are reported in a multiple of words rather than numbers. As a result, a qualitative researcher can identify emerging themes, questions, biases, and patterns for future research opportunities. Therefore, a qualitative design was advantageous for this study.

This qualitative study utilizes a single-case study design. A single case study is “...analogous to a single experiment, and many of the same conditions that justify a single experiment also justify a single-case study” (Yin, 2003, p. 39). A case study employs multiple methods of data collection. Yin wrote as follows: that a case study:

copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result relies on multiple sources of evidence, which data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions that guide data collection and analysis. (p. 13)

My Background Experience Statement and Biases

In October 2007, I attended my first training session on Ohio’s value-added model. Because value-added data will be used as a criterion in making AYP for the 2007-2008 school year, all central office administrators had to select participants for this training. I attended several sessions that focused on the rationale for value-added, understanding, navigating, interpreting value-added data, and utilizing value-added for school improvement planning and implementation process. It was my responsibility as building principal and District Value-Added Specialists (DVAS) to share my value-added knowledge with teachers. The Toolkit for School Leaders, which was provided to all participants at the first training session, helped me to understand and use value-added analysis. Each module contains learning objectives for the participants. Module I includes basic terms and implementation stories. Module II explains the

difference between progress and achievement, the benefits of value-added progress information for various stakeholders, and rationale for using this model. Module III explains the rationale for using value-added information to improve teacher quality as well as how value-added analysis is calculated using the predicted mean and gain approaches. Lastly, Module IV helps participants to access and interpret value-added reports, create customized reports, identify trends in data, and recognize ways to use value-added information when designing school improvement plans (Battelle for Kids, 2006).

The information I acquired from these trainings helped me to develop an appreciation and interest in value-added assessment. My role as a DVAS was to become familiar with pertinent concepts surrounding Ohio's value-added model. After I completed the DVAS trainings, I conducted two informational faculty meetings with the teachers. In addition, I helped to establish a data team that specifically dealt with value-added data. The more I learned about value-added assessment, the more I wanted to continue researching the topic.

As a building administrator, I view the teaching and learning process through a social lens. My experiences have afforded me the opportunity to be a problem solver, compromiser, communicator, and leader at the building level. These experiences influence how I see education. Therefore, my study is constructed on experiences as a building administrator.

Research Site

Research was conducted at a rural elementary school that houses approximately 324 students ranging from fifth thru eighth grades. It is located in a valley that is surrounded by rolling hills and streams in a tranquil environment. The nearest city is approximately 25 miles. The building is 28 years old and has an elementary school and high school located on the same campus. During my visits, I noticed that the area was very susceptible to flooding. As a result, the superintendent canceled school approximately three times a year. The elementary school site

was where I conducted my research. This site has 15 teachers and one administrator in the building. Out of the 15 teachers, nine of them met the criteria to be interviewed. However, one of the nine was out on maternity leave. The free and reduced lunch rate is 43%, which is consistent with the district's percentage.

This particular SOAR building received an "Effective" rating on its 2007-2008 school year report card. The overall achievement scores for this building with last year's scores. The District's Performance Index Score was 91.7, which is slightly up from last year. Additionally, AYP was met in mathematics proficiency, reading participation, mathematics participation, and attendance. AYP was not met in Reading Proficiency. The value-added component of the district report card was rated as "Above Expected Growth." Grades five thru eight were above the expected rate in Mathematics. Reading scores for grade eight met the expected growth. Grade five was the only level that was below the expected growth rate.

Research Participants

Participants for this study included the building administrator, and purposefully selected teachers and stakeholders. For the purposes of this study, eight teachers, one building administrator, and three stakeholders were interviewed. The method for selecting participants for the study is referred as "purposeful sampling" (Patton, 2002). "Information – rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about the issues of central importance to the purpose of inquiry, thus the term purposeful sampling" (p. 230). In this study I defined the criteria for my selection of participants. They were as follows:

1. Participants are employed at the research site for at least three consecutive years.
2. Participants teach fifth, sixth, seventh, and eight grade students.
3. Participants have prior knowledge of value-added assessment.
4. Stakeholder participants are a parent of a school-age child.

5. Building administrator must have a professional administrative license.

The identification of quality participants and information rich cases provides a great opportunity to understand how one school experiences and perceives Ohio's value-added model. Participants selected for this study helped to provide the necessary descriptive data needed for a qualitative study.

Research Instrument and Materials

There will be one instrument utilized in this study. The instrument (see Tables 1-4) is the protocol I established for the participants. The protocol focuses on the four underlying questions I wanted to answer. The types of interviews used in this study include guided, informal, and open-ended questions. A copy was delivered to each participant with a request for verification of their responses. Other materials for this study include Ohio Achievement Test data, value-added data, building strategic plan, and memos.

Sample interview questions have been developed for each of the four guiding questions. I utilized four of Patton's six (2002) question types. They include: (a) experience and behavior questions, (b) opinion and values questions, (c) feeling questions, and (d) knowledge questions. "On any given topic, it is possible to ask any of these questions. Distinguishing types of questions forces the interviewer to be clear about what is being asked and helps the interviewee respond appropriately" (p. 348).

Data Collection Procedures

I selected a rural school in Ohio that has been participating in a statewide pilot called SOAR for the past few years. Value-added was introduced in 2002 to 42 districts throughout the state. This particular SOAR school obtained an "Excellent" rating on the 2007-2008 School Year Report Card and achieved an overall value-added rating composite score of "Above Expected Growth". A score of "Above Expected Growth" means that students overall made greater than

Table 1

Distribution of Interview Questions for Implementing Ohio's Value-Added Model using Patton's (2002) Question Types across participants

Question 1 How is value-added assessment being implemented and what does that mean to teachers, principals, and stakeholders?

Participant	Type	Interview Questions
Key	E/B=Experience/Behavior O=Opinion/Values F=Feeling K=Knowledge	
Teacher	E/B	Please describe your participation in Ohio's value-added model?
	E/B	From your perspective, describe the implementation of Ohio's value-added model?
	O/V	Based on your experiences with Ohio's value-added model, what would you say are the strengths? Weaknesses?
	K	What strategies did you implement in the classroom as a result of Ohio's value-added model?
Principal	F	How do you feel about Ohio's value-added model?
	E/B	What steps did you take to implement Ohio's value-added model in your building?
	O/V	What are the strengths/weaknesses of Ohio's value-added model?
	K	What procedures did you implement as a result of Ohio's value-added model?
	F	How do you feel about Ohio's value-added model being part of the state report card?

Table 1 (cont.)

Question 1 How is value-added assessment being implemented and what does that mean to teachers, principals, and stakeholders?

Participant	Type	Interview Questions
Key	E/B=Experience/Behavior O=Opinion/Values F=Feeling K=Knowledge	
Stakeholder	E/B	Does your child's school teacher and/or principal discuss Ohio's value-added model with you?
	K	Do you understand how to interpret your child's value-added report?
	E/B	What impact has the implementation of Ohio's value-added model played on your child's education?
	O/V	What do you think about Ohio's value-added model?

Table 2

Distribution of Interview Questions for Implementing Ohio's Value-Added Model using Patton's (2002) Question Types

Question 2		What is the context of Ohio’s value-added model at the school level?			
Participant		Type	Interview Questions		
Key	E/B=Experience/Behavior	O=Opinion/Values	F=Feeling	K=Knowledge	
Teacher	K	Tell me what you know about Ohio’s value-added model.			
	K	How long have you been participating in Ohio’s value-added model?			
	K	How often do you have staff meetings that focus on Ohio’s value-added model?			
	O/V	From your perspective, how does Ohio’s value-added model impact your school culture?			
Principal	K	Tell me what you know about Ohio’s value-added model.			
	K	How long have you been a SOAR school?			
	E/B	What is your role as an instructional leader in regards to this model? How has it impacted your school culture in regards to school improvement efforts?			
	E/B	How often, if any, do you conduct staff meetings that focus on this model?			
	O/V	What do you think about Ohio’s value-added model?			
Stakeholder	K	Tell me what you know about Ohio’s value-added model.			
	F	Do you feel that Ohio’s value-added impacts student achievement?			

Table 3

Distribution of Interview Questions for Implementing Ohio's Value-Added Model using Patton's (2002) Question Types

Question 3 What are the types of services and training received by administrators and teachers?

Participant	Type	Research Questions
Key	E/B=Experience/Behavior O=Opinion/Values F=Feeling K=Knowledge	
Teacher	K	What training have you received on Ohio's value-added model?
	F	How did you feel about the training sessions?
	E/B	Do you have staff meetings that focus on Ohio's value-added model?
	E/B	If I were in the training sessions with you, what would I observe?
	K	How long and where did these trainings take place?
Principal	O/V	From your perspective, how productive were the training sessions?
	K	What training have you received on Ohio's value-added model?
	F/B	How did you feel about the training sessions?
	K	Who conducted the value-added trainings?
	O/V	How productive were the training sessions?
Stakeholder	F/B	If I were in the training sessions with you, what would I observe?
	K	Did you participate in any training sessions?
	E/B	If so, describe what it was like.

Table 4

Distribution of Interview Questions for Implementing Ohio's Value-Added Model using Patton's (2002) Question Types

Question 4 What are the effects of Ohio's value-added model?

Participant	Type	Research Questions
Key	E/B=Experience/Behavior O=Opinion/Values F=Feeling K=Knowledge	
Teacher	E/B	Describe the result of Ohio's value-added model on the following: For teachers? For students?
	E/B	Do you use value-added to modify or enrich classroom instruction? If so, please explain.
	O/V	What would you like to see happen as a result of Ohio's value-added model?
Principal	E/B	What impact has Ohio's value-added model had on your school improvement plan and professional development plan?
	K	How do you use value-added data to improve student growth, student achievement, and student success?
	O/V	From your perspective, does value-added data drive instructional decisions at the building level?
	E/B	Describe the impact of Ohio's value-added model on the teachers and stakeholders?

Table 4 (cont.)

Question 4

What are the effects of Ohio's value-added model?

Participant	Type	Research Questions
Key	E/B=Experience/Behavior	O=Opinion/Values F=Feeling K=Knowledge
Stakeholders	E/B	What impact has value-added played on your child's education?
	O/V	Do you think Ohio's value-added model will help your child academically and be success in the workforce?
	O/V	From your perspective, what would you like to see happen as a result of Ohio's value-added model?

one years growth.

The Battelle for Kids organization provides training for School's Online Assessment Reports (SOAR) schools called Teachers Connecting Achievement and Progress (T-CAP). T-CAP training is a program designed to help teachers analyze student value-added data, enhance professional development opportunities to understand Ohio's value-added model, and identify effective instructional practices to raise student growth and student achievement. This school improvement initiative gives teachers an opportunity to utilize value-added to improve teacher effectiveness and student growth.

According to Patton (2002), three types of data gathering exist in qualitative studies, which include in-depth, open-ended interviews, direct observation, and written documents. Yin (2003) contends that "...these principles into a case study investigation will increase its quality substantially" (p. 83).

To achieve an understanding of the experiences and implementation of Ohio's value-added model, I employed the following data collection methods: (1) interviews, observations, and document analysis. In addition, "raw" notes and a reflective journal was used to provide a method expression for my perspective and thoughts. The following paragraphs provide a detailed account of the methods used for this study.

A series of interviews was conducted for the purpose of collecting data. Yin (2003) contends that interviews are one of the most important sources of case study research. According to Janesick (1998), interviews are defined as a "...meeting of two persons to exchange information and ideas through questions and responses, resulting in communication and joint construction of meaning about a particular topic" (p. 30.) In my study, I interview teachers, the building principal, and selected stakeholders of the district. The types of interviews used in this study include guided, open-ended, and informal. All interviews were digitally recorded and

transcribed. A copy was delivered to each participant with a request for verification of their responses. The transcription and checking process proved to be time consuming.

The observations (see Table 5) used in this study provided valuable information that was used to triangulate the data. Patton contends that "... observational data must have depth and detail. The data must be descriptive – sufficiently descriptive that the reader can understand what occurred and how it occurred" (p. 23). During this study, observations afforded me the opportunity to provide descriptive accounts of instructional practices. Data collected also provided me with insight into the emotions involved in the events.

Examining cultural artifacts is critical in a qualitative study. Yin (2003) contends that there are various forms of documentation and "...should be the object of explicit data collection plans" (p. 85). The following are examples of documentation according to Yin:

1. Letters, memoranda, and other communiqués.
2. Agendas, announcements and minutes of meetings, and other written reports of events.
3. Administrative documents – proposals, progress reports, and other internal records.
4. Formal studies or evaluations of the same site under study.
5. Newspaper clippings and other articles appearing in the mass media or in community newsletters. (p. 86)

Documentary data that were collected, such as Ohio Achievement Test results, student value-added data reports, strategic plans, memos, board meetings minutes, and other pertinent information pertaining to value-added assessment, provided valuable background information for this study.

Table 5

Observation Protocol (Patton, 2002) Utilized for Observations

Questions	Descriptions
Question 1	Describe the setting that was observed.
Question 2	What activities took place during the visit?
Question 3	How did the lesson correlate with the model?
Question 4	Describe the meanings of what was observed from the perspectives of those observed.

Data Analysis

The *Constant Comparison Method* of data was used to code and compare data (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994). The four steps of this model include: (1) Inductive category coding and simultaneous comparing of units of meaning actors categories; (2) Refinement of categories; (3) Exploration of relationships and patterns across categories; (4) Integration of data yielding an understanding of people and settings being studied (p. 135). These four steps were utilized to find emerging themes from categorized information as they relate to the four research questions.

Each transcript was taped recorded and transcribed to determine emerging themes. Once emerging themes were found, I transferred all findings in a narrative report. I photocopied each transcript and reviewed them in a thorough manner.

Ethical Considerations

In this study, I ensure the anonymity of all subjects by protecting their rights, dignity, welfare, and privacy. I completed the West Virginia University Institutional Review Board for Protection of Human Research Subjects (IRB) training prior to conducting my research. “Qualitative researchers are guests in the private spaces of the world. Their manners should be good and their code of ethics strict” (Stake, 2000, p. 447). My research meets the IRB requirements covered under the provisions of the Federalwide Assurance of West Virginia University.

Data collections methods of interviewing and observation can pose ethical issues for researchers in the qualitative field. According to Patton (2002) “...qualitative methods are highly personal and interpersonal...and because in-depth interviewing opens up what is inside people – qualitative inquiry may be more intrusive and involve grater reactivity...” than quantitative research (p. 407). Thus, Patton devised an Ethical Issues Checklist (p. 408) for qualitative researchers. I used this checklist while conducting interviews and observations.

Observations also have its ethical disadvantages. “The act of observation may bring about changes in activity, rendering it somewhat atypical” (Merriam, 1998, p. 215). All observations conducted took place in staff meetings and classroom observations of teachers. I do not feel that my presence induced or prohibited any particular behaviors of the participants in my study.

According to Merriam (1998), public documents usually do not cause ethical issues. The reason is that these documents are public and open for review by the citizens. Thus, Ohio Achievement Test results, student value-added data reports, strategic plans, and memos are all considered public knowledge.

Summary

In the first chapter, I justify the reason for conducting research on Ohio’s value-added model. The concept of value-added assessment adds another dimension to improving student learning. The most notable problem this researcher found was that no one has ever told the story of how Ohio’s value-added model affects the people experiencing and implementing this model. Thus, limited descriptive evidence exists.

A review of the literature in Chapter two examines selected research that is related to Ohio’s value-added model. Research indicated that Ohio’s value-added model is guided by the follow four guiding principles: (a) student achievement, student success, and student growth, (b) teacher and administrative quality and professional development, (c) leadership of the model, and (d) stakeholder enlistment and support. Value-added assessment does not rely on a single test; rather, it adds another dimension to measuring student growth and student success. Teacher quality is essential to the improvement of the student and learning process.

Chapter three described the methodology used in the study including sections on the research design, my background experience statement and biases, research site, research participants, research instruments and materials, data collection procedures, and ethical

considerations. In addition, an interview and observation protocol was included in this chapter.

“The protocol is a major way of increasing the *reliability* of case study research and is intended to guide the investigator in carrying out the data collection from a single-case study” (Yin, 2003, p. 67).

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

The purpose of this study was to provide a description of how one school implements and experiences Ohio's value-added model at the elementary school level. This study will assist other principals, teachers, and lawmakers in the future by providing a better understanding of Ohio's value-added model. This research answers the following questions:

1. How is value-added assessment being implemented and what does that mean to teachers, principals, and stakeholders?
2. What is the context of Ohio's value-added model at the school level?
3. What are the types of services and training received by administrators and teachers?
4. What are the effects of Ohio's value-added model?

This study utilized selected interview questions that have been developed for each research question. I interviewed eight teachers, one administrator, and three stakeholders. The teachers selected for the study had to be employed in the research site for at least three consecutive years and had to teach fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students. The purpose of interviewing teachers at these grade levels was because these were the only grade levels pertinent to the study at the research site. In addition, the building administrator had to hold a valid Ohio professional certificate and have prior knowledge of value-added assessment. The stakeholder participants had to be a parent of a school-age child at the research site. I interviewed one parent who was a teacher at the research site and two parents that had no affiliation with the research site other than their child attending the school. Document analysis, classroom observations, and grade level meeting observations provided a more detailed in-depth picture as a phenomenon was occurring. Thus, the emergence of themes occurred by utilizing interviews, observations, and document examination.

This chapter includes a profile of the research site. A clear description of the school is presented. Following the profile of the research site, the themes that emerged from the data are presented according to each of the four research questions. The elements and variables that emerge from triangulating the data are summarized and defined to support this in-depth case study. Triangulation was used in qualitative research by "...checking out the consistency of findings generated by different data collection methods" (Patton, 2002).

The Research Site

The research site was an elementary school that has been in existence for 28 years. It was built to replace three elementary schools that were spread out throughout the county. The site is centrally located in the county and houses 324 students in grades 5 thru 8. This rural community showed its support by passing a Bond Issue in 1981 for a state of the art K thru 12 school facility, which is comprised of two buildings on the same campus. This contemporary facility was located in a rural community surrounded by farms, rolling hills, and streams. Because the school sits in a valley, it is extremely prone to flooding, which I witnessed during one of my visits. It is not uncommon for students to miss up to three days a year due to extreme flooding. Flooding most often occurs during the winter and spring months. This has been a problem since the two buildings were constructed at this site.

The entire complex was situated on several flat acres and trees deep in a valley. A beautiful playground was located next to the school with picnic tables strategically placed under huge pine trees. The athletic fields were located on campus, which makes practice accessible for students and coaches. The nearest structure to the school was a church. There were no traffic lights in the town, only stop and speed limit signs. The entrance to the complex was aesthetically landscaped including a big marquee displaying the school's name. Visitors entered the school

using two entrances. One was for the high school and the other was for the elementary and middle school.

The free and reduced lunch rate at the school site was 43 percent with a 99 percent White/Caucasian district population. The school served a small population of gifted and resource students. All the teachers at the research site were deemed highly qualified according to the Ohio Department of Education. Criteria for meeting HQT includes the following: (1) Teachers possessing at least a bachelor's degree; (2) Teachers must have a certificate/license that is appropriate to the grade and subject they are teaching; and (3) Teachers must be able to demonstrate their subject area expertise in the core academic subjects they teach. If any part of this definition is not met, the teacher cannot be HQT.

The first thing I noticed inside the building was the mission statement posted on the walls. The mission stated "to provide a caring environment which strengthens the unique qualities and abilities of each student and encourages lifelong learning." My observations of the school supported this statement. The staff welcomed me and was eager to show me around the building. They were very proud of their Ohio Achievement Test scores and Value-added scores. Even the students greeted me in the halls with a friendly smile. Student unique abilities were displayed on the walls. In most classrooms, posted work consisted of data charts representing student growth in each core subject. This work demonstrated students taking a stake in their own learning. These charts were colorful and easy to interpret. Students at all levels were familiar with their own data. Even at an early age, students were learning about growth and progress, which are key concepts of value-added assessment. This data were not only used to show student progress, but also served as a powerful visual for anyone who walked into the classroom. Also, bulletin boards throughout the building were decorated with student work. For instance, one bulletin board outside the sixth grade classroom consisted of timelines representing the different

periods in World History. Most bulletin boards throughout the school had positive phrases, such as “We are an Excellent School with Excellent Students and Teachers”.

I chose this school for two reasons. First, the district of the research site participated in a statewide project prior to value-added become law. Early exposure of value-added assessment training gave staff the opportunity to implement it slowly at the building level. Three teachers and the principal were invited to attend several value-added sessions even before value-added became law in Ohio in 2003. When it became part of the state report card in 2007, this particular school was already familiar and heavily immersed in value-added data. Secondly, the research site has shown overall positive growth at both the district and building levels. The 2007-2008 state report card indicated that this school received an “Excellent” designation, which means they met all four measures of performance. One of the four measures of performance they met was the value-added component. The building received an overall composite rating of “Above Expected Growth.” The significance of this rating of “Above Expected Growth” indicates greater than one year of progress has been achieved. Students are not only meeting a year’s growth, they are exceeding it. A school that is familiar and successful with value-added assessment constitutes a good case study to find out how teachers and the building administrator implemented and experienced the model. Much can be learned from an up-close view of this particular research site. “Qualitative inquiry is especially powerful as a source of grounded theory, theory that is inductively generated from fieldwork, that is theory that emerges from the researcher’s observations and interviews out in the real world rather than in the laboratory or the academy” (Patton, 2002, p.11).

The interview process started with the building principal followed by teachers and parents. In addition, observations and document analysis were utilized to triangulate the study. The following sections are categorized according to each research question. The findings of my

research presented will "...illuminate the people behind the numbers and put faces on the statistics, not to make hearts bleed, though that may occur, but to deepen understanding" (Patton, 2002, p.10).

Research Question One, the Implementation and Experience

Research question one focused on the implementation and experience of Ohio's value-added model. The principal was a friendly, mild-mannered gentleman who was nearing the end of his career. He spent over 20 years as a classroom teacher before assuming the principal role, which he has held the past seven years. It was quite evident to me that he was a patient and intelligent man liked and well respected by his staff. When I asked him to describe the implementation of Ohio's value-added model, he stated that "the initial contact was with the Superintendent at our administrator's meeting. He presented it to us and it was kind of foreign to us." The principal described his early efforts to implement Ohio's value-added model by stating:

We weren't clear at that time and took a lot of gathering data and different information to get it all together. We went slowly. It started out with reading and math and when the initial training started, we sent two math teachers and also a 5th grade teacher at which that time we were self-contained. They went to the initial training and then sat down as a group and from there we started looking at it very serious and how it could impact our instruction, curriculum and those areas. It was going to show staff where some of their strengths were, not particularly weaknesses. Then we had a second round of training and we sent a language arts junior high teacher, a junior high science teacher. I guess we still took the approach that we still wanted to have a couple years of data before really giving it to the teachers. One of the core values of this is to have multiple years of data so we have a good baseline and not just jump to conclusions for one year. And after our first year of getting all that data, we started introducing it slowly to the teachers...bring them

in, showing them data results, where some of their strengths were and not mentioning their weaknesses or perceived weaknesses or any area where they may need to target a little more. We gradually have given them more data and access to look at their own data at their own pace. This year we provided them with passwords so they can get in and actually look at their own data.

The strength of value-added assessment data lies in the potential impact to improve student achievement for all students. The principal took the initiative to gather multiple years of data prior to full implementation of the model. Once data accumulated, volunteered teachers had the opportunity to examine value-added data and other school performance information pertinent to increasing student achievement and student growth. It was during this time that these teachers and principal assessed student strengths and weaknesses as well as their own teaching strengths and weaknesses. The principal strongly reinforced the notion that value-added data would be utilized to set goals that build on strengths.

Thus, value-added information was used as a strategy for overall school improvement efforts. It began as a pilot project involving the training of selected staff members to individual teachers analyzing data to determine student and teacher strengths and weaknesses. Once student and teacher strengths and weaknesses were accessed, grade level teams set goals and worked toward those goals throughout the school year. Goals focused on improving teacher instruction, assessment, and curriculum. More specifically, these goals included alignment of the curriculum to the standards, determining which indicators were essential, and using formative assessments to drive the instructional process.

In 2002, the principal asked for three volunteers to attend training in Columbus, Ohio. He stated:

We wanted to understand what value-added data was all about prior to implementation and bringing teachers together, we sat down as a group and wanted teachers we felt that would first understand it and secondly have a stake in it.

Three teachers volunteered for the training, but I only interviewed two since one of them moved to a primary grade level. The first District Value Added Specialist (DVAS) I interviewed was a 15 year veteran female teacher who taught sixth and seventh grade Language Arts and Reading. Teacher A attended Battelle for Kids training seven years ago and was officially trained as a DVAS four years ago. Teacher A expressed the implementation in these words:

Initially, teachers felt very intimidated by it that it was going to be another way they were going to judge us and be held under a microscope. The more familiar people become with it, the easier it is to get them on board now. But the administration here is very good at not making this a judgmental process. They tend to always look at the positive sides, even though there are some teachers scoring very, very low. They never made that a negative thing. Administrators would say, we have made some improvements, but where can we go from here? So I think people are starting to feel empowered by it and they know where they need to go. Our administration has really gotten on board with this. I think there has to be strong leadership in order for people to buy into it.

Leadership of the model is a critical component needed for successful implementation. Teachers not only need support from both the superintendent and building principal, but the actual involvement at both levels. Teacher A stated that “people are slow to change and some people think that this is one more thing we are being forced to do.” However, focusing on the positive aspects of the model contributed to successful implementation at the early stages. Teachers looked at individual data on student growth to determine whether or not students were meeting a year’s growth. The principal did not use this data to make judgments on teacher performance.

Rather, the principal wanted each teacher to analyze the data to determine areas of improvement. Teacher A stated that the principal would say, “We have some improvements, but where can we go from here?” As a result, teachers felt empowered by this, which helped ease any fears that the model would be used to judge teacher performance. Also, teacher collaboration played a critical role during the implementation phase. Teacher A describes the implementation phase in the following words:

One of the things we do here is that our principal gives us a data folder. It not only has value-added data, but the Ohio Achievement Test data, and other sorts of data. We come together as a group and analyze the data we have received. We look at which of our groups grew the most in a particular area and which group showed the least amount of growth and in which areas. Then we look at individual teacher pieces to see if there is one particular teacher who has better success with a group than another.

The purpose of the data folder was to provide teachers adequate information on each student’s achievement and growth. This information was then utilized to identify areas of improvement. Data folders I observed from the participating teachers contained student OAT scores, value-added scores, OAT released tests with an answer key and scoring guidelines, and an Item Analysis report. The Item Analysis report showed the school’s performance on all the OAT questions. Individual test questions do not give complete picture of student performance. However, the Item Analysis report was a valuable resource that gave teachers the opportunity to focus on the performance data for each standard. As a result, teachers were able to analyze each child’s performance according to each specific standard. Data folders accurately reflected teacher and student performance that was aligned with state standards.

Value-added data also constituted part of the folder. Because this school participated in the SOAR and T-CAP pilots, they received a Teacher Value-Added Report from Battelle for

Kids. Schools not part of the SOAR project receive a less detailed report that is not broken down by teacher. The school sites report contained the following information: (1) Mean Student Score; (2) Mean Score Percentile; (3) Predicted Score Percentile; (5) Teacher Effect; and (6) Teacher Standard Error. The Mean Student Score represents the student performance level based on the OAT. The Mean Percentile Score compares the performance of students at a particular grade level statewide. The Mean Predicated Score column is the average of the predicated scores for all students taught by this teacher. Comparing the Mean Score Percentile with the Predicated Score Percentile provides an indication of the amount of progress students made this year. The Teacher Effect is an estimate of a teacher's influence on students' academic growth. The Teacher Standard Error provides the basis for establishing a confidence band around the Teacher Effect value.

A bar graph displayed the relationship between Teacher Effect and Student Growth. This data, which is a diagnostic report, was used to identify patterns of progress among students at different achievement levels. The chart gave a clear visual representation of student progress for different prior achievement levels and can be used to identify patterns in progress among students. It was colored coded. The green line represented the amount of progress students must make to keep up with their peers. Blue bars show the progress of students in the current school year. The yellow bars showed the progress of students in previous school years. Bars above the green line indicate that students in the subgroup made better than average progress. On the contrary, bars below the line indicated that students made less than average progress. No bar is presented for subgroups with fewer than five students. This report was an excellent tool used by teachers to analyze student growth. Not only were the students doing well on the OAT's, they were also exceeding a years growth in all grades, except fifth grade.

In 2008, grade five was below the Growth Standard by more than 1 Standard Error. However, grades six, seven, and eight exceeded a year's growth of performance. The school site not only achieved a value-added rating of "Above Growth", they also exceeded expected gains for two consecutive years. As a result, the overall school rating was improved one level by the Value-Added rating.

OAT data was another source of information utilized by staff. An OAT report consists of an average school score for each tested area. Performance levels included the following: (1) Advanced (448-579); Accelerated (429-447); Proficient (400-428); Basic (378-399); and Limited (233-377). The research site achieved a school average in the proficient range for grades five thru eighth. A bar graph was used to compare the state average with the school's average of students meeting state standards.

Prior to the beginning of the school year, the principal provided each teacher with a data folder. The collaboration of teachers made the implementation phase less overwhelming, especially when discussing data. Having ownership in the model was a key element. If teachers were forced to adopt the model at its infancy, the less likely it would have sustained. After Teacher A was finished with the interview, she shared the following with me before she left. She said:

There is one thing I will say, I think this initiative is going to be much more successful if it is led by teachers. There have to be people who are willing to put it into practice in their room and discuss it with other people of what works and what doesn't work. I think it is better coming from colleagues than administration. If we take small steps, everyone will be on board for the betterment of our students.

Shared decision making and teacher empowerment are key leadership qualities found in this case study. Teachers and school administrators are best qualified to make decisions at the building

level. A top-down approach to any new initiative is bound to fail on its own (Blase and Kirby, 2009). Administrators must draw on the expertise of many teachers rather than using an authoritarian leadership approach. As a result, teachers will feel empowered. The majority of teachers at the research site believed they were empowered by their principal. The principal asked for volunteers to be trained rather than selecting them. The process was slow that involved teachers in the analysis of student and teacher data. It is important to note that data was not used to identify or eliminate poor teachers. Such action creates a tense environment and sends fear throughout the learning organization. It actually "...encourages avoidance, sabotage, and fudging of data" (Schmoker, 1999, p. 41). Rather, data was used to monitor and assess performance.

Teacher B, who is a seventh and eighth grade math teacher and eight years of experience, was the second trained DVAS I interviewed. He also stated that some teachers were skeptical during the implementation phase. Teacher B said:

Initially, teachers have that attitude of here we again, this something else we got to do.

And in 5 years we are not going to talk about it anymore, but this one seems to have the sticking power. Value-added is what moved us into an "Excellent" district.

Like Teacher A, Teacher B also believed that getting teachers to support the model was a critical element needed for its success. Teachers relied heavily on administrators for the support and encouragement throughout the implementation phase. Teacher B said that "...the buy in was the main thing with the teachers early on." It was never approached as an evaluation tool. Although some teachers early on believed that value-added assessment was another initiative that may not sustain, this proved to be quite the contrary. Moving slowly with the process helped teachers to better understand and use value-added in a school improvement and planning process. Results did not happen suddenly. In this case, it took several years for it to be fully implemented.

Teachers A and B and the principal were responsible for training teachers at the building level. Their training at Battelle for Kids gave them the knowledge needed to start the implementation phase. Building level trainings included in-service days and early release days. The two DVAS and principal conducted meetings on the model. Although it was a slow implementation process, all of the interviewed teachers stated that they initially felt overwhelmed.

Teacher C, who is a fifth grade Language Arts Teacher with five years of experience, stated that “we were able to move slower in our in-service meetings, but the staff was still overwhelmed.” Teacher C elaborated on his description of the initial staff in-services by stating:

The first few in-services we had were challenging. Some people were like ...I’ve been here for 25-30 years and it’s not going to affect me. But what they don’t realize is yes, it’s going to affect everyone. At first, there was a little bit of confusion, but each time we had a meeting, people asked more questions. The information we got, the more comfortable we felt on how it was going to be used. Honestly, once people heard that value-added wasn’t part of the evaluation, they were more comfortable and receptive. Establishing and maintaining a certain trust level within the school culture played an important part during the implementation phase. Any new initiative can cause dissention among individuals involved in the change process. According to Reeves (2009), opposition to change is evident. “In fact, if your proposed change does not engender opposition, then you should question whether or not what you are proposing really represents meaningful change” (p. 11). Although the principal made it clear that value-added data would not be used in any way to evaluate the performance of teachers, many were still skeptical. Teacher C stated that many teachers felt threatened that their value-added results may lead to different classroom assignments. In other instances, some teachers believed this data would create a negative perception formulated by other staff

members. For example, Teacher C stated: “What would the staff think of me if I received low test scores on my group of students?” Low morale among staff was a concern with the model. It was evident that teachers needed to observe the principal’s actions before completely trusting the new initiative. The principal told staff at the beginning of the implementation phase that value-added would not be used as an evaluation tool; however, it could be used for teachers to evaluate themselves.

Teacher D, a fifth grade teacher with 10 years of experience, and Teacher E with 15 years of experience both stated that the in-service trainings were initially overwhelming, but administration was helpful throughout the implementation phase. Teacher E stated:

First of all, we have a superintendent that is on board with us and we have a building principal that wants all of us to use it and see it as a tool to help our school better prepare our students. They have said it is not an evaluative tool.

Teacher F was a veteran eighth grade Reading and Language Arts teacher. She also echoed the same concerns of feeling overwhelmed in the beginning of the process. Both Teacher E and Teacher F stated that they were initially intimidated with the model because they felt it would be an evaluation tool rather than for a tool to look at student strengths and weaknesses. Since the implementation, Teachers E and Teacher F both stated that they believe value-added has a positive impact on the school culture. Teacher F said, “I think value-added is a good thing. Everyone participates and gives input.” The strength of the model is that all teachers are examining and analyzing the student data. Although the value-added results were not good in the beginning, teachers did not give up on the value-added concept. In fact, they kept working hard and putting in the necessary time using job-embedded professional development. The principal created time in the master schedule for common planning periods and other designated times for professional development throughout the year.

Teacher G, a 5 thru 8 Math teacher with 35 years of experience, discussed her experience with the model. Teacher G's experience and expertise made the implementation phase a little easier for her than most of the other teachers. She stated:

I was an intervention coordinator before value-added. We took the test scores, like we do now with value-added, and provide intervention to those students who did not do well. It was easy for us to move into value-added because we were used to breaking down our own scores.

Although Teacher G was not a DVAS, she did attend some initial value-added sessions in Columbus. She also mentioned that value-added data is a great tool to identify strengths and weaknesses. "Data makes the invisible visible, revealing strengths and weaknesses that are easily concealed (Schomker, 1999, p.44). This common theme was evident throughout the interview process. Once data was analyzed, clear goals at the building level were created, which reduced any uncertainty among staff. Performance data collected and analyzed by teachers in and across grade levels not only broke down teacher isolation, but it also promoted a culture of collaboration and satisfaction. A PLC was established and sustained. This type of professional development collaboration allowed teachers and school leaders to look at quantitative data in a qualitative fashion. PLC's break down teacher isolation and allows them to provide valuable feedback on the implementation of new strategies. Analysis of data leads to the establishment of clear student centered goals. These goals must be revisited several times a year. At the research site, data was analyzed and goals were set at the beginning of the year and monitored throughout the year. The monitoring process took place at grade level meetings and early release days. Teacher A stated:

We formulate our goals at the beginning of the year. Once we have our goals in place, we determine if we are still on track. Sometimes, we have to change what we are doing. I like the fact that we have time built into our schedule to do this.

Teacher G agreed that constant assessment of goals was important for both the student and teacher. She stated that "...we need to constantly look at what our students are doing. If our students are not improving, then we need to assess how we are instructing them."

Teacher H, who is a special education teacher with 11 years of experience, was the last teacher I interviewed. He served as co teacher in Teacher A's classroom four periods a day. This was the first year that Teacher H worked with value-added data. In previous years, he had a self contained classroom in a primary grade level. Teacher H stated:

I work with my students and regular education students. I use the IEP goals for my students and value-added information as a form of student assessment. The strength is that value-added data can be useful. The standards and value-added all work together to raise student achievement.

According to Teacher H, the strength of the value-added model was the data it produced for the teachers. The curriculum standards connect each grade level with one another by subject areas and the value-added data was helpful information to help raise student performance. It gives each teacher specific data points on each student. As a result, teachers have the capacity to look at the data, analyze it, and utilize it to address the different weakness and strengths of each student.

Teacher H liked the fact that value-added data was now part of the state report card and could be used as a tool to improve student achievement. Although Teacher H only spent one year working with the model, he said he was fortunate to be a co teacher with a DVAS, Teacher A, who helped train the staff on the model. Working with Teacher A allowed him to view firsthand how the

value-added concept could be used to improve student achievement and student growth. The following was what Teacher H said about his co teacher:

I get along very well with my co-teacher. I believe it is true co-teaching. I plan a little less than half of the lessons where I am the main planner, teacher, and facilitator. Of course, I rely on her knowledge of the standards and curriculum, and especially her knowledge on value-added assessment. We try to diversify our lessons and sometimes we split the kids up for tests. I service all students in the classroom.

In this particular classroom, two teachers were collaborating to maximize student performance. Both teachers played an integral part of the instructional process.

During an observation of Teacher A's classroom, Teacher H helped with the instruction and assessment of students. The Lesson Summary, which was written on the blackboard, stated "Students will develop and understanding of persuasion. Students will be able to define persuasion, identify persuasive arguments in writing, and define an author's point of view." Also written on the blackboard was "Indicator 6 – Identify an author's argument or viewpoint and assess adequacy and accuracy of details used." Even before the lesson started, students were already cognizant of the standard and indicator being introduced. Teacher A distributed a pre-assessment activity called "Too much Television." Students had to read an editorial column and answer questions on a pre-assessment worksheet that was provided to them. After reading the editorial, students took about 20 minutes to answer the worksheet. It contained four questions, which included a rubric at the bottom of the page. Upon completion, Teachers A and H collected the worksheets. Next, Teacher A asked the following questions: (1) Why do writers write? (2) Why did this writer write? (3) What words in this editorial tell you the writer's purpose? and (4) Why do readers need to know the author's purpose? The students were actively engaged in the lesson and many of them had their hands raised to answer the questions. Afterward, Teacher A

provided a brief lecture on persuasive writing. Simultaneously, Teacher H was reviewing the pre-assessments and used the results to place students into small groups of four. The groups were heterogeneous that ranged from low level to high level students. Each group had a different editorial. Teacher A assigned roles within each group. For instance, each group had a timekeeper, traffic controller, reporter/recorder, and a taskmaster. The students were then given another handout in which they had place the Title and Author of Article at the top the worksheet. They had to write the main idea, the purpose of writing, supporting details, and opposing arguments. Both Teacher A and Teacher H monitored each group and examined each group to ensure they were accurately identifying the author's purpose, viewpoint, and supporting arguments. This activity took the entire 50 minutes of class. However, Teacher A stated that this lesson would take up to three days to complete. In this particular classroom, I observed two teachers working together and differentiating instruction to meet the needs of all learners.

Teacher H stated:

It's great to have someone like Teacher A to co-teach with. I am fortunate that Teacher A has a solid foundation of the standards and can teach them at all different levels. That plays right into the value-added concept of getting students to grow. We try to use a variety of groupings in different lessons. I work with all students, not just the ones that have IEP's.

In addition, Teacher H said that Teacher A knows how to implement the key concepts of the model in her classroom, which is evident from her test scores. However, Teacher H stated that the students and parents know very little about value-added assessment. Teacher A stated that "it is very unfortunate that parents do not know what value-added is. This is something we need to look at."

I interviewed three parent stakeholders regarding the implementation of Ohio's Value-added model. I asked the stakeholders if they participated in any training sessions, and if so, what they were like. All three participants noted that they did not attend any training sessions nor were they asked to be part of the implementation phase. The model builders did not have consideration of how parent stakeholders could be part of the implementation phase. Educational leaders have to make important decisions that affect the adoption of an innovation (Rogers, 1995). Early Adopters of Ohio's Value-added model did not feel that it was critical to make stakeholders part of the initial implementation phase. However, the three parent stakeholders provide valuable data later in this chapter.

Three Themes on Implementation and Experience

Three themes emerged from research question one. First, all teacher participants I interviewed stated that strong building leadership was critical during the implementation of Ohio's Value-added model. The principal asked for volunteers to be trained in Columbus and introduced value-added gradually to staff. Initially, most teachers felt overwhelmed with the concept of value-added assessment. However, the principal did not make teachers feel threatened or intimidated by this new initiative. Rather, he empowered staff by getting other teachers to support the model on their own. For instance, instead of pointing out teacher weaknesses from the initial data, he asked the staff for input on how everyone can improve their classroom instruction. Data results focused on teacher strengths. Pointing out teacher strengths rather than teacher weaknesses was instrumental in establishing and maintaining a high level of trust. Thus, teachers became more comfortable with value-added assessment and eventually supported the model after a series of trainings. Job-embedded professional development was utilized to introduce and implement Ohio's Value-added model. Teachers supported the idea of being

trained by their own staff members and unencumbered about looking at relevant data, even when data was associated with their own teaching.

Secondly, value-added data produced meaningful information that teachers could use to make pertinent instructional decisions in the classroom. Each teacher received a data folder at the beginning of the year. Data folders served as a tool that provided specific student information to help raise student performance. Multiple data sources, such as OAT scores, value-added scores, and Item Analysis reports were utilized to determine student strengths and weaknesses. On the contrary, teachers also used data folders to analyze their own strengths and weaknesses and were unafraid to share their self reflective thoughts with colleagues.

Thirdly, a PLC was established and sustained during the implementation phase. Teachers had time during the school day to collaborate and discuss strategies to improve student achievement. There was also professional development at the beginning and end of the school year for teachers to work in and across grade levels. For instance, the majority of teachers I interviewed stated that professional development was used to align the curriculum to the Ohio Academic Content Standards, determine essential indicators, and analyze student data. Teachers mapped the curriculum to ensure all standards were being covered before the OAT. Because all indicators cannot be taught at the same pace, teachers worked in grade level teams to determine which indicators were the most essential for students to learn. The teachers and principal also utilized PLC's for analyzing student data. It was evident that teachers shared knowledge with one another and applied it in their classroom. Research supports the notion that "...quality teaching requires strong professional learning communities" (DuFour, Eaker, and DuFour, 2005, p.8). Thus, high quality professional development leads to high administrative quality and high teacher quality, which leads to higher student achievement, student growth, and student success.

The three principles found in research question one includes strong building leadership, teacher empowerment at the building level based on data, and the establishment and sustainment of a PLC. The PLC helped to create a culture of trust between the principal and teachers.

Research Question Two, Context of the Model and its Impact on School Culture

Research question two focused on the context of Ohio's Value-added model. It was my intent to not only find out how much background knowledge the principal, participating teachers, and stakeholders had of the model, but also to determine how the model impacted the school culture. The principal and participating teachers had excellent knowledge of the model.

During the interview, the principal elaborated on his knowledge of Ohio's Value-added model. He noted:

You would have to be a statistician to understand it in-depth, but the focus is on the individual student's growth. I think it has served as a tool for the teachers to enable them to seek advice from other staff members through staff development. It's also a tool that is used to determine the amount of growth a student makes each year. A lot of professional development has centered on Ohio's Value-added model.

Implementing and sustaining any new initiative requires school leaders to fully comprehend the change that is taking place. Therefore, principals must embrace the change and be able to use strategies to lead change effectively. At the research site, the principal believed that value-added had an enormous impact on the school culture. He sent teachers to be trained in Ohio's Value-added model and expected those same teachers to share their knowledge with other staff members. Several in-service trainings took place to help teachers fully understand and eventually implement the model at the classroom level. The principal did not use value-added data to identify poor teachers. Rather, he allowed teachers to look at data collaboratively by grade levels to determine their strengths and weaknesses. The principal had to have knowledge of the model

and transfer that knowledge for the practical purpose for building a PLC. The school of culture was transformed to one that showed great collaboration that supported student and teacher learning. The principal believed the school culture had improved with the implementation of the model. He stated:

I see a more positive attitude, a happier staff, and I see students proud of their progress, proud of their “Excellent” Rating. There is a sense of pride for our staff and community and it’s hard to put an estimation of what that can do for your entire school system. The teachers are now sitting down with each other to look at how their teaching can raise student achievement.”

The utilization of job-embedded professional development provided teachers the opportunity to gather evidence of student achievement and to motivate learning. Just a few years ago, the concept of job-embedded professional development was not a practice. The principal took the initiative to widen a professional development model that eventually formed into a PLC. Thus, it became clear that a culture of collaborative teacher learning evolved at the building level. As the principal took the model and transferred it to practical uses, so did the teachers.

Teacher’s A and B received their knowledge of the model from attending several training sessions at Battelle for Kids located in Columbus. Teacher A stated:

This is a model which seeks to measure growth of a child from one year to the next. It is more of a teacher efficacy piece showing what one teacher can do for each child in the course of that school year. It takes away environmental factors and cultural factors that the child came to us with. The model says we can take any child that comes to us in whatever state they are in and grow them to the optimal level within the level they are in.

According to Teacher A, value-added assessment was more than a statistical formula measuring student growth. It was a valuable tool that can be utilized by teachers to make themselves better

classroom instructors. Teachers have the greatest impact on student learning, regardless of their students' environmental background (Pollock, 2007). Marzano's (2003) research supports the notion that students in classes with ineffective teachers will gain much less than with effective teachers. "In fact, ineffective teachers might actually impede the learning of their students" (p.74). Determining the growth of each child remains a critical component of the model.

According to Teacher A, professional development supported the process of Ohio's Value-added Model. She added:

Actually, we changed our professional development. We have departmental meetings and value-added is part of every meeting. We generally look at what our goals were in the beginning of the year, determine if they were met, and decide where we need to go from here? The middle school language arts department meets every two weeks. We have early dismissals once every two months as a district.

Because Teacher A was a DVAS, she often helped facilitate professional development meetings along with the principal. My observation of a sixth grade team meeting included Teacher A showing and explaining the 2008 School Value-Added Report for the research site, which she learned to interpret as a DVAS. Unlike the Value-Added Report for SOAR Districts, this particular report was received by all public schools in Ohio, regardless whether or not if a district participated in the pilot program (See figure 1). This information was utilized by teachers to determine the amount of growth made in their respected grade level. Although the fifth grade was slightly below the Growth Standard, grades six, seven, and eight scored above the Growth Standard. This indicated that students were making more than a year's growth in these grade levels. The chart provided a discussion piece for teachers to determine grade level effectiveness.

One major difference between the two reports was that the School Value-Added Report did not include a breakdown of student growth per teacher. Instead, this report contained

Figure 1

**2008 Ohio Value-Added School Report for Ohio Elementary School
Ohio Ach. Composite**

Estimated School Mean NCE Gain								
Grade:	3	4	5	6	7	8	Mean NCE Gain over Grades Relative to	
Growth Standard:		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0		
State 3-Yr-Avg:							Growth Standard	State
2006 Mean NCE Gain:								
Std Error:								
2007 Mean NCE Gain:								
Std Error:								
2008 Mean NCE Gain:		1.4 Y	-1.7 R*	7.0 G	5.0 G	1.6 G	2.7	
Std Error:		1.6	1.4	1.1	1.1	1.1	0.6	
3-Yr-Avg NCE Gain:								
Std Error:								
Estimated School Mean NCE Scores								
Grade:	3	4	5	6	7	8		
State Base Year (2007):	50.0	50.0	50.0	50.0	50.0	50.0		
State 3-Yr-Avg:								
2005 Mean:								
2006 Mean:								
2007 Mean:	43.0	51.0	43.5	47.1	51.0	49.3		
2008 Mean:	47.8	44.4	49.2	50.5	52.1	52.6

G - Estimated mean NCE gain is above the Growth Standard by 1 Standard Error or more.

Y - Estimated mean NCE gain is at most 1 Standard Error below the Growth Standard but less than 1 Standard Error above it.

R*-Estimated mean NCE gain is below the Growth Standard by more than 1 Standard Error.

information on the progress or lack of progress each building and district made for the school year. It included a Mean Gain Approach, which was used to determine if each grade level participating in value-added assessment showed gain above the Growth Standard by Standard Error or more. This was shaded in green. Yellow meant that the Mean Gain Approach was at most one standard error below the growth standard but less than one standard error. Red indicated that the Mean Gain Approach was below the growth standard by more than one standard error (Battelle for Kids, 2006). A report was available for both Reading and Math.

Teacher's A and B also utilized Diagnostic Value-Added Reports, which could be retrieved on a value-added website. The fifth thru eighth grade teachers and principal at the research site had a password to view student value-added data. These reports consisted of bar graphs broken down into quintiles. Quintiles range from the lowest to the highest level students. The diagnostic reports "...show progress by prior achievement level or by rank ordering by where they are projected to be relative to the state's achievement categories" (Battelle for Kids, 2006). The purpose of the report was to identify gain patterns that described trends. According to the Battelle for Kids Training DVAS Manual (2006), an upward shed pattern means that a school learning experiences benefit higher-achieving students more than their lower-achieving peers. A Downward Shed Pattern indicates that a school learning experiences benefit low level students more than higher level students. A Teepee Pattern means that middle level students are progressing more than the lower- and higher- level students. The Reverse Teepee Pattern shows that middle-achieving students are progressing less than the lower- and higher-achieving students. Teacher B stated that teachers have the capability to go online to look and examine value-added data. Teacher B stated:

We looked at actual data and learned how to chart progress for each student. The

principal made sure we understood why boxes were green, yellow, or red. Based on the standard deviation, when people see a yellow box, they think there's caution, but actually these kids are making a year's growth for a year's worth of instruction.

Analyzing and interpreting value-added data gives teachers the ability to examine data points for each student. Therefore, teachers can differentiate instruction according to different student levels. In a heterogeneous classroom, students bring a variety of learning abilities to the classroom. Value-added data served as a tool to help teachers maximize the learning potential of each student. Having this information provided an optimal learning environment for student growth and student achievement, which has transformed the school culture into a collaborative learning environment. Teacher B stated that the implementation of the model has been "...positive and overall, people have been happy with the growth they are giving their students." Even at the district level, value-added has proven to be a positive experience. The superintendent supported the concept of value-added assessment from the onset, which was critical to successful implementation at the building level.

Teacher C also attended a couple of trainings at Battelle for Kids. Although he was not a trained DVAS, his knowledge of the model was proficient. He added:

It gives you a specific set of data for each student. There's a baseline where students are supposed to be at called zero. The Model will show us in a nut shell what you want your students bar above that line or at the zero line. Above the bar, shows growth. You don't want that bar below the baseline because that shows they didn't reach a year's growth.

Teacher C stated that he was fortunate to attend trainings in Columbus. The trainings helped him to understand the general concept that drives Ohio's Value-added Model as well as to interpret value-added data and what that means to school improvement efforts. However, Teacher C initially struggled with the first set of value-added data. He continued:

A couple years ago when the first set of data came in, a lot people had a problem with it. On the achievement test, my students scored very high, but my value-added scores were negative...a lot of reds. It was like that the first year. I did everything I could to raise achievement scores, but when the value added scores came back later...the kids didn't have the growth. For me, it was frustrating. I was kind of ticked off. I asked, where do I go now? I thought I hit everything, but I had to regroup. And I finally started getting success on my value-added scores.

Because the school culture embraced job-embedded professional development and empowering leadership, teachers were able to work through their early frustrations and eventually see the benefits of the model. The school's culture had the necessary conditions conducive for improving overall student performance. Achievement expectations were clear and appropriate. Team-based learning continued to be the driving force behind this new initiative.

Teacher C also stated that his attitude changed because the school culture changed.

Teachers are not fearful of the model any longer. He stated:

The first few in-services we had were challenging. Some people were like ah...I've been here for 25-30 years and it's not going to affect me. But what they don't realize is yes, it's going to affect everyone. At first, there was a little bit of confusion, but each time we had a meeting, people asked more questions. The information we got was more clearly stated on how it was going to be used. Honestly, once people heard that value-added wasn't part of the evaluation, they were more comfortable and receptive.

School culture is reflected by staff behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs of individuals and groups. Teacher C experienced a culture where the building leader embraced the idea of having teachers attempt new practices to improve student performance. Teachers responded to the changing culture once trust and fear disappeared.

Teacher D did not receive any formal value-added training at Battelle for Kids. All of her training on value-added came at the building level. The DVAS and principal facilitated several sessions for staff members who did attend any Battelle for Kids trainings. The following was what Teacher D said about the trainings:

I did not receive any training from Battelle for Kids. It was implemented at school in-services. The first presentation wasn't thorough enough to understand. It took about two in-services to understand what value-added was about. We are still having in-services to understand and fully implement the model.

Teacher D reported that the building level in-service trainings were getting more in-depth and thorough. Students were supposed to make a year's growth at the conclusion of a school year. She continued:

I also know that the model provides teachers with data that can be used to make decisions in the classroom regarding curriculum and assessment. There is a baseline that is used to determine if a student made a years growth or not.

Looking at student data in a collaborative setting helped teachers make sound instructional decisions in the classroom. Like Teacher D, Teacher E and Teacher F did not receive training outside the building level. Teacher E stated that value-added showed student progress from year to year. It gives teachers pertinent information on high to low level learners. As a result, all teachers have the capacity to approach student levels differently, which was achieved through differentiated instruction. It is important to mention that Teacher D, Teacher E, and Teacher F all stated that Ohio's Value-added model had a positive impact on school culture. The model forced teachers to analyze data and become more aware of student needs. Teacher F stated, "We have a lot of children who need that push, especially since many don't get it at home."

Teacher G had the opportunity to attend a training session sponsored by Battelle for Kids. Her definition of the model included, "...looking how a child is growing instead of a shot in the dark test." She was referring to the OAT. Value-added brings another dimension to assessing student performance. However, Teacher G stated that the OAT and value-added data has made the culture of the school competitive. She said, "Once a school achieves an "Excellent" rating, it is difficult to maintain that status." Therefore, teachers must continue to interpret and analyze student data each year. Teachers proactively seek to enhance their teaching skills all the time. It is a continuous growth option. Elmore (2007) contends that "...professional development affects teachers, that is, its use assumes that giving teachers new skills and knowledge enhances the capacity of teachers to teach more effectively" (p. 120). School conditions, such as a school culture that supports innovative teaching and learning, must be present. If not, teachers will become "...cynical about any new idea when no previous new idea has worked" (p. 120). This is true regardless of the amount of teaching experience.

Teacher H had the least amount of experience with Ohio's Value-added model. Although Teacher H was only introduced to the value-added model last year, he stated:

It's better when you can have someone in the school explain it to you. They are familiar with it and put many hours into learning value-added. We see them as a trusted co-teacher or staff member that can help disseminate the information.

The culture of the research site afforded every participating teacher in this case study the opportunity to learn about the model in a trusting environment. Everyone was introduced and eventually implemented the model at the classroom level. A culture of collaboration was established. Each grade at the research site studied the state curriculum, identified essential knowledge and skills for all students, and analyzed different student data to gain new insights on student and teacher learning. Collaborative conversations took place that focused on building

goals, strategies, concerns, and results. Meaningful collaboration formed into a PLC in which staff members were working together to improve student performance. Every teacher participated and identified current levels of student achievement and student growth. The results were utilized to establish and monitor grade level goals throughout the year. It is important to mention that building goals must be shared with parents. Communication with stakeholders has become a viable way to strengthen connections between the school and home. Improving stakeholder relationships "...promises great benefits in terms of moving toward ensuring optimum learning opportunities for students in school today..." (Meek, 1999, p.3).

I asked questions on the context of Ohio's Value-added model to three parent stakeholders. Although two of them had limited knowledge of value-added assessment, all of them were able to give valuable insight for this study. Parent A had a child in sixth grade and a child in eighth grade. She was a primary teacher in the district. She knew that Ohio's Value-added model was a growth model that showed how much a child gains during the course of one school year. "I believe that it impacts student achievement." Because she possessed strong knowledge of the model, Parent A felt comfortable discussing it with me. She said:

I think it has a lot of merit. It enables me to look at my child to determine if he or she has grown over the course of the year. Having a child who is talented and gifted will always pass the achievement test. Their scores are always going to be top of the state. But I want to know, is she really learning? And value added is a way for me to gauge that.

Parent A stated that it is more difficult for teachers to make a year's growth with higher-level students than lower-level students. Because she has a child in the talented and gifted class, Parent A wanted to ensure her child was making at least a year's growth. She added:

My 8th grader is identified as talented and gifted. One of the concerns I had as a parent was I wanted to make sure she was being placed with teachers who get good results with

those upper end kids. I want to see where she is going to take them. I think value-added accentuates whether or not those talented and gifted kids are being challenged and moving forward like the general education kids.

According to all three participating parents, student value-added reports were not sent home. Only the student OAT scores were mailed home in summer or distributed to students at the beginning of the school year. Parent A continued:

Value-added reports do not come from the school. The state web page has that information for each district and building. As a parent, I start at the school level to get information. Personnel at the school have directed me to websites, such as ODE, or other experts within the district who can help me. I wish the school would do presentations for parents.

Parent B, who has a child in fifth grade and Parent C, who has a child in seventh grade, both reported that they have never received value-added student reports. Because the model does not produce individual student data reports for parents, they cannot view the same information as school personnel. While Parent B heard of value-added assessment, she did not know what it meant. Parent C had never heard of value-added assessment.

All parent participants expressed interest in receiving their child's value-added data. The state report card, which can be viewed on ODE's website or in the form of a hard copy at the school, gives a value-added rating. Also, ODE has a value-added link on their website that shows building and district value added data results. Individual student data are not available to the public. However, the teachers and principal have the capability to access student value-added data for each student. For example, reports consist of student numbers, not student names. This means that the principal or teacher must possess each student identification number to determine individual scores. This also means that parents did not have access to their child's value-added

data. Only building and district value-added data found on the state report card and a value-added link on ODE are available to parents. Although parents had limited knowledge of the model, it is important to note that they wanted to know how it impacted their child. Parent B stated, “I don’t know much about the model, but I would like to learn more about it.” All interviewed parents wanted more information from the district explaining the concept of value-added assessment. Parent C said, “If the model works, then ODE should continue using it. I wish I knew more about value-added assessment.” The research gathered from the parent interviews contributed to the emerging themes found in research question two.

Three Themes on the Context of Ohio’s Value-Added Model

Three pertinent themes emerged from research question two. First, the teachers and principal were knowledgeable of the model. Although some teachers had more training and experience with the model than others, they all knew the main principles behind Ohio’s Value-added model. Teachers accessed student value-added data and used this information to improve instruction in the classroom. The teachers not only had knowledge of the model, but actually applied it at the classroom and building level. The building level culture consisted of a collaborative environment that focused on improving student performance.

Secondly, teachers developed a trust for the principal because he never used value-added scores as an evaluation tool. As a result, a collaborative culture supporting teacher risk taking developed and sustained that helped teachers feel more at ease with the implementation of the model. Job-embedded professional development consisted of professional dialogue that focused on instructional improvement through analyzing student data and teacher efficacy without repercussions for the individuals in the classroom, including the teacher.

Thirdly, parents had limited knowledge of the model; however, they wanted to learn more about it. Parents did not receive any type of student value-added report for their child. The

model builders did not include parent value-added reports in the early adoption stage. Therefore, lack of value-added information existed for parents. The only information available to parents included the District and Building State Report Cards and the ODE website, which reports progress for individual buildings and the district, not individual students. Parents also did not have the opportunity to be trained in the model.

Research Question Three, Trainings and Services

Research question three focused on the types of services and trainings received by the building administrator and teachers. In 2002, the superintendent volunteered the district to be part of a statewide value-added pilot project. The superintendent and another teacher in the district attended three trainings in Columbus, Ohio, which was called Project SOAR. The differences between Ohio's Value-added model and Project SOAR is that Ohio's Value-added model implemented a mean gain value-added approach and uses only state achievement tests to establish a baseline. Project SOAR uses a prediction based value-added data and both state and non-state data are used to establish a baseline. However, both utilize the power of longitudinal data and links student's assessment over time. Both compare students' current test scores to baseline scores. Lastly, both provide value-added information in Web reports. The Project SOAR model laid the foundation for Ohio's Value-added model.

In 2006, the principal and three teachers from the district attended five sessions to become a DVAS. The principal stated that several trainings were made available during the implementation phase of the current model. The principal said:

I have gone through the DVAS training. We have had several trainings. We also attended regularly the National Value-Added conferences in Columbus since we have been involved in this pilot. Basically, any training that was made available through Battelle for Kids, we have attended including me, the superintendent, and DVAS.

The topics for the five day DVAS training included the rationale for value-added assessment, interpreting and analyzing data reports, value-added navigation of data reports, and using value-added for school improvement planning. Training sessions consisted of PowerPoint presentations, analyzing value-added data in groups, answering discussion questions, and navigating through data on the computer. The trainings were organized into three levels. They included: (1) Level I Analysis: What Results Are We Producing? (2) Level II Analysis: Why Are We Getting These Results? (3) Level III Analysis: How Do We Improve? According to the principal, each participant received a large binder from Battelle for Kids called District Value-Added Specialists Training Curriculum Guide (Battelle for Kids, 2006). The manual contained general information on value-added assessment, presentations and key points, activities and facilitation notes, resources, and contact information.

Day one of the training provided participants an overview and definition of value-added assessment. The principal stated that everyone was introduced to the difference between progress and achievement as a way to measure student learning, which took place in the morning session. He stated, “We watched a PowerPoint that explained the difference between the measures of achievement. This gave us the background we needed.” The afternoon session included accessing and navigating value-added Web reports and linking value-added data to school improvement efforts. Sample value-added summary reports were used to help participants understand and apply data at the building level. Teacher A, who was also in the training, added:

In the training session I was in, they gave a lot of information on value-added and a lot of analysis, looking at data and determining what that data means. We did a lot of case studies where we had to interpret the data that was given to us and analyze it. We had to see if our analysis was the same as other people in the training.

The sessions gave everyone the opportunity to interpret data and analyze case studies in a group setting. In addition, all participants had to complete an out of class assignment prior to every training session, which was a reading and response assignment in their manual.

The second day of training focused on examining school value-added reports and gain patterns. The overarching questions that guided this session were, what does it mean to be a DVAS and what tools and support will I receive? Participants used their training materials and learned facilitation strategies to help with presenting this information at their respected districts. Teacher A discussed one particular activity called the “Scavenger Hunt”. This activity gave participants a chance to explore value-added reports on their own using a computer. A list of questions pertaining to access, navigation, and interpretation were completed and discussed in small groups. The homework assignment for day two was a check for understanding exercise.

Day three of the training consisted of deeper navigation of value-added in the computer lab. According to Teacher A, participants spent over an hour in the morning navigating through web reports and completing an activity that resembled the day two homework assignment. The afternoon session focused on understanding how value-added data impacted teaching and learning, and school improvement efforts. Participants were asked to read questions, located in their manual, and jot down their responses. Afterwards, a small group discussion took place to reflect on the activity. At this session, the participants began to plan how to have value-added discussions with administrators and teachers. A PowerPoint presentation helped everyone to understand Ohio’s Value-Added School Improvement Model, which consisted of three components. They included: (1) Enabling Conditions; (2) School Improvement Scheme with three levels of analysis and action; and (3) Differentiated School Improvement Goals. Participants were assigned homework that included school improvement scenarios located in the resource manuals.

Day four of the training focused on reviewing and analyzing district data in the computer lab. Participants were able to look at “dummy” data reports to help them become more proficient at interpreting value-added information. At this session, participants were also introduced to an action planning form that would be used to create a two-year action plan to roll out value-added in their own district. The sample action plan demonstrated the importance of creating strategies, activities, resources, responsibilities, and a timeline. Participants started to collaborate on this two year plan.

The final day of the training focused on evaluating multiple strategies for rolling out value-added information within their school districts. The participants continued to build capacity on interpreting value-added information and utilize data as a school improvement tool. The final part of the training session was designated for writing an action plan for the school district. The principal and other DVAS developed a building plan to share with the teachers. The building plan consisted of enhancing the learning of all students by analyzing student data, and establishing a PLC where building goals were aligned to the district goals. The training sessions gave the principal and DVAS valuable insight on value-added assessment.

Overall, the principal believed the training sessions were productive and helpful. He described the trainings as an informal setting where people were comfortable asking questions. Like the principal, Teacher A, stated:

I thought the sessions were very productive. There were not huge amounts of people so the trainers were able to answer individual questions. We had an opportunity to look at data as a team and analyze it. We interpreted it together. There was a lot of follow-up and they made themselves available through email and phone numbers if there were any questions.

The DVAS trainings prepared the principal to begin the implementation phase of the model. Value-added was introduced slowly to the staff by the building principal and DVAS. Only general concepts of value-added were covered at that initial building level meeting. The principal and DVAS then held several in-service meetings over a two year period. It was at these meetings when staff began to become more familiar with interpreting value-added reports and using the data to make sound instructional decisions in the classroom.

In June 2007, Teacher A and the principal stated that they met with the other principals in the district, including the superintendent, to establish a realistic timeline for rolling out value-added. During this meeting, Teacher A stated that job-embedded professional development would be established at each building. The purpose was to have teachers collaboratively collect and perform a preliminary analysis of value-added data, noting trends, patterns, and strengths and weaknesses. Building goals were also discussed and prioritized for the 2007-2008 school year.

From September 2007 to June 2008, the principal utilized release time for teachers and changed the master schedule so grade level and departmental groups could spend more time with each other learning about value-added data. Teacher A and the principal facilitated the groups. For example, the November 2007 agenda from the sixth grade Language Arts Department showed an apparent focus on value-added and OAT data. Items on the agenda included: (1) Achievement Test Information; (2) Report Cards; (3) Battelle Data; (4) Improving what we do; (5) Future Report Card Criteria; (6) Battelle Graphs; (7) Discussion for Improvement; and (8) Long and Short Term Goals.

Throughout the 2007-2008 year, grade levels and department teams concentrated on using value-added information to set grade level goals and discuss strategies to improve overall student performance. In August 2008, grade level meetings were held to create new data

notebooks for teachers, review 2007-2008 data received from the state, and establish new goals for the school year. The trainings made available to the DVAS and in-services received by the teachers clearly helped with the implementation phase of the model. The research gathered from question three contributed to emerging themes in regards to the trainings and services made available to the principal and teachers.

Three Themes on the Trainings and Services Received by Administrators and Teachers

Three themes emerged from research question three. First, the Battelle for Kids sessions were tightly organized trainings offered to teachers and administrators. Each district in Ohio was given the opportunity to select DVAS, who would then train teachers at the building level utilizing job-embedded professional development. Participants who completed the training came back confident as DVAS. Leadership was funneled down to the DVAS, which created an empowering effect. Several in-service trainings were held to familiarize teachers with the model. The in-service trainings were conducted by Teacher A and principal. They were considered the building level experts in Ohio's Value-added model.

Secondly, quality teaching and quality leadership emerged in a culture built on trust between the teachers and principal. Teachers were given time to collaborate on best teaching practices. The principal even changed the master schedule to ensure teachers had time to meet with each other. A PLC was created and supported by the building leadership. A timeline to roll out value-added information to teachers was implemented. Teacher A and the principal started introducing value-added to other teachers in September 2007. Several in-service trainings were conducted as well as grade level and departmental group meetings. Thus, job-embedded professional development emerged as a result of the model.

Thirdly, both the principal and Teacher A believed the training sessions were productive and helpful. Pertinent information was given to participants, which included the knowledge of

Ohio's Value-added model and applying it at the training sessions. The sessions were informal and contained small groups of people. Participants interpreted and analyzed sample reports in a small group setting. This hands-on activity gave everyone the opportunity to apply what they learned. As a result, Teacher A and the principal conducted in-service trainings with teachers at the building level utilizing job-embedded professional development.

Research Question Four, the Effects of Ohio's Value-Added Model

The implementation of Ohio's Value-added model has changed how teachers approach student and teacher learning at the research site. Teacher collaboration occurred in a culture that supported the concept of job-embedded professional development. According to the principal, value-added played an instrumental role in how professional development emerged at the building level. He noted:

Value-added became the focus. Professional development became a focus as a result of it. It has had a positive impact. It's given us a gauge to start with...to know where we are, and know where we need to go. It allowed us to look at our curriculum. We did a lot of alignment. Our Educational Service Center has a power educator project which allows us x number of days to have in-services with our teachers. They can sit down and look at the alignment and to make decisions based on that. Professional development, such as early release days and grade level meetings take place monthly.

Such professional development has had a positive impact on the teachers. Teachers do not mind putting in extra time as long as they are seeing positive results. Not only does value-added data show the growth or lack of growth for each student, it also becomes a discussion piece for teachers on what good teaching looks like. For example, my observation of the principal meeting with the sixth grade level supports this notion. He said, "Based on your test scores, do you think we need to start having more short extended responses and short answers as part of our

classroom assessments?” This question was formulated by examining student value-added and OAT data. As a result, a valuable discussion piece emerged among the teachers and principal in a non-threatening collaborative culture. Teachers used their data notebooks and practice OAT tests to determine student strengths and weaknesses. Traditionally, students at the research site have struggled with short response answers on the OAT in reading and math. However, building leadership had a positive effect on the school culture. The building principal asked pedagogical questions to his teachers. This model also changed teacher’s minds of how they do their work. No longer are teachers working in isolation.

Teacher A agreed with the principal that professional development has changed since the implementation of Ohio’s Value-added model. She stated that value-added helped focus the teacher’s instruction on meeting all students’ needs. Students are no longer viewed as one treatment would solve all their learning challenges. It forced teachers to spend time with each others collaborating on how to improve student performance. Teacher A continued:

Actually, we changed our professional development. We have early dismissals or delays and when we meet, we generally spend the first hour doing whatever business the district wants us to do. The second hour is spent in departmental meetings and value-added is part of every meeting. We generally look at what our goals were in the beginning of the year and determine if they were met.

Professional development at the research site became data-based driven. Prior to value-added assessment, teachers only focused on the OAT. Teacher A said, “In our minds, we knew that every student wasn’t going to pass the test, so it was a pass or fail thing.” However, with value-added assessment as part of Ohio’s accountability system, teachers can concentrate on the amount of growth a student makes each year. Although every student may not pass the OAT, students can still show progress and be successful in making a year’s growth. Teacher A believed

that this concept was empowering to teachers. It also helped eliminate teacher isolation. For instance, Teacher A stated:

There is a colleague of mine that is good at growing upper students, so I will go to her and say I need something really good for this group, what do you recommend I do? So there is a lot more sharing of ideas and focus sharing of ideas.

Allotting time for teacher collaboration helped ease teacher fears of trying new strategies in the classroom. For instance, Teacher A reported that she incorporated more formative assessments into her classroom instruction since the implementation of the model. She stated:

I think the biggest thing is the formative assessments. It's a total change in how we do everything. We usually determine what skills we want to work on. We do a pretest, we teach, we do an assessment which is not graded, but is scored. We used that to determine student levels. We re-teach and come up with alternative activities. We try to use different modalities, giving students different opportunities to use that information and then retest again and continue this process until we feel they have at least mastered it to the best of their ability.

My classroom observation of Teacher A supported her interview responses. Her lesson consisted of formative assessments and differentiated instruction. The co-teacher (Teacher H) in her room also provided students with extra intervention and additional instruction. Both teachers noted that they spend time inside and outside the classroom collaborating on how to raise their student performance levels.

Like Teacher A, Teacher B also believed that value-added played a role in teacher collaboration. Teacher B said that value-added "...gave us an opportunity to talk about student effort and growth." It kept everyone on track of what should be taught in the classroom. Ohio's Value-added model makes teachers more accountable in what they are teaching. Teacher B

stated that teachers have to teach to the indicators and also determine the strengths and weaknesses of each child.

Teacher C also agreed with Teacher A and B's statement regarding more teacher accountability. He said, "I think it makes everyone aware of what's going on. We no longer just worry about OAT scores." The OAT is only one way to measure student performance. Value-added forced teachers to look at individual data to determine student growth levels. Teacher D also believed that value-added "...makes teachers more conscious of what's going on. Before value-added, everyone just taught what they wanted. But now, with the standards and value-added, there is more accountability on the teachers." Thus, value-added played an important role of how teachers instruct students. The teacher must take into consideration the low, medium, and high level students. Teaching to only one group of students is not acceptable. In fact, teachers have to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all students. Teacher D continued:

I like the value-added model. Value-added plays an important part of how I instruct the students. The first year, my Language Arts class did well. The second year they didn't do so good. I tried to figure out what I needed to do to bring the scores back up. I hope they do away with the OAT. Value-added is a fairer way of showing what a student really has learned.

Teacher E, Teacher F, Teacher G, and Teacher H all agreed that Ohio's Value-added model has made teachers more accountable in the classroom. Teacher F elaborated on how her classroom instruction changed as a result of value-added. She said:

I am trying to take what we are doing and incorporate things, such as Bloom's Taxonomy, into my lessons so we can reach all students since all learn differently...kinesthetically, auditory, and visually. We are trying to do that to see what

works best. I am actually having kids write questions using Bloom's Taxonomy so they become just as familiar.

This supports the notion that strategies, such as formative assessments, were being used in the classroom. Thus, students were learning in an environment that supported higher level questioning techniques used by the teacher. This was also examined in Teacher A's classroom observation. Based on data given to teachers at the beginning of the year, Teacher F stated that she knows the different learning levels of her students. She used this data to assign different skills. For example, Teacher F said:

If I had the students do a report, and there is one who is not a strong writer, I would make them the illustrator and have them tell me the story orally. Sometimes I scribe for them, which gives them a model to follow to increase their writing skills.

There was clear evidence that teachers at the research site were willing to try new strategies in their classroom. Formative assessments and differentiating instruction were widely used strategies. Teacher G stated, "I am not very good at having student self-assess themselves." However, Teacher G said that she has attended sessions on formative assessments and spent time trying to implement it in her class.

The model not only got teachers to interpret value-added data, but also to think about how they assess students. Teacher H stated that value-added data was used to develop formative assessments. He said:

You look at the standards you teach in the classroom, and then look at the student's value-added data. I try to come up with formative assessments that specifically deal with what the value-added data is telling me. I also look at OAT scores because it really breaks down the data.

Research supports the idea of formative assessments as a strategy to monitor student progress (Stiggins, 2005). Formative assessments provide the teacher with student diagnostic information that can be used to drive the instructional process. At the research site, teachers built capacity by collaborating with each other and developing new strategies to improve student performance. On the contrary, the parents I interviewed did not know how much effect Ohio's Value-added model had on their child's education. This was due to their lack of knowledge and involvement with the model. It is important to note that parents were interested in the effects of the model. However, pertinent themes emerged at the building level in regards to research question four.

Three Themes on the Effects of Ohio's Value-Added Model

The three themes that emerged were: (a) teachers incorporated formative assessments as part of their instruction; (b) culture at the research site made teachers more comfortable with trying new assessment strategies in the classroom; and (c) parents could not elaborate on the effects of the model. The implementation of the model changed the mind frame of how teachers approach student learning. Teachers realized that they were being held accountable for meeting the needs of all learners. This meant that teachers would begin to differentiate instruction and conduct ongoing student assessments. Students were exposed to higher level thinking skills which leads to higher student performance (Stiggins, 2005).

Secondly, the principal demonstrated high-quality distributed and instructional leadership skills which lead to a transformation of school culture built on trust and good teaching practices. The principal displayed key characteristics of a transformational leader. According to Leithwood (1992), transformational leadership is a building leader who serves as an instructional leader that works closely with teachers to develop research-based instructional strategies in the classroom. The goal of this practice is to not only to help teachers become better classroom leaders, but to empower them so they are not afraid to try different instructional strategies. The study conducted

at the research site suggests that the principal emerged as a transformational leader that helped changed the school culture. Teachers no longer feared the unknown of the model. Teacher B stated, “Early on it was a bit overwhelming, but as we put the time in with the help of the principal and DVAS, it became better and better.” The principal shared his role as facilitator with Teacher A. Both Teacher A and the principal conducted several in-service trainings to familiarize staff with value-added assessment.

Thirdly, parents could not elaborate on the effects of the model. Due to their lack of knowledge and participation in Ohio’s Value-added model, they were not able to answer questions pertaining to research question four. Again, strong evidence supports the notion that the model builders did not incorporate parental involvement as a part of the model. Ohio understood the power of using value-added assessment, however, after researching preliminary phases of the model, it was discovered that there was no mission framework for the model.

The research from this study indicated that a lack of parental involvement existed at all phases of the model. Not only did parents have limited access to their child’s value-added information, they also knew very little of the model.

Summary

Chapter four provided the results of how one elementary school implemented and experienced Ohio’s Value-added model through interviews, document analysis, and observations. A profile of the research site, which included the two reasons why this particular school was chosen for the study, was discussed prior to reporting results for the research questions.

Research question one focused on the implementation and experience of the model at the building level. Teachers stated that they believed strong building leadership was essential to successful implementation. Staff began feeling comfortable about looking at data, even when

results were below the yearly growth baseline. Teachers received data folders at the beginning of the school year so they could examine individual student data and to evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses. Ohio's Value-added model helped establish a culture of collaboration among teachers. The result was a PLC that led to professional dialogue focusing on student and teacher learning. The establishment of a PLC gave teachers time to share knowledge with one another, which lead to a change in the building culture.

Research question two discussed the context of the model. The building culture became one of trust between the principal and teachers. As promised, the principal never used value-added data to evaluate teacher performance. Instead, the principal used value-added data to engage teachers in professional dialogue that focused on improving instructional practices in the classroom. Although teachers became an integral part of the implementation phase, the parents were never involved at any phase of the model. They did not receive value-added reports for their child and were never asked to receive any training on the model

The trainings and services were only offered to selected teachers and administrators, which was discussed in research question three. The superintendent at the research site volunteered the district to be part of a value-added pilot project. Teacher A and principal attend five trainings in Columbus on Ohio's Value-added model. These trainings were tightly organized sessions designed to give participants the ability to learn value-added information at the building level. In-service trainings were conducted at the building site to help teachers comprehend and apply the model in their classroom. The building experts on the model, who were Teacher A and the principal, facilitated several in-services utilizing job-embedded professional development. Thus, a culture supporting quality teaching surfaced which resulted in the collaboration of best teaching practices. The principal played a critical role in the creation of this building culture. A timeline was established to roll out value-added information to teachers. This timeline was

created on the last day of the DVAS training. Both Teacher A and principal took back a completed action plan to the building level. When asked about the training sessions, both Teacher A and principal believed they were productive and informational. Training sessions consisted of small groups of people that made it a comfortable atmosphere to ask questions. Activities included PowerPoint presentations, hands-on activities, and small group assignments. The trainings gave the DVAS the knowledge needed to help get teachers to analyze and use value-added data to modify their classroom practices. Continued support for the building experts was provided by Battelle for Kids.

Research question four focused on the effects of the model on the school. As a result of the model, teachers began using formative assessments as a strategy to monitor student progress. The utilization of formative assessments occurred in a collaborative culture that supported job-embedded professional development. Stiggins, Arter, Chappuis and Chappuis (2004) report that formative assessment provides teachers with descriptive and timely feedback utilized to maximize student growth and success. Formative assessments provide learners with a clear and understandable target which engages them in their own self-reflection. The principal found the necessary time for teacher collaboration and sharing of best practices.

Several themes emerged from the four research questions (see table 6). This study suggests that strong building leadership, teacher collaboration, and analyzing and interpreting data in a non-threatening environment contributed to the successful implementation of Ohio's Value-added model. Although teachers experienced the effects of the model at different times, an established timeline for rolling out the model provided an overall structure at the building level.

The principal and Teacher A played a critical role in disseminating value-added information to teachers. The principal went a step further and changed the master schedule so teachers could have time during the school day to collaborate on different strategies. Value-

Table 6

Themes that Emerged from the Four Research Questions

Research Questions	Themes
1. How is value-added assessment being implemented and what does that mean to teachers, principals, and stakeholders?	<p>1. Strong building leadership helped teachers feel comfortable with the implementation of the model.</p> <p>2. Value-added data was used to make pertinent instructional decisions.</p> <p>3. A PLC was established that gave teachers time to collaborate and analyze data in a non-threatening environment.</p>
2. What is the context of Ohio's Value-Added Model?	<p>1. The teachers and principal had knowledge of the model.</p> <p>2. A high level of trust existed between the teachers and principal in a culture supporting job-embedded professional development.</p> <p>3. Parents had limited knowledge of the model.</p>

Table 6 (con't)

Themes that Emerged from the Four Research Questions

Research Questions	Themes
3. What are the types and services and trainings received by administrators and teachers?	<p>1. DVAS trainings were tightly organized and in-depth.</p> <p>2. In-services on the model took place at the building level and facilitated by the principal and Teacher A.</p> <p>3. The principal and teachers believed the trainings sessions were helpful and productive .</p>
4. What are the effects of Ohio's Value-added Model?	<p>1. The teachers incorporated more formative assessments as a result of the model.</p> <p>2. The principal was a transformational leader that changed the school's culture.</p> <p>3. Parents did not have the knowledge to discuss the effects of the model.</p>

added data was never used to evaluate teachers. As a result, teachers accepted the model with little fear that it would be used to judge their performance. However, this study indicated that parents had limited knowledge of the model.

This chapter included a detailed description through the use of teacher, principal, and stakeholder interviews, analyzing documents, and observations on how one elementary school implements and experiences Ohio's Value-added model. Data were presented that gave the district's value-added rating on ODE's website, but individual value-added reports cannot be accessed. Only designated school personnel have this privilege. Teachers took the initiative to examine student value-added data, which gave them a clearer picture of each student's performance. These results were reviewed in a collaborative environment that gave valuable insight to value-added assessment. Quality teaching became evident in this transforming culture of student and teacher learning. Lastly, themes from the data were reported. The discussion will be presented in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The discovery was made that there was no established framework for the entire Ohio's Value-added model. The literature and documents observed and analyzed never listed or mentioned any guiding principles of the model. Based on pertinent and selected literature, the framework for the model includes: (a) student achievement, student growth, and student success; (b) teacher and administrative quality and professional development; (c) leadership of the model; and (d) stakeholder enlistment and support. It is imperative that the notion of culture be considered as an important piece of this research as well as how the leader influences the culture. Themes that emerged in this in-depth case study support the four guiding principles of the discovered framework.

Research question one supports the notion that strong building leadership is a critical component to highly effective schools. Transformational leaders have the influence and inspirational motivation to carry out tasks associated with a culture based on trust. (Hoy and Miskel, 2005). Without trust, teachers are unlikely to accept any change that results in how new work gets done in the classroom. The principal established a sense of trust with his staff. He stated:

We wear a lot of hats. As far as value-added, my initial role was to make this as least threatening as I could so that teachers could see the benefit of it instead of thinking it was just more paperwork or another job they have to do. Teachers already don't believe they have enough time to teach. I think one of my functions as a principal is to help teachers be more effective. I told them that value-added is a tool that you can use and not a tool that will cause you more work. I had to reassure the teachers that it wasn't my purpose to

use value-added as an evaluation. And I think just being positive about it and presenting it in a good faith atmosphere has been key of getting them to buy into it.

Research suggests that working in isolation is not a good practice. Actually, student learning can suffer from such practices (Schmoker, 1999). The NCSD (2001) endorses the concept of teacher collaboration, which encourages teachers to work with each other to improve the learning of all students. Without effective collaboration, the absence of sharing best practices and discussing student growth will set the tone for an ineffective school culture. However, the principal took the initiative to change the master schedule in order to allow teachers the time to engage in professional dialogue. The principal allotted time for teachers to collaborate and analyze student data folders for the purpose of analyzing student and teacher strengths and weaknesses. Altering a schedule is one way leaders can find valuable time for teachers to meet in and across grade levels. The principal stated, “We decided to change our schedule so teachers could meet with each other. I met with teachers from each grade and we discussed the details.” This process involved input from the teachers, who helped the principal to find time to collaborate during the school day.

Secondly, a PLC contributes to supportive and shared leadership when aligned to the school’s vision and mission. Leadership in the 21st century places great demands on principals to serve not only as a manager, but also as an instructional leader who works closely with teachers to get them to try new strategies in the classroom. At the research site, the teachers commented on the principal’s desire to be part of grade level and departmental meetings. Finding time in a busy schedule is often difficult for administrators, but in this study, the principal laid the foundation for a PLC, which eventually changed the school culture to one of collaboration. The PLC gave teachers at the site time to examine student data and discuss instructional strategies. The principal not only sets high expectations for the academic development of students, but also

sets high expectations for pedagogical development of teachers. An effective leader understands the change process. Change does not occur instantly. Rather, it takes place when the entire learning organization understands and accepts the rationale for change. It is the leader's responsibility to lead this change process (Fullan, 2002). A major change at the research site was allotting time during the day for teachers to meet and discuss ways to improve overall student performance.

Research question two focused on the context of the model. In this study, context pertains to how school culture is impacted by the use of value-added data for school improvement efforts. The principal at the site never used value-added data as an evaluation tool. Ohio Department of Education (ODE) does not support the use of value-added data for teacher evaluation purposes. Teacher A stated that teachers were initially intimidated by value-added because they felt they were going to be judged by the results. All teachers interviewed gave similar responses. However, the administration did not make it a judgmental process.

Effective principals have the ability to serve as instructional leaders in a collaborative environment focusing on improving the overall learning organization (SOE, 2005). In this study, the principal had the power to influence the entire process of the model, which had a positive impact on the culture. Teachers took the knowledge learned about the model and transferred it into their classroom. Teacher D said, "Value-added plays an important part of how I instruct the students. I have to take into consideration the high, medium, and low students. I need to reach all of them." Teacher H continued:

You take the standards you teach in the classroom and then you look at the students coming in and the value-added data. The teachers do a good job of coming up with formative assessments that specifically deal with the value-added data. When you get the OAT scores back, it really breaks down the data.

All teachers were familiar with the model and were engaged in job-embedded professional development. Professional development was a positive learning experience that involved teachers engaging in meaningful tasks. Also, a fully supportive organizational culture existed for them to take risks, which contributed to their quality teaching. The research states that teachers have the greatest impact on student learning (Marzano, 2003; Pollock, 1997; Schmoker, 1999). High quality teaching includes differentiating instruction, administering formative assessments, aligning the curriculum to the standards, and obtaining student feedback to make pertinent decisions regarding the instructional process (Pollock, 2007). Research conducted in this case study showed evidence of high quality teaching through interviews and observation. The observation performed in Teacher A and Teacher H's classroom showed that formative assessment played an important role in their lesson. Students were initially assessed and assessed again to ensure mastery learning. Students were grouped heterogeneously and assigned particular tasks that actively engaged each child. The teachers not only differentiated instruction, but made sure the content being taught was aligned to the Ohio Academic Standards. Feedback from the students also gave Teacher A and Teacher H information on how well the material was being learned.

Another major finding in this study was that parents had little knowledge of the model. Unlike the teachers, parents did not have specific value-added data to examine. Their access to value-added reports was limited to the ODE website, which only gave school and district value-added results. Student value-added reports were not distributed to parents. However, the SOE states that stakeholders should be involved in the educational process for raising student achievement. Marzano (2005) also contends that parent and community involvement has a positive impact on student achievement. Nonetheless, parents did not have a voice in any aspect of the model. Parent two stated, "I heard of value-added, but not sure what it is." Parent three

said,” Since I don’t know much about the model, I don’t really know the effects. But since the state is pushing the model, I guess it must be a good thing.” The model builders completely excluded parent involvement as an important component of the process.

Trainings and services were discussed in research question three. The DVAS trainings were tightly structured that allowed participants to work in small groups. The superintendent asked for volunteers to attend the training. Teacher A and the principal volunteered for the five day training in Columbus, Ohio. An action plan and time line for rolling out value-added at the building level was completed on the last day of training. Both Teacher A and the principal took the action plan back to the building level and shared it with staff. They facilitated several in-service trainings and used a tool box of strategies, which were received at the DVAS training. This type of professional development is supported by the research. Teacher A mentioned that professional development has changed from how it was conducted in the past. Teachers meet in departmental meetings to discuss value-added results. They look at their goals, which were established in the beginning of the year, and determine if they have been met. Early release days and two-hour delay days are used for professional development. The principal stated:

As an entire staff, we meet 3 or 4 times a year, but I have several individual meetings where I call a teacher in and we will sit down together to look at data. It’s an informal meeting. There’s no threat on the teacher. I also make myself available when grade level teams have meetings to discuss student learning.

The NSDC (2001) endorses the use of learning teams at the building level to discuss school improvement goals and ways to improve student and teacher learning. Murphy and Lick (2001) also believes that job-embedded professional development, such as WFSG’s, gives teachers a structure for collaboration and the reflecting of ideas. Well planned professional

development creates learning communities that focus on improved teacher performance and student learning.

Effective school leaders understand the whole process regarding professional development. Teacher A and the principal had a structured plan in place to disseminate value-added information. The process refers to how teachers work together to acquire new knowledge and apply this new knowledge in the classroom (Murphy and Lick, 2001). The organizational culture at the site supported the value-added initiative with the backing of the superintendent.

Both Teacher A and the principal believed the DVAS trainings were productive, which helped lay the foundation for successful implementation of the model. Professional development at the building level contained short and long-range goals on how value-added would be implemented. Effective professional development focuses on the delivery of content that is relevant, meaningful, and research-based (Benton and Benton, 2008). These components were all present in the DVAS trainings. On the last day, participants filled out an evaluation feedback form to determine the overall effectiveness of the trainings. Also, Teacher A and the principal received a list of contact numbers for questions or concerns regarding the implementation of the model. Teacher A stated "...there was a lot of follow up and they made themselves available through email and phone numbers if there were any questions." Both Teacher A and the principal stated that they both called individuals at Battelle for Kids when they did not know an answer to a question from teachers. Total supported network by Battelle for Kids was an instrumental piece that helped the building facilitators successfully introduce and implement Ohio's Value-added model.

The last question discussed the effects of the model on teachers, principal, and stakeholders. Teachers at the site incorporated formative assessments as part of their daily instruction. For example, Teacher A stated that formative assessments became a priority for the

teachers. Formative assessments are a complete change in how teachers assess students. The utilization of formative assessments was a slow process that evolved over time. Teacher A stated that she gives a pretest, instructs, and informally assesses students prior to giving them a grade. At times, it is necessary to re-teach the material until it is mastered. All teachers at the research site mentioned the importance of using formative assessments as a strategy to determine student levels. For instance, Teacher F stated that she incorporated Bloom's Taxonomy in her classroom to ensure students were getting asked different level questions. Also, Teacher F said she has students write their own questions using Bloom's Taxonomy. Black and Wiliam's (1998) research on assessment showed that "formative assessment is an essential component of classroom work and that its development can raise standards of achievement" (p. 139). One major effect of the model was that teachers became cognizant of the importance of assessing students to gain information on their strengths and weaknesses. Student feedback is effective when used to pinpoint strengths and weaknesses in student work. Quality assessments produce accurate information that can maximize student performance (Stiggins, Arter, Chappuis, and Chappuis, 2004). The model positively impacted teacher assessment practices along with the principal instructional leadership involvement at the building site.

According to the research, transformational leaders have the ability to create a collaborative culture where power is delegated over to teachers. Such leaders not only have good management skills, they also have the ability to inspire others to excellence, which results in positive school improvement (Ubban, Hughes, and Norris, 2001). The principal at the research site had a vision how value-added would be implemented and positively impact teachers. His vision was to create a collaborative culture that consisted of teachers engaging in professional dialogue on how to improve overall student performance. The principal shared his instructional leadership role with Teacher A. This proved to help ease any fears teachers experienced during

the implementation phase. As a result, teachers were willing to try to strategies in the classroom that focused on formative assessments and differentiating instruction. The principal realized that teachers have the biggest impact on student learning. The ODE report card (see figures 2 and 3) is an important piece of documentation from the research conducted that supports this notion. According to the 2006-2007 report card, the research site received a designation of “Continuous Improvement.” Adequate Yearly Progress was not met and the value-added measure was not part of the state report card. The school met 12 out of 19 indicators and had a Performance Index of 89.7. The 2007-2008 report card was the first year value-added information became part of the state’s accountability system. The research site scored “Above” growth in the value-added measure and raised their Performance Index to 91.5. This means more students scored in the Accelerated and Advanced level compared to the previous year. Also, the school met AYP, which meant that the subgroups, such as economically disadvantaged and special education students, met AYP targets that year.

The implementation of Ohio’s Value-added model was a slow process that began with a few teachers and the principal in 2002. By 2008, the concept of value-added assessment became embedded in the school culture. The next section will discuss the implications this research has on policymakers, administrators, teachers, and stakeholders.

Implications for Policymakers

Policymakers passed legislation that included Ohio’s Value-added results to the high stakes testing accountability system already in place. Standardized tests are only one of several ways a child’s academic performance should be measured. Although the NCLB was passed in 2001 mandating standardized testing, policymakers in Ohio realized that relying on a single test to measure student achievement was a fallacy. In 2006, Ohio revised its operating standards to include value-added assessment. In 2007, value-added results were included on the state report

Figure 2

OHIO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

2006-2007 SCHOOL YEAR REPORT CARD

**Your
School's
Designation:
Continuous
Improvement**

The designations are Excellent, Effective,
Continuous Improvement, Academic
Watch or Academic Emergency

Number of State Indicators Met out of 19	12
Performance Index Score (0 - 120 points)	89.7
Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)	Not Met
School Improvement Status	At Risk

STATE INDICATORS	Percentage of Students at and Above The Proficient Level		
	Your School 2006-2007	Your District 2006-2007	State 2006-2007
5th Grade Achievement <i>The state requirement is 75 percent</i>			
Reading	71.0%	71.0%	80.0%
Mathematics	47.8%	47.8%	61.2%
Science	52.9%	52.9%	68.0%
Social Studies	43.5%	43.5%	57.9%
6th Grade Achievement <i>The state requirement is 75 percent</i>			
Reading	78.0%	78.3%	77.7%
Mathematics	78.0%	78.3%	74.0%
7th Grade Achievement <i>The state requirement is 75 percent</i>			
Reading	79.8%	79.0%	77.5%
Mathematics	81.7%	81.0%	71.2%
Writing	85.6%	84.8%	81.1%
8th Grade Achievement <i>The state requirement is 75 percent</i>			
Reading	75.2%	75.2%	80.2%
Mathematics	88.1%	88.1%	71.5%
Science	64.4%	64.4%	62.7%
Social Studies	22.8%	22.8%	49.3%

Any result at or above the state standard is shown in bold.

Figure 3

OHIO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

2007-2008 SCHOOL YEAR REPORT CARD

School's Designation:
EXCELLENT

The designations are Excellent, Effective, Continuous Improvement, Academic Watch or Academic Emergency

Number of State Indicators Met out of 19	12
Performance Index Score (0 - 120 points)	91.5
Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)	Met
School Improvement Status	OK
Value Added Measure	+ = above

STATE INDICATORS	Percentage of Students at and Above The Proficient Level		
	Your School 2006-2007	Your District 2006-2007	State 2006-2007
5th Grade Achievement <i>The state requirement is 75 percent</i>			
Reading	75.0%	75.0%	72.7%
Mathematics	68.8%	68.8%	61.8%
Science	65.0%	65.0%	66.4%
Social Studies	63.7%	63.7%	64.8%
6th Grade Achievement <i>The state requirement is 75 percent</i>			
Reading	78.1%	78.1%	79.7%
Mathematics	83.6%	83.6%	76.6%
7th Grade Achievement <i>The state requirement is 75 percent</i>			
Reading	82.5%	82.5%	77.3%
Mathematics	75.0%	75.0%	68.8%
Writing	91.3%	91.3%	85.7%
8th Grade Achievement <i>The state requirement is 75 percent</i>			
Reading	72.0%	72.0%	79.4%
Mathematics	82.0%	82.0%	72.8%
Science	62.0%	62.0%	62.2%
Social Studies	47.0%	47.0%	53.5%

Any result at or above the state standard is shown in bold.

Figure 3 con't

card.

This study supports the notion that policymakers realize there are many key performance indicators that renders the holistic picture of the quality of teaching. Quality teaching means more than getting students ready to take the OAT. Rather, quality teachers use a variety of research-based pedagogical strategies to reach all student levels, ranging from low to high. The value-added component adds another dimension to measuring student performance. In reality, some students are functioning below their grade level. Unfortunately, many of these students do not pass the high stakes standardized test. However, these same students are still expected to make at least a year's growth at the conclusion of a school year. The use of formative assessments along with summative assessments gives a broader picture of a child's academic level. Multiple measures of student assessments are more reliable than a single key performance indicator.

This study shows that using value-added for teacher evaluative purposes should not be implemented. Ohio policymakers considered the strength of the teacher's union regarding the use of value-added results to evaluate teachers. Policymakers agreed that the value-added model would help many more students make academic gains, but decided against using it as a teacher evaluative tool. Since it is a fallacy to judge the students on one performance key indicator, it is also a fallacy to use one indicator to evaluate teachers. A culture of fear would be instilled in each school if such a policy existed. The research conducted at the site showed that teachers were not afraid to take risks or try new instructional strategies based on student value-added data received by the administrator. The building administrator reiterated the point that value-added would not be used to evaluate teacher quality. However, it would be used to determine student strengths and weaknesses. Also, value-added data can be used to give teachers an idea of their

own teaching strengths and weaknesses. For instance, some teachers may be more effective with low level students than high level students.

Like teachers, school administrators should also not be evaluated on a single performance indicator. Policymakers must understand that there are many factors that determine the effectiveness of a school. Effective schools have building leaders who create a collaborative school culture that supports high levels of student and teacher learning. If administrators had to judge teachers using value-added data, a culture of mistrust would likely formulate. Thus, this is an important reason why policymakers must understand that school culture plays a critical role on student learning. A culture of trust between the administrator and teachers is essential to any new initiative. Transformational leaders understand the impact culture has on student and teacher performance.

Policymakers should consider stakeholders when passing new legislation pertaining to education. Parents are key stakeholders in the educational process. Schools that have communities working with them strengthen the educational process. Effective partnerships benefit and provide structure in connecting individuals, not just institutions or groups. The power of community partnerships provides a greater sense of purpose for educational organizations.

Implications for Administrators

Establishing a positive rapport with teachers is necessary for any new initiative to sustain. Thus, a high level of trust must exist for teachers in order for them to feel comfortable enough to change how work is being done in the classroom. Understanding the change process is essential for any administrator taking on change. Introducing lasting change requires more effort from the individual posing the change, such as the school leader. However, it takes cooperation and support from teachers to recognize the importance of the change and process it takes to successfully implement it. At the research site, the principal involved Teacher A to help others

with the change process. This gave the change more validity since the initiative was not solely lead by the principal. Teachers not only had input on changing the master schedule, but they also began to see the merit behind Ohio's Value-added model and slowly began to accept it as an effective school improvement effort designed to help them become better instructors. Teachers are more likely to accept change when they are involved with the change itself. Thus, empowering teachers to take risks and involving them in building level decisions contributes to a positive school culture, which leads to higher student performance. Thus, this can be achieved when the building administrator has a vision and the ability to get teachers to support the same vision toward a common goal.

This study also supports the notion that student data should be an integral part of professional development. School leaders need to be involved in all professional development efforts at the building level. The principal should be viewed as a teacher of the teachers. Effective principals are instructional leaders who sit down with teachers to analyze student data and discuss possible strategies for improving student performance. In this study, the principal made it a priority for teachers to analyze value-added and OAT data utilizing job-embedded professional development. Ideas were shared among grade level teachers as well as the principal. Data should be used to make instructional decisions in the classroom. The absence of a common focus results in fragmented school improvement efforts. Data helps school leaders to establish goals. The combination of clear building goals and teacher collaboration promotes a culture of collegiality working toward the same purpose.

Stakeholders are a key omission to the Ohio's Value-added model. School leaders are expected to keep an open line of communication and form partnerships with parents and community. They play a pivotal role in making parent and family involvement a reality. Because

stakeholders were excluded by the model builders, administrators did not have the opportunity to work with parents to discuss how the model could positively impact their child's education.

Implications for Teachers

Instead of hoping for good results, teachers can utilize student data to ensure their students are achieving good results. Replacing hope with certainty can occur if teachers acquire the necessary pedagogical tools needed to improve instructional strategies. This study supports the notion that quality teachers use data to determine achievement of student levels. Results from the data provide teachers the necessary background information on each child. The use of formative assessments provides teachers the information needed to determine student mastery of the content. However, some teachers may have a great pedagogical framework in place, but have limited knowledge of their students' academic background. It takes time to determine the skill level of each student. Using formative assessments to benchmark student progress is a critical component to quality teaching.

Teacher isolation hinders a building culture. Teachers cannot be satisfied with the status quo regarding professional growth. New teaching methods and pedagogy are always being developed. Results from this study indicate that teacher collaboration, which involves meaningful professional dialogue, contributes to higher levels of student learning. Establishing and maintaining professional relationships with colleagues sets the tone for a positive school culture. Working together toward a common goal is necessary for implementing new initiatives.

Parents need to be an ally of the classroom. Parents who are involved in their child's education have a better understanding of their child's experience in school. When parents are involved, they are more likely to have a better understanding of the curriculum, peer and teacher interactions, and challenges that occur in our educational system. Excluding parents from the classroom can lead to dissatisfaction and a breakdown of communication between the teacher

and parents. Parents want to feel a sense of belonging to the institution that is educating their child.

Implications for Stakeholders

A chain of command is in place at each building for all stakeholders. Parents should be encouraged to meet with their child's teacher before speaking to the principal. If a question cannot be answered at the building level, it then goes to the superintendent. Just because parents were excluded from the model does not mean they should not inquire about Ohio's Value-added model. This model is not only part of Ohio's accountability system, but is reported on the building and district state report cards. State report card data is available to all stakeholders. Value-added plays a critical role in determining which schools make AYP. Having knowledge of the model will give stakeholders a better understanding of how it impacts their child's education and if their child's is making a year's growth.

Stakeholders should take the initiative to ask their child's teacher about value-added assessment and the impact it has on teaching and learning. If the teacher cannot explain the model clearly, the parent should contact the principal for additional information. Parents who actively involved in their child's education can help create a positive attitude toward the school. It also has a positive impact on student performance.

Implications for Future Research

This research serves to the existing body of research on value-added assessment. This in-depth case study provided insight on how Ohio's Value-added model is being implemented and experienced at one elementary school. Multiple case studies of matched samples would provide additional insight to researchers studying value-added assessment. These case studies would examine how the model has impacted each individual school.

Ohio has approximately 134 Schools of Promise which are high performing and high poverty schools. A quantitative piece comparing these schools through surveys would provide a broader view of teacher and principal experiences of the model. This type of study would particularly be of interest to school administrators. Successful implementation and experience of Ohio's Value-added model leads to higher student performance in a culture where teachers are not afraid to try new instructional strategies in the classroom.

Another worthwhile study would be a quantitative piece on schools that scored "Above" on the value-added measure. A research instrument that takes into consideration the emerging themes from this study could prove beneficial for future researchers. A survey could consist of questions pertaining to how Ohio's Value-added model impacts school culture and professional development. A comparison of these schools would be helpful for school administrators, teachers, and policymakers to determine best practices. The information would provide valuable insight on these best practices at the building level.

A replication of this case study would add to the existing information found from this study. It would be interesting to know if this school continues to have success with Ohio's Value-added model. The focus of this study could be an in-depth study that focuses on principal leadership and school culture supporting high quality professional development. The results from this study could be compared with existing results.

Lastly, a mix methodology study consisting of teacher, principal, administrator, and stakeholder interviews and observations along with a quantitative instrument measuring multiple schools that have had success with Ohio's Value-added model would add to the worthy body of research on value-added assessment. Such a study would give researchers an in-depth view and data on a selected sample of schools.

Future of Ohio's Value-Added Model

The future of Ohio's Value-added model appears to show promise, especially since policymakers passed legislation in support of it. However, this model needs continued support from ODE and policymakers. Funding continues to be cut from educational programs at the state level. It would be behoove ODE to provide additional resources toward the effects of the model. It needs the support not only from policymakers, ODE representatives, administrators, and teachers, but it also needs to the support from stakeholders. This piece of the model is absent. Money should also be allocated to educating stakeholders on the effects of the model.

ODE uses a foundation formula to allocate money to public schools. Because value-added is part of Ohio's accountability system, a line item in the foundation formula should be earmarked for value-added assessment. Schools do not receive any extra funding for implementing the model. The model is an unfunded mandate imposed by the state.

It is critical that the value-added assessment component remains part of Ohio's educational system. The model does not solely rely on one single key performance indicator. It makes sense that students are measured on the academic growth made each year rather relying on a single standardized test. Closing the achievement gap can be obtained by putting a quality teacher in the classroom for each child. Value-added provides the needed information to determine student and teachers strengths and weaknesses. Component administrators have the ability to use this data with their teachers utilizing job-embedded professional development. Every school deserves a component administrator that can create a culture that focuses on improving the academic performance of every student, regardless of their socioeconomic status or academic level.

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Appendix A

College of Human
Resources & Education

Dear Principal,

I am requesting your assistance. My name is David Quattrochi, and I am involved with the Educational Leadership Doctoral Program at West Virginia University. The completion of this project is the final step in obtaining my Doctor of Education in Public School Leadership. This research is focused on the problem of how one elementary school experiences and implements Ohio's Value-added model. This is a qualitative case study where by data will be collected from the principal, selected teachers, and parents. This project has the support from the Ohio Department of Education.

I will be conducting on site interviews and observations at your school. Please find attached a copy of the interview and observation protocols. I sincerely appreciate your time in responding to these interview questions.

The interviews will be taped, stored, and eventually destroyed. All individual responses will be kept confidential. There will be no penalty for anyone choosing not to participate. During the interview, you do not have to answer all of the questions and may quit at any time.

To ensure all procedures are followed The West Virginia University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has acknowledgment of this study on file. I will serve as the Principal Investigator under the direct supervision of Dr. Paul Chapman from WVU for this project. My affiliation with WVU is my involvement as a student in the Leadership Doctoral program. Dr. Chapman may be reached at 304-293-2174 or Paul.Chapman@mail.wvu.edu.

If you have any questions about this project, please contact me at my home phone number. (304-748-5044). In addition, upon completion of this project, I will be glad to send you a copy of the summary report per your request.

Sincerely,

David Quattrochi
david.quattrochi@omeres.net
304-748-5044

Appendix B

College of Human
Resources & Education

Dear Teacher,

I am requesting your assistance. My name is David Quattrochi, and I am involved with the Educational Leadership Doctoral Program at West Virginia University. The completion of this project is the final step in obtaining my Doctor of Education in Public School Leadership. This research is focused on the problem of how one elementary school experiences and implements Ohio's Value-added model. This is a qualitative case study where by data will be collected from the principal, selected teachers, and parents. This project has the support from the Ohio Department of Education.

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To ensure all procedures are followed The West Virginia University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has acknowledgment of this study on file. I will serve as the Principal Investigator under the direct supervision of Dr. Paul Chapman from WVU for this project. My affiliation with WVU is my involvement as a student in the Leadership Doctoral program. Dr. Chapman may be reached at 304-293-2174 or Paul.Chapman@mail.wvu.edu.

If you have any questions about this project, please contact me at my home phone number. (304-748-5044). In addition, upon completion of this project, I will be glad to send you a copy of the summary report per your request.

Sincerely,

David Quattrochi
david.quattrochi@omeres.net
304-748-5044

Appendix C

College of Human
Resources & Education

Dear Parent,

I am requesting your assistance. My name is David Quattrochi, and I am involved with the Educational Leadership Doctoral Program at West Virginia University. The completion of this project is the final step in obtaining my Doctor of Education in Public School Leadership. This research is focused on the problem of how one elementary school experiences and implements Ohio's Value-added model. This is a qualitative case study where by data will be collected from the principal, selected teachers, and parents. This project has the support from the Ohio Department of Education.

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To ensure all procedures are followed The West Virginia University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has acknowledgment of this study on file. I will serve as the Principal Investigator under the direct supervision of Dr. Paul Chapman from WVU for this project. My affiliation with WVU is my involvement as a student in the Leadership Doctoral program. Dr. Chapman may be reached at 304-293-2174 or Paul.Chapman@mail.wvu.edu.

If you have any questions about this project, please contact me at my home phone number. (304-748-5044). In addition, upon completion of this project, I will be glad to send you a copy of the summary report per your request.

Sincerely,

David Quattrochi
david.quattrochi@omeres.net
304-748-5044

Appendix D

July 15, 2009

David Quattrochi
Superintendent
Edison Local Schools
14890 St Rt. 213
Hammondsville OH 43930-7902

Dear Mr. Quattrochi:

It was a pleasure talking to you about your dissertation work. As the person in the Ohio Department of Education who is charged with overseeing our accountability system and the value-added metric implementation in particular, I am very interested in your research on how one school implements and experiences Ohio's Value-added model. We feel that this study has potential to help better serve students in Ohio and look forward to reviewing your findings.

Regards,

Matthew Cohen, Ph.D., Executive Director
Office of Policy and Accountability
Ohio Department of Education

Appendix E

IRB Exemption Letter

Paul & Dave:

I have just entered into BRAAN the following note attached to your H-21413 protocol.

*

Not human subjects research :: after reviewing the protocol, interviewing the Co-I and PI, and reviewing the CFR, it is my judgment that this protocol is not human subjects research under the definition of "research" in 45 CFR 46.102(d) in that the protocol is not designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge.

*

In toto, 45 CFR 46.102(d) reads,

Research means a systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge. Activities which meet this definition constitute research for purposes of this policy, whether or not they are conducted or supported under a program which is considered research for other purposes. For example, some demonstration and service programs may include research activities.

Please file a pre-approval closure of H-21413 in BRAAN.

--Riegel

The Rev. Matthew Riegel
IRB Chair (Blue)
304-680-5388 (c)
304-296-5388 (o)