INFORMING AND IMPROVING INSTRUCTIONAL QUALITY:

AN ACTION RESEARCH STUDY

by

HEIDI K. POPHAM

(Under the Direction of Lorilee R. Sandmann)

ABSTRACT

The increased focus on accountability in higher education reinforces the importance of instructional quality. This study used an action research approach as a means to explore, inform, assess, and improve instructional quality. Four research questions guided this study:

1. How is instructional quality defined by college stakeholders?
2. What essential competencies are necessary to ensure instructional quality?
3. What elements should be included on an observation performance evaluation instrument that measures instruction quality?
4. In what ways does the development of a performance evaluation process, through an action research approach at a community college, inform and improve instructional quality?

Utilizing action research methodology, the internal consultant/participant researcher worked collaboratively with administrators and faculty within a community college setting for nearly three years in exploring performance evaluation as a process to inform and improve instructional quality. Data were collected through the review of documents and literature, an internal questionnaire, observations, team meetings, interviews, and memos. The study's findings produced the definition of instructional quality, determined the competencies necessary

for ensuring instructional quality, adapted and piloted an observation evaluation instrument, and realized the impact of performance evaluation in informing and improving instructional quality.

Three conclusions were drawn from an analysis of the findings. These conclusions included:

1. The development of an institution-specific performance evaluation process is essential for the assessment of instructional quality.
2. Instructional quality is a broad and complex construct therefore multiple assessments are needed for evaluation.
3. Action research as a method of organizational development utilizes the expertise and knowledge among college faculty and academic administrators, strengthens collaboration, and cultivates system change.

Implications include: The necessity for continuous assessment of the evaluation system; the alignment of the evaluation system with the expectations of the college; providing professional development opportunities for faculty and staff; and the implementation of policy associated with performance evaluation. The recommendations for future research include the replication of this work in other areas of evaluation; further validity and reliability of the evaluation instrument; the exploration of alternative ways for assessing instructional quality; and conducting a longitudinal study focusing on the institutional type.

INDEX WORDS: Instructional Quality, Performance Evaluation, Community College, Action Research, Adult Education, Competency-based Models, Faculty, Reflective Practice

INFORMING AND IMPROVING INSTRUCTIONAL QUALITY:

AN ACTION RESEARCH STUDY

by

HEIDI K. POPHAM

B.S., Covenant College, 2001

M.Ed., The University of Georgia, 2009

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF EDUCATON

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2013

INFORMING AND IMPROVING INSTRUCTIONAL QUALITY:

AN ACTION RESEARCH STUDY

by

HEIDI K. POPHAM

Major Professor: Lorilee R. Sandmann

Committee: Wendy E.A. Ruona
Karen E. Watkins

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso
Dean of Graduate School
The University of Georgia
December 2013

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my understanding, tolerant, and supportive husband, Kurt, who encouraged and supported me each and every step. You are my best friend, my "split-apart." With each milestone, you were there to congratulate and celebrate with me. I can honestly say that I could not have reached this goal without your gentle reminders, love, and motivation. I love you.

And, to our children, Kyle and Kaycee, I am so very proud of you and am honored to be your mom. Thank you for your encouragement and support throughout this process.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my committee members, Dr. Wendy Ruona and Dr. Karen Watkins, who provided their time, effort, and insightful comments that helped shape this study. I would like to especially thank Dr. Lorilee Sandmann, my major professor, for her patience, understanding, and guidance through this process that led to the completion of this study. Your understanding and insight into recognizing my strengths and identifying the areas where I needed to step outside of my "Heidi-esque position" were greatly appreciated. Thank you for your dedication and commitment to get me to this point. I finally finished the drill!

I would also like to recognize the members of my action research team. Thank you to the faculty and administrators that were committed to the action research process and provided invaluable knowledge and wisdom. Your commitment to the continuous improvement of our college is undeniable.

I am also grateful to my fellow UGA classmates. Thank you for your never-ending support during our time together. The friendships formed during our journey together are cherished and will last a lifetime.

Finally, many of my colleagues at Public Community College inspired my pursuit of this degree and I am forever grateful for your encouragement.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

Page

LIST OF FIGURES

Page

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

As never before, faculty members are being held accountable for how well they do their jobs (Seldin, 2006). The purpose for this study was to use an action research approach as a means to explore, inform, assess, and improve instructional quality. Why is the accountability of faculty in question, and why should a study focus on instructional quality? Two scenarios typify the justification for these questions. These scenarios reflect a composite of demographic data provided by the American Association of Community Colleges as well as my 18 years of experience in a community college setting. The first scenario is from the viewpoint of a student, and the second is from a college administrator's perspective.

> *Hello. I am a 28 year old, white female enrolling as a part-time student in my local, public community college. I recently lost my job as a result of an industry closing. Due to this life-changing event, I am forced to return to college to enhance my skills to better my opportunity to secure a new job, preferably leading to a challenging, rewarding career. I have recently secured a part-time job that helps with family expenses, which includes daycare for my two children and expenses for my college tuition and fees. I have found that every penny of my household income is obligated, so I cannot afford to waste a dime. I have many obstacles and excuses I could use for not returning to college, but I also have no choice if I want to move beyond where I am currently. As I enter the front door of my community college, I worry about my academic progress and receiving the up-to-date skills I need to re-enter the workforce. Since I cannot afford to take additional coursework due to time and expense, it is imperative that I gain the knowledge and skills I need to be successful from each faculty member I encounter.*

The above scenario is typical of many students attending a community college. The American Association of Community Colleges, Community College Fact Sheet (2013) reports that eight million college students were classified as credit-seeking students enrolled in community colleges in Fall 2011. Furthermore, the association notes that 59% of the eight

million students attended on a part-time basis; 57% of the student body was female; 52% reported ethnicity as white; and the average age of the student population was 28 years old.

> *Greetings. I am a public community college administrator and am currently struggling with a decreasing state budget, understanding newly implemented funding formulas, and ensuring the college is committed to its mission. Due to the state's decreasing budget for education, a performance-based funding formula has been put into place. This formula will no longer focus solely on enrollment but will now consider the number of students completing their programs of study. This adds a new level of accountability to our funding challenges. Not only must we have stable enrollment, but we must retain those students in order to receive funding. It is my obligation to ensure that each course offered is a quality product and our students receive the high-quality education promised to them through our mission statement. It is my hope that providing quality courses will increase the likelihood that students will continue in their program of study until completion. To be accountable for the education provided, we must have a process that measures the instructional quality of our faculty in each classroom.*

Today's economic environment has forced states to carefully consider how their shrinking dollars are spent on higher education. States have generally allocated funds on the basis of enrollment. Enrollment, however, is a poor predictor of institutional performance (Miao, 2012). Ongoing budget cuts make it increasingly important for states to measure and base funding on additional indicators such as the retention, completion, and placement of students. As higher education spending continues to decline, states face growing pressure to demonstrate that they are invested in the long-term success of their students (Miao, 2012).

Like the scenario shared above, Public Community College[1] faces very similar challenges, such as ensuring we are meeting our obligation to the citizens of our service area by providing a high-quality education. After meeting with the senior administration of Public Community College, I gained institutional commitment to work with the faculty and staff of

[1] Public Community College is a pseudonym used to maintain the confidentiality of the research site and participants.

Public Community College in exploring, informing, assessing, and improving instructional quality through an action research approach.

Public Community College

The setting for this study was Public Community College. Public Community College is a public, multi-campus, two-year institution with an enrollment exceeding 8,800 students. Public Community College enrolls thousands of students that possess the same obstacles as the typical student portrayed earlier. Furthermore, the administration of Public Community College faces similar challenges as the administrator illustrated above.

The mission of Public Community College is to provide high-quality education and workforce development to the citizens in its region. With a focus on quality, Public Community College presented an opportunity for an action research study to document a case of one community college's efforts to develop a performance evaluation process informing instructional quality and using the data for improvement. Stringer (2007) defined action research as a systematic approach to investigation that enables people to discover effective solutions to problems. Like action research, institutional effectiveness at Public Community College is a comprehensive and integrated system of analysis, planning, implementing, and assessing processes, resulting in the continuous improvement of services. Therefore, conducting this action research study at Public Community College was a welcomed endeavor as the college has a culture of and focus on continuous improvement.

Action research is learning in action as opposed to learning on action (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010). By conducting this study through the utilization of an action research team, I, as an internal consultant/participant researcher, had an opportunity to bring together key members of the faculty and administration in the development (learning in action) of a new

performance evaluation process. The action selected by the team included the implementation of three interventions. Each intervention built upon the work of the previous intervention. Therefore, at the completion of an intervention, the team reflected on the results of that intervention as well as considered any effects on previous interventions. For instance, the first intervention involved the defining of instructional quality as well as the selection of competencies associated with instructional quality. The second intervention involved the development of the evaluation instrument utilizing the information determined in the first intervention. As the instrument was adapted, the team reflected on the outcomes of the first intervention and, at times, questioned the results. The end goal was to have a means to which the college could measure and assess instructional quality, as well as institutional commitment to the assessment process.

In Herr and Andersons's (2005) book, *The Action Research Dissertation: Guide for Students and Faculty*, there is a chapter titled, "Designing the Plane While Flying it." This description sums up the action research process for this study. Herr and Anderson stated both qualitative and action research proposals must begin the research with a clear direction, but as the process proceeds, the researcher should anticipate that the research questions, methods, design, and participants may shift. "These shifts are anticipated as part of a spiraling synergism of action and understanding" (pp. 70-71). As these shifts "spiral" over time, new questions, methods, designs, and participants occur.

These shifts were evidenced in this action research study. The purpose was clarified; research questions edited; team membership changed; methods were added and deleted; and the timeline was altered significantly. These shifts occurred through the action and understanding of team members.

Conceptual Framework

Maxwell (2005) described a conceptual framework as a visual or written product that is primarily a conception of what is out there that you plan to study. The conceptual framework for this study focused on the action research approach. Herr and Anderson (2005) defined action research as an "inquiry that is done *by* or *with* insiders to an organization or community, but never *to* or *on* them" (p. 3).

This action research study created an opportunity for representatives from Public Community College to participate in planning action, taking action, and evaluating the action once the context of the study was understood (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010). The conceptual framework was used to guide the study as members of the team used action research as a collaborative approach to inquire and investigate actions that could be taken in the development of a performance evaluation process informing and improving instructional quality (Stringer, 2007).

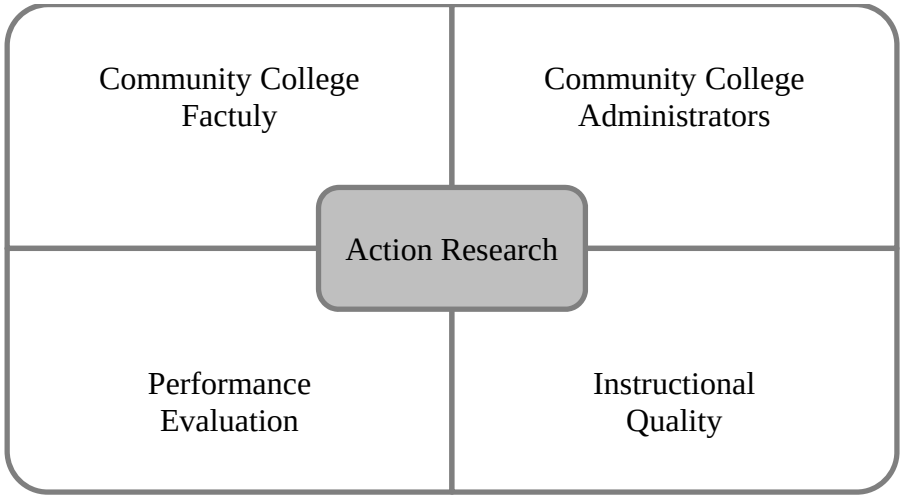

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

This study's plan included the examination of how instructional quality was defined, the essential performance competencies considered necessary, the performance evaluation process,

the evaluation sources available for measuring quality, and how the development of a process could inform and improve instructional quality. The operational framework, shown below, illustrates the actions taken for this study.

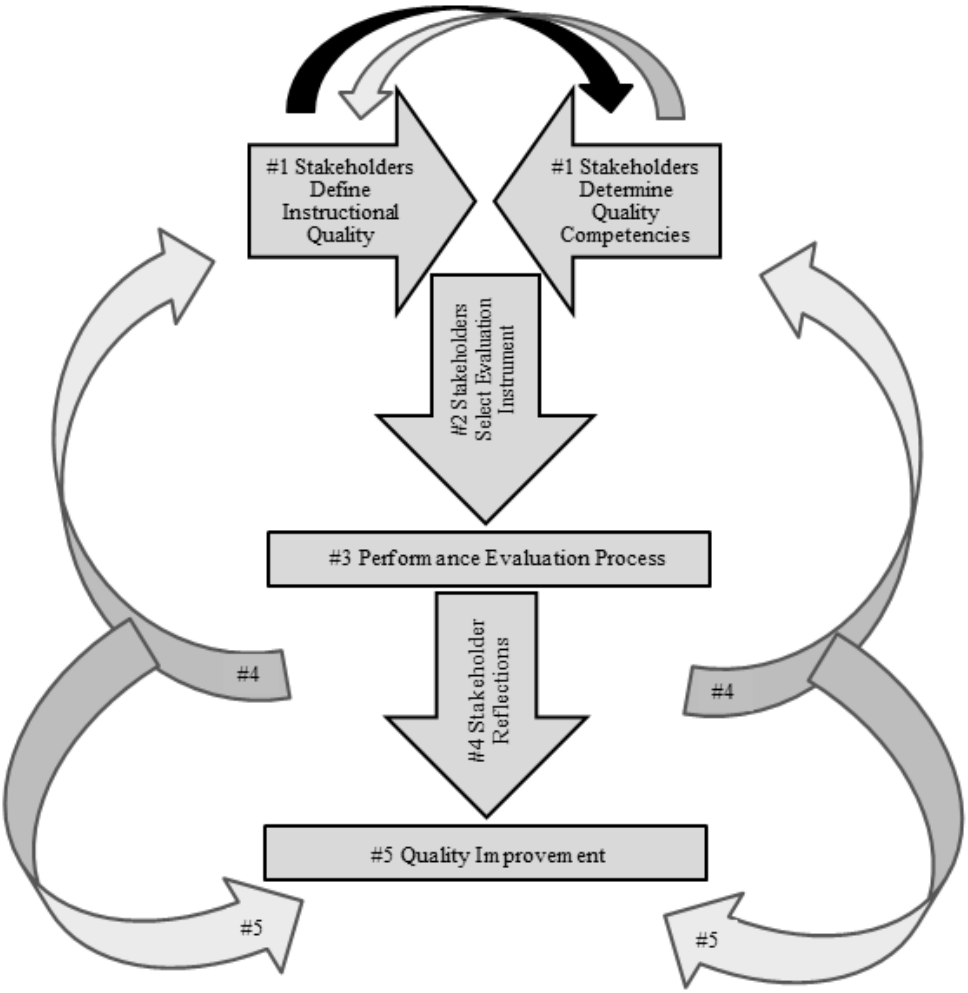

Figure 2. Action Research Process for Improving Instructional Quality

The operational framework illustrates the various stages of the study. The first stage involved research in the areas of defining instructional quality and the competencies that reflect exemplary performance. These two actions were each dependent on the other and involved multiple stakeholders as well as various literature resources. At the conclusion of this stage, a clear definition of instructional quality, as it related to Public Community College, was

developed. In addition to the definition, Public Community College provided performance competencies that were reflective of the competencies established by the action research team.

Stage two of the framework consisted of the review of current evaluation sources utilized at Public Community College. Following the analysis of the current process and documents, additional research was conducted to evaluate other sources available for possible implementation. As the team reached the end of stage two, it determined that the evaluation source selected for this study would be an observation. As noted in the research, observation is only one component of the evaluation system at Public Community College, but it was the selected component for this study as requested by the sponsor site. Utilizing the research information on evaluation sources and the competencies determined in the first stage, the action research team selected a new observation instrument for Public Community College.

The third stage of the framework was the actual performance evaluation process of a selected classroom session utilizing the evaluation instrument created during stage two. There were a total of ten faculty members that were a part of the pilot. Following each evaluation, a post-observation interview was conducted by the observer. During this interview, questions were asked of the faculty member concerning the class, observation, and instrument. This stage initiated the reflection process.

The fourth stage involved the role of reflective practice. Reflective practice is the careful review of and thoughtfulness about one's own teaching process (Stronge, 2007). With this study, reflection occurred in two layers: the faculty member as well as the action research team. The first layer involved the reflection of the faculty member on his or her performance. The second layer involved the reflection of the administrators and faculty members serving on the action research team. This group reflected on the first three stages of the framework to ensure

the definition and competencies of instructional quality, the evaluation instrument, and the observation process were appropriate for Public Community College.

Finally, stage five provided the opportunity for improvement in instructional quality. Through reflective practice, faculty and administrators had an opportunity to recognize areas for improvement through the action and reflection process. Stronge (2007) stated, "the importance of conscientious reflection and involvement in all aspects of teaching cannot be overemphasized in defining the effective teacher" (p. 102). Self-reflection can serve as the basis for improvement by exploring contradictions and compatibilities between what one wants to happen in class and what actually does happen (Seldin, 2006). Faculty interviews, following classroom observations, provided an opportunity for reflection and the exploration of what actually occurred in class as compared to what was intended. In several instances, faculty members noted that there were processes they would change in their instructional delivery in the future to allow students more time on a specific topic or possibly use a different instructional strategy to engage more students. As an administrator, reflective practice identified areas for development such as aligning performance competencies with performance expectations, implementing continuous improvement opportunities, and providing the prospect for professional development.

Problem Identification

In 2011, a new initiative was implemented at the state level, changing the focus of postsecondary education from enrollment to completion. The state's goal is to significantly increase the number of students completing college over an eight-year period. Following the announcement of the initiative, EmpowerED, a group of parents and educators founded in January 2010, made the following assertion:

> At his press conference, Governor Deal cited that "by 2018 more than 60 percent of jobs in the state will require a post-secondary degree." Though Deal is citing a fact, he gets the statement wrong. Deal should have stated, "by 2018 more than 60 percent of jobs in the state will require a post-secondary *education."* When policymakers focus solely on the quantity of the degrees, then the quality of the education is destroyed (EmpowerED Georgia, 2011).

The action research methodology for this study provided an opportunity for Public Community College to offer assurance that quality would not be abandoned as actions were established and goals set in the development of strategies to meet the new state initiative. Utilizing performance evaluation as a means to inform and improve instructional quality, Public Community College sought to establish a process involving the faculty and administration in the development of a new performance evaluation process assessing instructional quality.

Currently, performance evaluations of all faculty and staff at Public Community College occur annually. The faculty are evaluated using three instruments: self-evaluation; supervisor evaluation, which includes an observation piece; and student evaluations. One of the initial steps in the study was to "question" the current evaluation process administered at Public Community College. The questions asked did not always produce answers that were understood by the members of the team. For instance, there was not a valid reason as to why the three processes (self, supervisor, and student) were selected other than the process had been conducted in that manner year after year. Another questioning session revolved around the issue of forms used and the training conducted in utilizing the instruments. It was determined that not only was a new instrument needed, but there was a need for training as well.

With the senior administration's support and encouragement, the action research team understood that there was a need for change in the area of faculty evaluation. The action research team was charged with fostering change and communicating the value of establishing an evaluation system that focused on the assessment and improvement of instructional quality.

Purpose for the Study

The purpose for this study was to use an action research approach as a means to explore, inform, assess, and improve instructional quality. This study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. How is instructional quality defined by college stakeholders?
2. What essential competencies are necessary to ensure instructional quality?
3. What elements should be included on an observation performance evaluation instrument that measures instruction quality?
4. In what ways does the development of a performance evaluation process, through an action research approach at a community college, inform and improve instructional quality?

Significance of the Study

While there is literature on performance evaluation in higher education, there is a lack of information on the issue of assessing instructional quality, specifically at the community college level. Therefore, this study sought to add to the knowledge base by using an action research approach as a means to explore, inform, assess, and improve instructional at a community college. In addition to contributing to the academic literature, this study has practical implications to the faculty and administrators at community colleges by focusing on the

collaboration between these groups in defining instructional quality and identifying specific, essential performance competencies.

Utilizing action research methodology, this study illustrated how participants worked collaboratively in exploring the practice of performance evaluation as a process to improve instructional quality. There were three interventions associated with this study. The first intervention involved the review of various evaluation systems including the responses from an internal questionnaire. The second intervention included the selection of an evaluation instrument. The final intervention was the implementation of the evaluation instrument with a pilot group of faculty.

The methodology offered a means for organizational change by providing a richer understanding of quality instruction and how the assessment of instruction can be used to inform and improve quality. By following the framework used in this study, administrators and faculty can work collaboratively in realizing the competencies associated with quality instruction at their institutions. Once the competencies are recognized, an evaluation system can be developed with the goal of informing and improving instructional quality.

Definitions

- *Adjunct Faculty*—term used interchangeably with part-time faculty member.
- *Community College*—primarily two-year public institutions granting certificates, diplomas, and associate degrees. Community colleges provide open access to postsecondary education, preparing students for transfer to four-year institutions, providing workforce development and skills training, and offering noncredit programs.
- *Competencies*—"a set of knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes that a person needs to be effective . . ." (Hellriegel, Jackson, & Slocum, 2008, p. 4).

- *Evaluation Source*—evaluation methods such as student ratings, supervisor evaluations, classroom observations, self-evaluations, and peer evaluations.
- *Evaluation System*—number of evaluation sources that are linked together collaboratively so the whole is greater than the sum of the parts (Miller, Finley, and Vancko, 2000).
- *Instructional Quality*—a concept involving multiple competencies that hold specific (and sometimes conflicting) expectations about what a faculty member should be doing and the results they should produce.
- *Performance-based Funding*—a system based on allocating a portion of a state's higher education budget according to specific performance measures such as course completion and degree completion, instead of allocating funding based entirely on enrollment (Miao, 2012).
- *Performance Competencies*—major duties performed by an instructor.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

With an increasing focus on accountability in higher education related to the retention, completion, and the placement of students entering postsecondary education, it is critical for our students to have access to quality instruction in each and every classroom. Furthermore, it is imperative for institutions of higher education to have the capability to assess faculty effectiveness in the classroom, ensuring instructional quality. This chapter is a review of the literature related to this study's focus on informing instructional quality through the use of performance evaluation. Bain (2004) stated teachers deny the evaluation of teaching can be accomplished since there are no standards by which teaching can be measured. Although one all-inclusive list of teaching competencies has not been developed, there is literature addressing competencies reflected in quality instruction. This chapter begins by examining the need for change related to assessing instructional quality at the community college level. The review continues with an examination of instructional quality and teaching effectiveness in higher education. A review of performance competencies and performance evaluation follows. The literature review concludes with defining the various evaluation sources, assessment of empirical studies on these topics, and an overall critique and synthesis of the literature.

The databases utilized to gather information included EBSCO, EBSCO Administrative Abstracts, ERIC, and ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. In addition, there are several texts that provided guidance to this study. These texts focus on teaching and learning, evaluating faculty performance, the development of a faculty evaluation system, and creating a culture for faculty

development. The search terms utilized included: *instructional quality, performance evaluation, community college, action research, adult education, competency-based models, and faculty, reflective practice.*

Recognition of Need

In 2005, the U.S. Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings, appointed a commission to examine four central issues in American higher education. This group, composed of 20 representatives from public and private sectors, was commissioned to consider how best to improve the system of higher education to ensure that graduates are prepared to meet future workforce needs and are able to participate fully in the changing economy. The issues analyzed included access, affordability, quality, and the accountability of higher education (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). The commission stated, "Among the vast and varied institutions that make up U.S. higher education, we have found much that requires urgent reform" (U.S. Department of Education, 2006, p. ix). Employers state that college graduates are entering the workforce without the skills necessary in the current economy. With this realization, the commission made an alarming statement concerning higher education, stating that there was a "remarkable absence of accountability mechanisms to ensure that colleges succeed in educating students" (U.S. Department of Education, 2006, p. x).

This study addressed one such mechanism for ensuring accountability: the assessment of instructional quality. As the literature review was conducted, a gap was noted for assessing instructional quality at the community college level. Literature addressing instructional quality within the K-12 system and four-year/research universities was more abundant than literature regarding community colleges, typically two-year institutions. Performance competencies addressing instructional quality were identified that were not relevant for two-year higher

education institutions. For instance, performance competencies associated with research requirements as well as standards related to working with parents of children were requirements not applicable to Public Community College. However, other literature addressing assessment, communication, instructional planning and strategies, learning environment, and professional knowledge provided information that was beneficial and translatable, within limits, for use at the two-year level.

Historical Context of Faculty Performance Evaluation

In an article published in 1987, Chickering and Gamson addressed higher education as, "apathetic students, illiterate graduates, incompetent teaching, and impersonal campuses" (p. 4). Chickering and Gamson created a popular framework for evaluating teaching. The *Seven Principles of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education* were developed from a review of 50 years of educational literature (Arbaugh & Hornik, 2006). The seven principles are an important work in the area of good practice focusing on contact between faculty and students, consideration of multiple approaches to learning, and engagement of students in learning. Several of the reviewed journal articles referred to the "*Seven Principles*." These principles were originally published by Chickering and Gamson (1987) in the *AAHE Bulletin* and have helped faculty members and higher education examine and improve teaching practices. These principles for good practice were endorsed by the American Association of Higher Education.

Going from those competencies applied generally to higher education instructional quality to those specific to two-year institutions, in 1982, the Hirst study was designed to determine what Kansas community college faculty perceived as important competencies for effective teaching. There were 225 community college faculty members asked to complete a teaching competency survey to evaluate the importance and usage of the teaching competencies.

The study identified four areas of teaching competencies considered "highly important" or "more important" for effective teaching by community college faculty. The first area of teaching competencies involves the students. These competencies include respect for students, respect for students' contributions, understanding of students' frustrations, and the consideration of students' questions. The second area of effective teaching focuses on planning and informing students of course content. Area three involves the planning and informing of the evaluation criteria. The fourth area of importance for effective teaching includes planning and practicing classroom techniques. "If instructors can identify those competencies that are relevant to their classroom proficiency and sanction the usage of those competencies, instruction can and will improve" (Hirst, 1982, p. 11). While this study is dated, it is remarkably consistent with Stronge's competencies.

In 2010, James H. Stronge published eight research-based standards for assessing teacher excellence. Stronge is the Heritage Professor in the Educational Policy, Planning, and Leadership Area at the College of William and Mary. His research interests include policy and practice related to teacher quality, and teacher and administrator evaluation. Dr. Stronge has worked and published in the field of teacher quality and evaluation for over 20 years. During his time consulting in many school districts and other educational organizations, his work in designing, piloting, and training educators resulted in his researched-based performance standards. Although some of the information addressed secondary instruction, the performance standards were adaptable for use at the post-secondary level, specifically in a community college setting. Within each performance standard, quality indicators were described as those specific, observable, measurable aspects of each major job responsibility (Stronge, 2010). Table 1 reflects Stronge's (2010) eight research-based standards for assessing teacher excellence.

Table 1
Stronge's Performance Standards

Research-Based Standards
1. Professional Knowledge
2. Data-Driven Planning
3. Instructional Delivery
4. Assessment of Learning
5. Learning Environment
6. Communication and Advocacy
7. Professionalism
8. Student Progress

Another prominent resource in the area of faculty evaluation is Raoul Arreola. Dr. Arreola has worked and published in the field of faculty evaluation and development programs. The evaluation program developed by Arreola applies different weights to instructional competencies based on the institutional type and faculty role. For instance, when evaluations are conducted at research universities, the research competencies for instructional quality carry more weight as compared to a community college where research is not weighted as highly, if at all.

Instructional Quality

The first phase of this study was to understand how instructional quality was defined. It was essential for the administration and the faculty to agree on what an effective faculty member embodies. Without an understanding of this profile, it would be difficult to develop a measurement instrument that assesses its quality.

Instructional Quality Defined

Alfred, Shults, and Seybert (2007) defined effectiveness as, "a construct involving multiple constituencies that hold specific (and sometimes conflicting) expectations about what a college should be doing and the results it should produce" (p. 9). Using Alfred, Shults, and Seybert's definition of effectiveness to focus on instructional quality, one could define instructional quality as a construct involving multiple competencies that hold specific (and

sometimes conflicting) expectations about what a faculty member should be doing and the results they should produce.

The *Cornell University Teaching Evaluation Handbook* made the following statement concerning the question of defining excellence in teaching, "the problem . . . is that it may not be answerable in *absolute* terms" (Cornell University, 2011, p. 3). Cornell University suggests a more useful way of thinking about excellence in teaching is in *relative* terms: "to what degree has improvement in practice revealed an individual's capacity for continual growth and development which is intrinsic worth to the department and college?" (Cornell University, 2011, p. 3). It is imperative for faculty and administrators to work together in defining instructional quality as they are partners in the process of improving practice. "Teaching effectiveness is a function of a number of variables including length of experience in the profession and recognition of teaching competence . . ." (Billimek, 2004, p. 4). Billimek stated, "measuring the dynamics of effective teaching involves a number of factors" (p. 18).

Gappa, Austin, and Trice (2007) made the following assertion, "The faculty in American colleges and universities have always been the heart of the institutions where they work, the intellectual capital that ensures those institution's excellence. The quality of the faculty relates directly to the effectiveness of a college or a university in facilitating students' learning, creating new knowledge, and linking research and practice in ways that benefit society" (p. xi). To ensure instructional quality is continuously provided, Public Community College must determine an accurate way to assess quality. "Evaluation is designed primarily to assist in the ongoing process of improving teaching and learning" (Miller, Finley, & Shedd-Vancko, 2000, p. 45).

In a 1998 article focusing on the improvement of teaching effectiveness of community college faculty, E.C. Nwagwu described an effective faculty member as one, "willing to foster

and recognize individual student needs, are sensitive to individual academic interests of students, possess the capability to motivate students, shows high levels of energy and enthusiasm toward teaching, and are willing to use a variety of teaching techniques" (p. 7). But, faculty are not solely responsible for teaching effectiveness. Administrators can enhance quality and effectiveness utilizing strategies such as changing the reward system to focus on teaching, recognition of exemplary teaching, establishing a mentor program, and encouraging faculty participation in professional meetings (Nwagwu, 1998). With the responsibility of ensuring instructional quality falling on both the administrators and the faculty, a team approach is suggested when determining an assessment method. In 2011, the Georgia Department of Education released *The Teacher Keys Effectiveness System* for use at the secondary level. The Teacher Keys Effectiveness System is a common evaluation system allowing the state to ensure consistency and comparability across districts, based on a common definition of teacher effectiveness. The Teacher Keys Effectiveness System stated the following:

> Classroom teaching is a complex activity that demands teachers possess substantial thinking skills and a solid knowledge base. Effective teaching requires teachers to have not only sufficient knowledge in their own fields, but also an interdisciplinary understanding that ranges across multiple branches of human knowledge (Stronge & Xu, 2011, pp. 2-3).

Peter Seldin and Associates published a book in 1995 titled *Improving College Teaching*. In chapter one, Seldin stated, "the argument has been raised by some that we still lack the final answer to the question of what constitutes effective teaching. That may be true, but the key ingredients of effective teaching are increasingly known" (p. 5). The key ingredients, alluded to by Seldin, included various competencies described throughout this literature review. These

competencies include: the assessment of learning, communication and advocacy, data-driven planning, instructional delivery, learning environment, professional knowledge, professionalism, and student progress.

Performance Competencies

Literature examining the key ingredients of effective teaching, as Seldin mentioned above, was researched from a variety of educational disciplines, secondary and post-secondary. Hellriegel, Jackson, and Slocum (2008) defined competencies as a "set of knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes that a person needs to be effective . . ." (p. 4). Seldin (1995) cites the ingredients of effective teaching as a deep knowledge of the subject, an ability to communicate with and motivate students, enthusiasm for the subject and for teaching, clarity of presentation, and fairness. The following sections detail performance competencies associated with exemplary instruction.

Assessment of learning. The assessment of learning performance competency addressed the responsibilities associated with systematically gathering, analyzing, and using data to measure student progress, guide instruction, and providing timely feedback (Stronge, 2010). Arreola (2007) defines instructional assessment as using and developing tools and procedures for assessing student learning. Quality indicators for this competency may include using a variety of formal and informal assessment strategies to guide and adjust instruction or using pre-assessment data to develop expectations for students (Stronge, 2010).

Communication and advocacy. This competency addressed effective communication by the faculty member with the students. Stronge (2010) describes the communication competency as the faculty's ability to effectively communicate with students in ways that enhance student learning. A sample quality indicator may include using precise language,

correct vocabulary and grammar, and appropriate forms of oral and written communication when addressing students.

Arreola (2007) recognized that individuals have various preferences for communicating with others, and faculty should have the ability to identify the communication style for each situation.

> Frequent student-faculty contact in and out of class is a most important factor in student motivation and involvement. Faculty concern helps students get through rough times and keep on working. Knowing a few faculty members well enhances students' intellectual commitment and encourages them to think about their own values and plans (Chickering & Gamson, 1987, p. 4).

Data-driven planning. The use of appropriate curricula, instructional strategies, and resources to address the needs of all students defined the data-driven planning competency. This standard requires knowledge and skill in task analysis, the psychology of learning, the conditions of learning, and the development of performance objectives (Arreola, 2007). A quality indicator shared by Stronge (2010) included the development of plans that are clear, logical, sequential, and integrated across the curriculum.

Instructional delivery. The instructional delivery competency is characterized by the utilization of effective instructional strategies to address individual learning differences promoting student learning (Stronge, 2010). When addressing the individual learning differences, Chickering and Gamson (1987) stated:

> There are many roads to learning. People bring different talents and styles of learning to college. Brilliant students in the seminar room might be all thumbs in a lab or art studio. Students rich in hands-on experience may not do so well with

> theory. Students need opportunities to show their talents and learn in ways that work for them. Then they can be pushed to learn in new ways that do not come so easily (p. 5).

Arreola (2007) defined instructional delivery as being those human interactive skills that promote or facilitate learning as well as the skills using various forms of instructional delivery mechanisms. These mechanisms may include online learning, voice conversations, still images, motion pictures, multimedia presentations, and social media. Chickering and Gamson (1987) also address the utilization of various mechanisms.

> Learning is not a spectator sport. Students do not learn much just sitting in classes listening to teachers, memorizing prepackaged assignments, and spitting out answers. They must talk about what they are learning, write reflectively about it, relate it to past experiences, and apply it to their daily lives. They must make what they learn part of themselves (p. 4).

Quality indicators that may be reflected in the delivery of instruction include the ability to engage and maintain students' attention by soliciting comments, questions, examples, and other contributions from the students throughout the lesson (Stronge, 2010).

Learning environment. The learning environment competency speaks to a faculty member's ability to provide a well-managed, safe, student-centered environment that is academically challenging and respectful (Stronge, 2010). Chickering and Gamson (1987) discussed the importance of time management as a component of a quality learning environment, "Learning to use one's time well is critical for students and professionals alike. Allocating realistic amounts of time means effective learning for students and effective teaching for faculty"

(p. 5). Chickering and Gamson (1987) go on to say that an effective learning environment must have a strong sense of shared purpose.

> Learning is enhanced when it is more like a team effort than a solo race. Good learning, like good work, is collaborative and social, not competitive and isolated. Working with others often increases involvement in learning. Sharing one's ideas and responding to others' improves thinking and deepens understanding (p. 4).

Sample quality indicators for this performance competency may include the instructor's ability to actively listen, paying attention to students' needs, and encouraging students to explore new ideas and take academic risks.

Professional knowledge. The professional knowledge competency focused on a faculty member's demonstration and understanding of the curriculum, subject content, and the development needs of students by providing relevant learning experiences.

> Knowing what you know and don't know focuses your learning. In getting started, students need help in assessing their existing knowledge and competence. Then, in classes, students need frequent opportunities to perform and receive feedback on their performance. At various points during college, and at its end, students need chances to reflect on what they have learned, what they still need to know, and how they might assess themselves (Chickering and Gamson, 1987, p. 5).

Stronge (2010) described this performance competency as an instructor's ability to link present content with past and future learning experiences, other subject areas, and real-world experiences and applications.

Professionalism. Maintaining a professional demeanor, participating in professional growth opportunities, and contributing to the profession are all qualities of the professionalism competency. Arreola (2007) addressed several skill sets that are components of professionalism. These components included skills associated with conflict management, resource management, budget development, and professional development.

Performance indicators associated with the professionalism competency included the instructor's flexibility in adapting to change within the college. Another indicator associated with the professionalism performance standard is an instructor's ability to evaluate and identify areas of personal strengths and weaknesses related to professional skills, their impact on student learning, and continuous improvement based on their assessment (Stronge, 2010).

Student progress. The final competency discussed by Stronge (2010) is student progress. This competency focused on the outcomes produced by the faculty member. "Expect more and you will get it. High expectations are important for everyone – for the poorly prepared, for those unwilling to exert themselves, and for the bright and well-motivated. Expecting students to perform well becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy" (Chickering and Gamson, 1987, p. 5).

As a result of the literature review focusing on the competencies associated with instructional quality, a crosswalk (Appendix A) was developed that aligns the various references addressing instructional quality competencies as well as the results of an internal questionnaire completed at Public Community College. The results of this survey will be detailed in a future chapter.

Performance Evaluation

Institutions of higher education are under increasing pressure to become more accountable and more effective. If colleges are not currently evaluating faculty, "an evaluation system should be developed to bring expectations more in line with reality" (Shao, Anderson, & Newsome, 2007, p. 365). Miller, Finley, and Vancko (2000) defined an evaluation system as a number of components that are linked together collaboratively so the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

Angelo and Cross (1993) stated, "learning can and often does take place without the benefit of teaching – and sometimes even in spite of it – but there is no such thing as effective teaching in the absence of learning. Teaching without learning is just talking" (p. 3). Through various assessment strategies, faculty measure the student learning of their students. It is the obligation of the college to measure the instructional effectiveness of teaching.

Using performance evaluation as a tool for informing and improving instructional quality, there is potential to not only improve faculty instruction but student learning as well. The evaluation of faculty effectiveness is essential to a variety of administrative recommendations and decisions such as providing feedback that influences the faculty member's self-image and professional satisfaction, and establishing a climate that communicates the college's commitment to professional improvement (Hoyt & Pallett, 1999).

Evaluating faculty performance offers faculty members and administrators the information required to foster effective and equitable evaluation at their institutions (Seldin, 2006). Faculty evaluation is a tool addressing concerns about faculty quality, institutional accountability, and educational improvements. Performance evaluations are designed to aid administrators in reaching formative and summative goals. Formative evaluations are used to

improve and shape the quality of teaching and to bring about positive change. In contrast, summative evaluations influence personnel decisions based on overall performance.

Performance evaluation is a process used to develop and motivate employees (Langdon & Osborne, 2001). Consistent performance evaluation should provide constructive feedback on performance, which is vital if staff are to build on their strengths, achieve their full potential, and make maximum contributions to their organization (Langdon & Osborne, 2001). Ongoing assessment should be practiced to assist in providing faculty with feedback for areas of improvement and to encourage the practice of continuous improvement (Fish & Wickersham, 2009).

In 1982, a dissertation published by William Hirst stated, "students and legislators are demanding accountability, further creating acute instructor apprehension about teaching effectiveness, assessment, and documentation" (p. 2). Today, 30 years later, students and legislators are still demanding accountability. Hirst (1982) goes on to say a great amount has gone into teacher evaluation issues and "evaluation forms often fail to identify specific teaching competencies or classroom behaviors teachers practice to be successful" (p. 2).

"Better evaluation will encourage faculty to contribute more thoughtfully and more often to the literature and discussion on teaching and learning, increasing pedagogical knowledge and its use for the benefit of students (Hutchings, Huber, & Ciccone, 2011, p. 8). But, not all faculty agree evaluation processes lead to improvement. In 1992, Spencer and Flyr conducted a study in which the researchers mailed 250 questionnaires to random faculty members representing two- and four-year colleges. The questionnaire contained ten questions and sought to determine the effects of the formal evaluation process on instructional performance. Survey results, based on a

58% response rate, stated the majority of the faculty (73%) indicated the formal evaluation process never or only occasionally led to instructional improvement (Spencer & Flyr, 1992).

In *IDEA Paper #36* associated with Kansas State University, Hoyt and Pallett stated, "assessing faculty performance is a complex and time consuming process. If it is done poorly or insensitively, it can have an adverse effect upon institutional quality" (1999, p. 7). The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) made the following statement as a guide to proper teaching evaluation methods:

> Colleges and universities properly aspire to excellence in teaching. Institutional aspirations, however, have not often led to practices that clearly identify and reward teaching excellence, and the quality of teaching is not in fact the determining consideration in many decisions on retention, promotion, salary, and tenure. The aspirations of faculty members are often frustrated, because they must wrestle with diverse obligations—commonly identified as *teaching*, *research*, and *service*—placed upon them by the profession at large, the scholarly discipline, the institution, and their own varied interests. Establishing a positive relationship between the institution's and the department's aspirations and the individual's competencies and aims is one outcome of fair and thorough faculty review procedures (2006, p. 139).

The AAUP divides the assessment of the effectiveness of instruction into six areas. These areas include student learning, teaching performance, student perception, classroom visitation, self-evaluation, and outside opinions. "The responsible evaluation of teaching does not serve advancement procedures alone. It should be wisely employed for the development of the teacher and the enhancement of instruction" (AAUP, 2006, p. 139).

Peter Seldin, publisher of several books on evaluating teaching and improving college teaching, is a distinguished professor and higher education consultant. Seldin details key ingredients that should be observed when constructing a faculty evaluation program. These ingredients include: acceptability, comprehensive evaluation, freedom from contamination, practicality, relevance, reliability, and sensitivity (Seldin, 2006).

Seldin (2006) also shares barriers to evaluating faculty performance. The barriers include:

- There are social and attitudinal problems.
- There is the immediate problem of developing accurate measuring rods of faculty performance.
- Other opponents of evaluation argue teaching is too complex and subjective to be evaluated.
- There is the unspoken professional dislike of being judged.
- Additional obstacles including standards and ratings that are subjective, inconsistencies of evaluators, and excessive emphasis being placed on numbers.

Avoiding an evaluation process due to the lack of information or barriers similar to those listed above is a dangerous practice (Seldin, 2006). "Even with the barriers and obstacles, it is better to install a program that requires evaluations to approach fairness and accuracy" (Seldin, 2006, p. 8). Without a rational evaluation system, irrational judgments may be made based on gossip or unfounded information (Seldin, 2006).

Arreola (2007) defined a comprehensive faculty evaluation system as "one which involves the systematic observation (measurement) of relevant faculty performance to determine the degree to which that performance is consonant with the values of the academic unit" (p. xix).

In addition to recognizing that the evaluation system informs the academic unit, Arreola stressed faculty evaluation systems, when initiated without reference to professional enrichment opportunities or programs, are inevitably viewed by faculty as being primarily punitive in intent (Arreola, 2007).

Shao, Anderson, and Newsome (2007) emphasized the use of appropriate measures to evaluate faculty performance is "one of the most important, challenging, and controversial issues facing academic administrators" (p. 335). The evaluation of faculty performance is rendered difficult since it involves the interpretation of both subjective and objective areas (Shao, et al., 2007).

The performance evaluation process can be a stressful time for those involved when it typically occurs one time a year. Most often, employees are concerned an accurate assessment of their performance will not be recognized during the evaluation process if only occurring annually. If the evaluation process is successful, it should focus on the qualities of learning, be used for improvement, and emphasize student success. "Excellent teachers develop their abilities through constant evaluation, reflection, and the willingness to change" (Bain, 2004, p. 172).

In January 2006, The Center for the Study of Evaluation issued Technical Report 671. This report summarized secondary education participants' use of the Instructional Quality Assessment (IQA). This assessment tool rated instructional quality based on classroom observation and student assignments. The authors stated, "quality of instruction has not been directly measured in many accountability systems because few assessment tools exist that have the potential to directly measure the quality of classroom practice on a large-scale basis" (Junker, Weisberg, Matsumura, Crosson, Wolf, Levison, & Resnick, 2006, p. 2).

In Report 671, the authors referenced an adage often quoted in industrial and software quality control, "That which cannot be measured, cannot be improved." Applying the adage to this study, if leaders in education do not measure instructional quality, then there is little opportunity for improvement. Junker, et al. (2006) suggested a connection between measuring instructional quality and the improvement of instruction by stating, "it is unacceptable to deny educators the tools they need to measure, reflect upon, and improve their own practices, in order to help students" (Junker et al., 2006, p. 2). Providing these resources allows faculty to enhance their instructional practices, which, in turn, improves instruction in the classroom.

Miller, Finley, and Vancko (2000) suggested objectives for a faculty evaluation system. Three of the objectives included:

1. Establishing an evaluation process that can be used to identify faculty strengths and weaknesses as a fundamental step toward improving professional effectiveness.
2. Developing a framework within which professional growth and development is encouraged.
3. Creating a process within which the quality of instruction may be improved in the interest of student success and the enhancement of student retention.

This action research study suggested additional objectives for performance evaluation that included accountability and effectiveness. The establishment of a performance evaluation process that focuses on instructor effectiveness aids in a college's ability to document accountability. Kember and Ginns (2012) stated that the aim or purpose of evaluating faculty should be improving the quality of teaching, providing a better learning environment, and improving the chances that desired learning outcomes will be attained.

Evaluation Sources

Researchers within the higher education field have a common belief that faculty evaluations must be based on multiple forms or methods (Shao, et al., 2007). Many methods and approaches exists that measure faculty effectiveness, such as student ratings, classroom observations, self-evaluation, and colleague evaluation. Foote (1998) stated, "Despite the differences in assessment methods and personnel involved in the appraisal process, practitioners agree that evaluation is a necessary part of teaching and learning" (p. 1). In 1996, Ackerman presented a paper at the International Conference of the National Community College Chair Academy, stating "a comprehensive faculty performance appraisal program is necessary for any college to maintain a high standard of excellence, effectiveness, and accountability" (p. 1).

According to The Center for Research on Learning and Teaching with the University of Michigan, it is best to use multiple measures involving multiple sources of data to evaluate instructional activities. The resource lists three areas of evidence that should be collected for the evaluation of teaching: students, colleagues, and self. The Center declared, "To ensure that the evaluation system adopted is credible and acceptable, faculty members must have a strong hand in its development. Before departments and schools adopt teaching evaluation systems, the faculty members should determine their criteria for effective teaching" (University of Michigan, 2011, p. 2). "By drawing on three or more different sources of evidence, the strengths of each source can compensate for weaknesses of other sources, thereby converging on a decision about teaching effectiveness that is more accurate than one based on any single source" (Appling, Naumann, & Berk, 2001, p. 247).

In 2005, Ronald Berk of Johns Hopkins University detailed strategies to measure teaching effectiveness. In a published article, Berk (2005) examined the potential sources of

evidence of teaching effectiveness. The sources reviewed included student ratings, self-evaluations, and administrator ratings. Of the various evaluation tools used to assess instructional quality, student course evaluations are utilized most frequently (Smith, 2007).

Student Course Evaluations

Student course evaluations are the result of students rating their instructor's performance through a structured or unstructured questionnaire, or interview (Arreola, 2007). "Most college professors enjoy being rated by students about as much as most college students enjoy taking final exams" (Cashin, 1999, p. 27). Student course evaluations are primarily used to provide feedback to faculty for instructional improvement. Smith (2007) stated college administrators use student feedback to make decisions concerning promotion, merit increases, and teaching awards. Berk (2005) stated, "Student ratings are a necessary source of evidence of teaching effectiveness for both formative and summative decisions, but not a sufficient source for the latter" (p. 50). The challenges associated with student evaluations include the ability for students to accurately evaluate some aspects of teaching (Smith, 2007). Shao, Anderson, and Newsome (2007) state "student evaluations should be only one part of a larger evaluation process" (p. 365).

Arreola (2007) provided strengths and weaknesses for this approach. Student evaluations can produce extremely reliable and valid information concerning faculty classroom performance simply due to the students observing the faculty member every day. Arreola goes on to comment that faculty are motivated to change as a result of student feedback. Weaknesses associated with student evaluations are factors being considered that are unrelated to faculty performance such as the class size or the time of day a course was offered.

Pallett (2006) detailed components of effective teaching that students are not well equipped to judge. These components included the appropriateness of an instructor's objectives;

the instructor's knowledge of the subject matter; degree to which instructional processes are current; quality of assessment methods; appropriateness of grading standards; and an instructor's administrative and curriculum development responsibilities. Instead, student ratings are beneficial in assessing instructor-student rapport and an instructor's interaction and clarity of communication.

Self Evaluations

Self evaluations are generated by faculty using various means to gather information to assess performance relative to their own needs, goals, and objectives (Arreola, 2007). Self evaluations are useful evaluation sources to consider in formative and summative decisions. An instructor's self-evaluation is his or her perception about teaching and effectiveness in the classroom (Berk, 2005). Farh, Werbel, and Bedeian (1988) mentioned skepticism surrounding the use of self-appraisal as a performance assessment method exists because of the belief that they are subject to self-enhancement desires and that most people are unable to evaluate themselves objectively. However, research suggested self-appraisals are valuable sources of information for performance evaluation purposes (Farh, et al., 1988).

Strengths associated with this form of evaluation focus on the data collected being more clearly related to a faculty member's own goals and needs. Faculty are more likely to act on data that they collect themselves. A weakness addresses the fact that faculty tend to rate themselves higher than students do, and the results fail to be consistent with other raters (Arreola, 2007).

Colleague Evaluations

Colleague evaluations are usually conducted by administrators who were faculty with expertise on teaching methods, classroom evaluation techniques, and content in the discipline (Berk, 2005). Administrators utilize a structured activity report to furnish a comprehensive

picture of achievement in areas over the past year. In many cases, the report addressed relations between instructor acts and student behaviors, and how instructors compare on certain factors (Arreola, 2007).

Observations. Classroom observation has been a common form of evaluation in secondary schools. However, in higher education it has been much less common (Kember & Ginns, 2012). In the higher education setting, which many times includes lecture-style delivery, it may be difficult to draw conclusions from an observation. But, criteria exist to evaluate instruction such as the class introduction, structure of the class, concepts provided, relevance of the information, any visual aids utilized, the delivery method, feedback provided, and the summary of the key concepts delivered at the end of class (Kember & Ginns, 2012).

A direct classroom observation can be a useful way to collect information on faculty performance, but it has limitations. Observations are intended to provide direct, natural information on the work of a faculty member, student behaviors, and the dynamic interaction between faculty and learners (Stronge, 2010). A formal observation is typically scheduled for a specific period of time and involves the evaluator observing a faculty member who is presenting a lesson to or interacting with students (Stronge, 2010).

Arreola (2007) stated "it is necessary to design and construct an observational checklist based on agreed-upon performances to be observed (p. 96). The strengths associated with observation as a form of evaluation are that it encourages professional behavior through the motivation of upgrading a faculty member's own profession, and it can provide specific suggestions and recommendations to instructional content (Arreola, 2007). Weaknesses include an observer's bias to previous information, personal relationships, or peer pressure to influence the evaluation process.

Seldin (2006) stated, "regardless of their purposes, it is critically important to follow a three-step process for observations: a pre-visit consultation, the visit itself, and the critically important follow-up visit" (p. 84). The pre-visit conference between the observer and the instructor should review the instrument to be used. The faculty member should communicate to the observer any teaching strategies or issues he or she considers important (Arreola, 2007). During the follow-up visit between the observer and the faculty member, the results of the observation should be reviewed, providing honest, accurate, and focused feedback in a positive manner (Arreola, 2007).

To ensure the reliability of the observation data, observers must be trained in the use of the observational checklist. "Training the observers increases the probability that their observations will be valid and consistent and thus result in acceptable inter-rater reliability" (Arreola, 2007, p. 96). DeZure (1999) detailed numerous methods that can be taken to increase the reliability of observations. Several of the methods she detailed included:

- Training the observers, including what criteria to use, how to apply them, observational skills, record-keeping, and how to provide constructive criticism.
- A consensus about what constitutes good teaching in the discipline with a focus on shared criteria for teaching effectiveness.
- A consistent process for all instructors and observers.
- Ensuring that all instructors, observers, and administrators understand the purpose and process utilized.
- Ensuring the instructor has input into the process.

As the research stated, it is best to use multiple measures involving multiple sources of data to evaluate instructional activities. Realizing the strengths and weaknesses associated with

each source provides a better understanding of the need for the various inputs associated with a performance evaluation system. At the request of the sponsor site, this study will focus strictly on the use of the observation piece, but it should be noted that it is just one source of a greater performance evaluation system.

Key Studies of Performance Evaluation Systems

In researching performance evaluation systems, several studies were reviewed. In the following table, a synthesis and comparison across the studies is provided to highlight points that were helpful in this study.

Table 2
Review of Key Studies

Author(s)	Major Theme	Sample Subjects	Data Collection Technique	Findings
Farh, Werbel, & Bedeian (1988)	Evaluations Supervisor Peer Self	Six departments within a college Faculty	Faculty members completed self-ratings of performance. Chairperson completed ratings of performance. Questionnaire survey of user acceptance.	When self-appraisals are used, they are more aligned with supervisor ratings.
Hirst (1982)	Teaching competencies	225 community college faculty	Faculty members completed a teaching competency survey.	Study identified four areas of teaching competencies.
Junker & Weisberg (2005)	Instructional Quality Assessment (IQA) Observation and student assignments	Seven secondary schools	Teachers were asked to complete an assignment portfolio for rating. Lesson observations.	A tool is needed to provide snapshots of instructional practice—before and after implementing a new professional development initiative.
Linksz (1990)	Faculty inventory	117 full-time community college faculty	Faculty members completed an inventory of their	Faculty support diverse talents with many

Author(s)	Major Theme	Sample Subjects	Data Collection Technique	Findings
			own practice based on seven principles of good practice.	identified strengths. The area of weakness identified was in the area of active learning and the mastery of learning.
Shao, Anderson, & Newsome (2007)	Faculty evaluation systems	1,300 admins and faculty	Survey Questionnaire	Differences between what faculty and administrators believe should be used and what they are currently using.
Spencer & Flyr (1992)	Faculty evaluation	250 faculty members; two- and four-year colleges	Questionnaire	Majority of the faculty indicated the formal evaluation process never or only occasionally led to instructional improvement.

Key studies are prevalent across the years from Hirst (1982) to Shao, Anderson, and Newsome (2007). Several of the studies were conducted at two-year institutions while the other studies were performed at secondary schools and four-year higher education institutions. Data collection methods included questionnaires, surveys, the completion of portfolios, and the observation of class lessons. Findings from the studies produced information comparing several of the evaluation sources, such as the alignment of supervisor evaluations with self appraisals. Findings also revealed faculty's perspective of performance evaluation practices. Even though the information produced by these studies was informative, there was not a direct study that focused on the relationship between the assessment of instructional quality and the use of performance evaluation for informing and improving instruction.

Conclusion

A review of the literature related to instructional quality, performance competencies, and performance evaluations, as well as action research, guided this study in the search for an assessment process that could inform and improve instructional quality. The improvement of post-secondary education is the responsibility of faculty, students, and college administrators. The literature suggested that the assessment of instructional quality and ensuring student success is the focus of not only college administrators and accreditors but governmental agencies as well.

Funding for higher education institutions is becoming more closely tied to outcomes such as retention, completion, and placement. The assessment of instructional quality is no longer an optional practice but is now being driven by a need to ensure accountability for each student that enrolls at a higher education institution. Stronge (2011) stated, "An increased alignment between teacher-effectiveness research and teacher evaluation has emerged. Such connection between research and practice facilitates the development of evaluation systems that are based on realistic, research-informed performance standards, therefore, making the measurement of teacher performance and feedback more accurate and useful" (p. 1).

The ultimate goal of performance evaluation, as it related to this study, was to support the continuous growth and development of each faculty member by monitoring, analyzing, and applying relevant data in the identification of areas for future professional development (Stronge, 2011). Consequently, while there is significant literature on performance evaluation in higher education, there is a lack of information on the issue of assessing of instructional quality, specifically at the community college level. Therefore, this study sought to address this gap.

Major works on performance evaluation systems, specifically in the area of community colleges, came from a group of researchers that included Arreola (1997), Chickering and

Gamson (1987), Hirst (1982), Kember and Ginns (2012), and Seldin and Associates (2006). In addition, Strong (2010) and Kennedy (2000) provided additional information from the perspective of teacher evaluation from the secondary level. The research provided multiple resources in the area of performance competencies associated with exemplary instruction as well as various performance evaluation systems. However, there was little literature that directly focused on the relationship between utilizing performance evaluation to inform and improve instructional quality. Public Community College sought to design a performance evaluation process for the purpose of informing and improving instructional quality. Utilizing action research methodology, Public Community College was empowered to generate knowledge by designing, testing, and piloting a new performance evaluation instrument and process using an observation and post-interview format.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter reviews the methodology used for this study including data collection and data analysis. The purpose for this study was to use an action research approach as a means to explore, inform, assess, and improve instructional quality. Various methods and sources of data collection were used to inform the research questions of the study. The chapter begins by reviewing action research methodology as well as the qualitative data collection methods used for the study. The conclusion of the chapter will discuss the limitations of the study as well as my positionality.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people make sense of their experiences they have in the world (Merriam, 2009). Patton (2008) defined qualitative researchers as finding meaning in words and stories, enamored with narrative and case studies, connecting the casual dots through unfolding patterns, and immersing themselves in the details of a specific time and space. Merriam (2009) stated, "applied research is undertaken to improve the quality of practice of a particular discipline" (p. 3). The particular discipline within this study focused on instructional quality.

The qualitative design for this study was an interpretive position. Merriam (2009) described interpretive research as assuming that reality is socially constructed; in other words, there is no single, observable reality. Interpretive research recognizes that there are multiple interpretations or realities of a single event (Merriam, 2009). Focusing on this study, improving

instructional quality through performance evaluation (a single event) has many interpretations. Seldin (2006) described faculty evaluation as an exercise in observation and judgment stating it is a measurement and feedback process. Seldin goes on to say that faculty evaluation is "an inexact, human method that must meet key requirements if it is to succeed" (p. 1). An inexact method, as Seldin described above, aligns with Merriam's description of multiple interpretations when defining the interpretive position.

This study employed participant observations followed by interviews as a form of data collection. The interpretive approach lends itself to such methods by ensuring adequate dialog between researchers and study participants in order to collaboratively construct a meaningful reality (Merriam, 2009). A characteristic of an interpretive quality study is that the researcher strives to understand the meaning people have constructed about their world and their experiences (Merriam, 2009). This study explored the understanding of instructional quality through the experiences of faculty and administrators at Public Community College.

My selection of a qualitative research approach was based on the need of the site as it related to the outcomes provided by the study. Based on the purpose of the study, the end product needed to be richly descriptive and provide evidence of broad-based input from not only administrators but faculty as well. When addressing the procedures taken and processes developed, the study needed to explain why actions were taken and the reasons behind those decisions. The need for transparency was necessary due to the fact that performance evaluation and the quality of a faculty member's performance was the focus. For the legitimacy of a new evaluation instrument and process at Public Community College, acceptance from faculty and administration was key.

Action Research Methodology

Understanding action research begins with defining the term. Stringer (2007) defined action research as a "systematic approach to investigation that enables people to find effective solutions to problems they confront in their everyday lives" (p. 1). Coghlan and Brannick (2010) stated, "action research is an approach to research which is based on a collaborative problem solving relationship between researcher and client which aims at both solving a problem and generating new knowledge" (p. 35).

Action research is described as research in action as opposed to research about action. My understanding of this statement is that action research is in the moment; the researcher is participating in the research not just viewing the research of others. Research in action is being created by the activities and participation of the group involved. The process works through the continuous participation, input, feedback, and reflection of the participants. "Action researchers tend to see research as a creative process of trial and error, working their way through and arriving at a 'best for now' position" (McNiff & Whitehead, 2009, p. 8).

Action research involves a process of constructing, planning action, taking action, and evaluating action (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010). The learning process of action research results from the continual reflection on each of the cycles. The reflection process can be illustrated by asking three questions. What happened? How do we make sense of what happened? So what? Coghlan and Brannick (2010) described a good action research study as containing three main elements: a good story, rigorous reflection on the story, and providing usable knowledge from the reflection of the story.

Unlike other forms of research, action research is about real-time change, happening in the moment. "Action research expects us to stop just going through the motions, doing what

we've always done because we've done it, doing it the same way because we've always done it that way" (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010, p. 16). This study utilized action research as a means to explore, inform, assess, and improve instructional quality. The point could have been argued that what we had done for the past 50 years was adequate, but this study made us stop going through the motions of evaluating instructional quality by providing an opportunity for our team of administrators and faculty to work collaboratively in developing a process that more accurately measures quality and a process that informs and improves instruction.

"Good research deals with significant issues and attempts to answer significant questions about the issues" (Herr & Anderson, 2005, p. 69). The goals of action research include the generation of new knowledge, achievement of action-oriented outcomes, education of not only the researcher but the participants, and providing results that are relevant to the local setting (Herr & Anderson, 2005). The goal of this study was to generate knowledge using an action research approach as a means to explore, inform, assess, and improve instructional quality. Through the utilization of an action research team, the researcher and the participants generated knowledge related to instructional quality that benefited the sponsor site.

Focusing on the purpose of this study, action research provided the methodology necessary to produce outcomes informing the college's knowledge base of instructional quality and provided an opportunity for organizational transformation though the utilization of the research team's actions.

Sample Selection

Merriam (2009) stated that once the general problem is identified, the task becomes to select the sample. To address the general problem of measuring quality instruction, purposeful sampling was appropriate for this study. The purposeful strategy is "based on the assumption

that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned" (Merriam, 2009, p. 77).

Research Site

The research site for this study was Public Community College. Public Community College is a public, multi-campus, two-year institution. Public Community College employs approximately 350 full-time employees and an additional 300 part-time employees. As mentioned, this study coincided with Public Community College's regional reaffirmation process. With the obligations of the reaffirmation process, along with growing accountability requirements, this study provided an opportunity for Public Community College to explore the means to inform and improve instructional quality. Through the utilization of an action research team in addressing the research questions, Public Community College had an opportunity to not only meet accreditation and governmental requirements, but to also focus on the continuous improvement of operations and quality.

Participants

Working in the office of institutional effectiveness at the site provided me valuable knowledge in the selection of participants. By knowing the administrators and faculty that focus on continuous improvement through other college initiatives, I had the ability to select a sample that I felt was interested in discovering, understanding, and gaining insight into improving instructional quality through the use of performance evaluation.

The primary participants of this study were the members of the action research team. The action research team consisted of eight members. The recruitment of the participants for this study was carried out through face-to-face meetings conducted at the college in order to ask individuals if they would participate. The selection of the participants was based on the

member's position at the college. "Action research is a participatory process that involves all those who have a stake in the issue engaging in systematic inquiry into the issue to be investigated" (Stringer, 2007, p. 6). Five of the eight members were faculty. Each faculty member represented one of the five divisions of the college. The three additional members represented the office of academic affairs. The selection of these particular participants reflects criterion-based selection sampling as described by Maxwell (2005). This strategy was used in order to gain information from the participants directly associated with instruction and their area of expertise. Table 3 provides an overview of the action research team members and their affiliation with Public Community College.

Table 3
Action Research Team Members

Member[2]	**Position/Discipline**
Amanda	Faculty Member/Health Technologies
Betsey	Faculty Member/Public Service Technologies
Dave	Faculty Member/Industrial Technologies
Jessie	Faculty Member/General Education
Joan	Faculty Member/Business Technologies
Melanie	Academic Affairs Administration
Phillip	Academic Affairs Administration
Trevor	Academic Affairs Administration

Data Collection

Merriam (2009) stated that data collection is about asking, watching, and reviewing bits of information found in the environment. Using multiple methods for collecting data "helps to uncover meaning, develop understanding, and discover insights relevant to the research problem" (Merriam, 2009, p. 86). Data collection methods are the means to answering the research questions, and using multiple collection methods allows you to gain broader

[2] Pseudonyms are used to mask the identity of the team members.

understanding of the subject (Maxwell, 2005). Table 4 reflects the multiple data sources collected as well as the collection time period.

Table 4
Data Collection Timeline

Data Sources	Timeline
Current Public Community College documents and processes	June 2011 – February 2012
Action research team meetings	June 2012 – September 2013
Questionnaire results	November 2012
Evaluation instrument finalized	May 2013
Observations and post-observation interviews	June 2013 – August 2013
Action research team interviews	September 2013
Field notes and researcher memos	Ongoing throughout study

Documents

Initially, the data collection process involved the research, utilization, and recording of data from the college's faculty handbooks, employee handbook, organizational structure, accreditation documents, and current evaluation instruments. Following the acquisition of the college's data, the action research team analyzed the information to determine how instructional quality was defined and what criteria were used to assess instructional quality. The recent accreditation reaffirmation document for Public Community College was also reviewed to gather information concerning faculty evaluation.

Questionnaire

"If the college or campus wishes to revise its procedure for evaluating teaching, the administration needs to engage faculty in the revision process" (Seldin, 1999, p. 201). One approach taken to engage faculty in the revision process of assessing instructional quality was the dissemination of a questionnaire (Appendix B). The questionnaire was distributed to all full-time and part-time faculty members, totaling 270 individuals. In addition, 11 staff members

within the academic affairs division of the college received an invitation to complete the questionnaire. The two-item questionnaire asked:

1. How do you define effective teaching?
2. In your opinion, what are the competencies associated with instructional quality?

I had the responsibility of collecting the responses to the questionnaire. Once the results were received, I placed the data in a spreadsheet by identifying the position of the respondent (administrator, faculty, full-time or adjunct). The discipline of the faculty was also identified. The disciplines included business technologies, general education, health technologies, industrial technologies, and public service technologies. The discipline was included to determine if there were any differences in defining instructional quality in one division of the college as compared to another division based on the stakeholder's position.

The team reviewed the results of the questionnaire and developed a list of themes focusing on instructional quality. The themed results were added to the research crosswalk created during the literature review. This crosswalk reflected each academic source that had been reviewed, referencing the performance competencies associated with instructional quality. This crosswalk was utilized by the action research team in the creation of the evaluation instrument.

Observations

In order to pilot the new instrument, observations were scheduled with ten faculty members. Five of the subjects served on the action research team while the remaining five members were new to the study. I was the designated observer. I worked with faculty members of the pilot group in allowing each to select the class they wished for me to observe. Prior to the observation, the instrument was shared and reviewed with faculty members in order to

familiarize them with the instrument being utilized and the performance competencies for which their instruction would be measured. In addition to the observation, the syllabi and course standards were reviewed by the observer. Following the observation, an interview was conducted with each faculty member. Specific questions were asked of each member in reference to the observed class. These questions included:

1. How would you assess today's class?
2. What was the best thing about today's lesson?
3. What would you change?
4. What do you think students learned?
5. Utilizing observation, how best can instructional quality be assessed?

A part of effective teaching is a teacher's reflective practice (Stronge, 2007). Reflective practice is the careful review of one's own teaching process and was the focus of the questions following the interview. Stronge (2007) stated, "thoughtful questions generated by research can guide teachers in reflecting on practice. Indeed, reflective practices are crucial for lifelong learning and a professional necessity" (p. 31). The interview sessions provided an opportunity for exploration of what actually occurred in class as compared to what was intended. Further details concerning the data generated through reflective practice is provided in Chapter 5.

Action Research Team Meetings

With the permission of team members, each action research team meeting was recorded. These recordings, generally one hour in length, were transcribed and the qualitative data analyzed. In planning the team meeting, members were sent an email asking them to participate in the meeting at a specific date and time at a common location at the sponsor site. I prepared

the meeting materials and, in many cases, emailed these documents in advance of the meeting to allow time for review.

Interviews

At the conclusion of the research study, interviews were conducted with each action research team member. The purpose for these interviews was to collect data regarding their participation on the action research team and their learning throughout the process. Each interview was conducted at the site and were scheduled at the convenience of the team member.

Field Notes and Researcher Memos

Throughout the study, the researcher made notes following stakeholder and team meetings, observations, and interviews. These notes referenced my thoughts about actions taken, comments made, frustrations expressed by participants, and those that I felt. In most cases, these notes were handwritten, but in some cases, when pen and paper were not available, a recorder was used.

Multiple methods of data collection were used during this study. These methods, as reviewed above, included the review of current documents, a questionnaire, observations, action research team meetings, interviews, and researcher memos. A summary of the research plan which includes the data collected and the analysis approach is presented in Table 5.

Table 5
Research Plan

Research Question	Data Collected/Reviewed	Analysis Approach
How is instructional quality defined by college stakeholders?	• Current Public Community College documents • Current Public Community College processes • Research literature	• Familiarization of the data; constant review of information, writing notations • Coding data through alignment of
What essential competencies are necessary to ensure instructional quality?	• Public Community College questionnaire • Research literature	

Research Question	Data Collected/Reviewed	Analysis Approach
What elements should be included on an observation performance evaluation instrument that measures instruction quality?	• Interviews – faculty and action research team members • Action research team meetings • Evaluation instrument • Research literature	similar information • Constant comparative analysis
In what ways does the development of a performance evaluation process, through an action research approach at a community college, inform and improve instructional quality?	• Interviews – Faculty and action research team members • Action research team meetings • Field notes and researcher memos	

Data Analysis

The goal of data analysis is the process of making sense out of the data (Merriam, 2009). "And, making sense out of the data involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read—it is the process of making meaning (p. 176). When addressing data analysis, Miles and Huberman (1994) stated, "analysis is an ongoing, lively enterprise that contributes to the energizing process of fieldwork" (p. 50). For this study, I followed the model of data analysis that included the steps of data preparation, familiarization, coding, and generating meaning (Ruona, 2005).

Data Preparation

The preparation of data for this study involved transcribing all the meetings, interviews, and audio recordings. Names and identifiable information were removed, and pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of team members and the sponsor site. Each professionally transcribed document was saved as a separate file in Microsoft Word. The data were prepared and organized in a uniform format. The constant comparative method of analysis was the approach used to analyze each data set. "The constant comparative method involves comparing one segment of data with another to determine similarities and differences (Merriam, 2009, p. 30). In order to compare the data, I elected to utilize a software package, HyperRESEARCH, to

assist in the coding and organization of my data. HyperRESEARCH allowed me to select a section of text, create a code, link the text to the code, and provided multiple reports to review the data associated with each code. Additionally, HyperRESEARCH permitted me to group codes together as well as build theories utilizing the individual codes and/or groups. If at any time I needed to rename a code, HyperRESEARCH allowed me to do so easily, ensuring that the code was renamed in each case. I found that utilizing this software package to assist in my data preparation for analysis allowed me the opportunity to "play" with the data as I made meaning from it.

Data Familiarization

Becoming familiar with the data involves immersing yourself in the data much more deeply (Ruona, 2005). During this stage, the transcripts of team meetings and interviews were read repeatedly. The crosswalk created from the questionnaire and the literature was reviewed and comments noted. For each review, additional notations were made in the margins. Transcripts were re-read, and the actual audio pieces were listened to multiple times in order to gain additional comments that may not have been appropriately transcribed.

Data Coding

The first step taken toward organizing information into meaningful categories was data coding (Ruona, 2005). Each transcript was read, and data categorized into general categories. This process led to the development of a code list that was then loaded into HyperRESEARCH. A case was created within HyperRESEARCH for each research question. I then opened each source document (interviews and meeting transcripts) and coded the information utilizing the initial code list. As I progressed through each source document, I found that I needed to develop additional codes to reflect the themes emerging and merge some of the initial codes into groups.

This process reduced the data into a more simple form. Figure 3 represents a typical coding window within HyperRESEARCH.

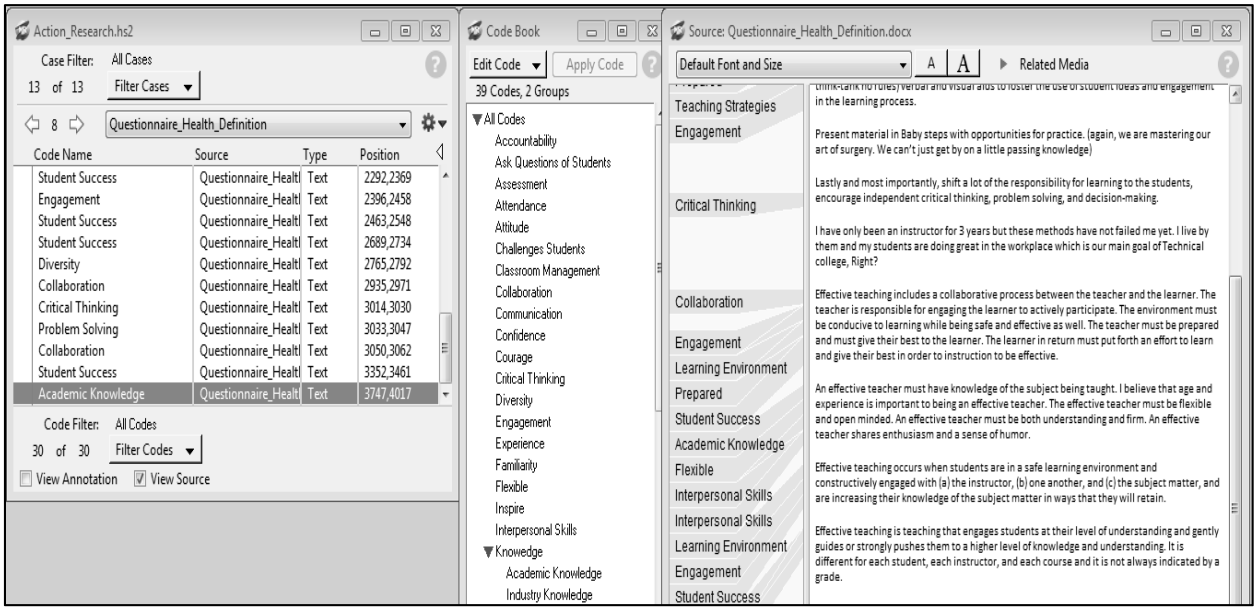

Figure 3
Data Coding Scheme

Generating Meaning

The final step in the analysis involved interpretation of the data and generating meaning from what was seen and learned (Ruona, 2005). "Your aim is to engage in the creative and intellectual work of exploring how the themes that have emerged are connected to each other as well as how they may be connected to ideas you have, the literature, prior research, and so on" (Ruona, 2005, p. 245). After coding each source, I utilized the report builder feature in HyperRESEARCH to create a document for each code. This process included selecting all of the codes associated with each of the research questions; then exporting the code data to a document. This was repeated for each research question. In addition to the report builder feature, I also utilized features such as the Frequency Report. These reports were studied and allowed me to make meaningful conclusions.

Data Reporting

There are various approaches and ways of organizing and presenting study reports. The contents of study reports depend on the audience and the purpose of conducting the research (Merriam, 2009). The primary audiences for this study were the college stakeholders, specifically the faculty and academic administrators. The approach selected for this study was to provide a descriptive narrative while integrating commentary experienced during the process. In Chapter 1, I introduced the study and identified the problem as well as presented the conceptual framework guiding the study. Chapter 2 presented the research reviewed for the improvement of instructional quality through performance evaluation. In this chapter, I presented the research methodology, how the data were collected and analyzed, and practices taken to ensure trustworthiness. In Chapter 4, I provide my perspective of events in the study as they unfolded. Chapter 5 includes the findings that emerged during data analysis. Finally, in Chapter 6, I offer conclusions and implications for practice based on findings from this study. Following analysis of the data, the findings and the conclusions of the study were presented to not only the action research team members but the senior administrator of Public Community College as well.

Trustworthiness of the Data

Stringer (2007) stated, "rigor in action research is based on checks to ensure that the outcomes of research are trustworthy – that they do not merely reflect the particular perspectives, biases, or worldview of the researcher and that they are not based solely on superficial or simplistic analyses of the issues investigated" (p. 57). Guba and Lincoln (1988) detailed four attributes that can be established to ensure rigor in action research. These attributes include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The following sections review

each of the attributes and offer the checks taken to ensure that the outcomes of this research are trustworthy.

Credibility

Credibility, also known as validity, is established through the integrity of the processes taken in action research (Stringer, 2007). Validity is approached through careful attention to a study's conceptualization and the way in which the data are collected, analyzed, interpreted, and the results presented (Merriam, 2009). A strategy used most often in qualitative research to address validity is triangulation. The use of multiple data sources in this study allowed for triangulation of the data collected. These sources included the research literature, the questionnaire results, minutes from action research team meetings, and the audio recordings of each interview session following the observation sessions. I routinely engaged in member checks with the action research team members to ensure their input was accurately portrayed. Periodic updates were also provided to the senior administration of the college to ensure their continued support of the study's purpose. Maxwell (2005) explained that the strategy of triangulation "reduces the risk that your conclusions will reflect only the systematic biases or limitations of a specific source or method" (p. 93). By using the various sources of data and different methods of collecting the data, the conclusions of this study should have "far more credibility than if it had been limited to one source or method" (Maxwell, 2005, p. 94).

Transferability

Merriam (2009) stated that the contents of study reports depend on the audience and the purpose of conducting the research. Therefore, the outcomes are unique to the people and location involved in the study. However, the transferability of the contents can be accomplished through a detailed, richly descriptive study report. This chapter provides a detailed account of

the methodology and actions taken for this study. A summary of the findings and conclusions drawn from the study are provided in Chapter 6.

Dependability

Providing research procedures that were clearly defined and open to scrutiny is a basis for dependability (Stringer, 2007). Reliability in qualitative research refers to the results being dependable, ensuring the results are consistent with the data collected (Merriam, 2009). Merriam (2009) goes on to say "if the findings of a study are consistent with the data presented, the study can be considered dependable" (p. 222). The strategies taken in this study to ensure consistency and dependability included the utilization of a team for taking action and reviewing documents, examination of the data and results by the participants of the study, and utilizing multiple methods of data collection.

Confirmability

Confirmability is achieved by providing evidence that the procedures actually took place (Stringer, 2007). This study took a team approach that allowed for checks and balances when it came to actions that occurred. Minutes of the meetings were kept and were available for review. In addition to the meeting minutes, other documents were produced including the crosswalk, which provided the literature reviewed as well as the internal questionnaire results; audio recordings of meeting and interviews; and the evaluation instrument, which included the aids for use. These artifacts serve as confirmation of the processes and actions implemented in the study to ensure trustworthiness.

The following table summarizes each of the attributes and offers the actions taken to ensure that the outcomes of this study are trustworthy.

Table 6
Trustworthiness Procedures

Attributes	**Defined**	**Procedures**
Credibility	Integrity of the study and the processes taken	-Team approach -Multiple stakeholders -Data triangulation
Transferability	Transferring the processes taken for a study into a detailed, descriptive narrative	-Methodology -Data collection and analysis -Member checks
Dependability	Research procedures clearly defined and open to scrutiny	-Utilization of a team -Various stakeholders involved -Transparency of procedures and examination of data and the results -Multiple methods of data collection
Confirmability	Evidence that the procedures actually took place	-Team approach -Minutes of meetings -Documentation available for review -Multiple stakeholders

Limitations of the Study

Action research has its advantages and disadvantages. One such limitation for utilizing an action research method includes the perception that the data collected cannot necessarily be generalized to a greater audience since it is unique to the organization in which it occurred. As noted in the section on Transferability, detailed earlier in this chapter, this limitation is addressed through the publication of the contents in a detailed, richly descriptive report.

Another limitation of action research is its use of the small sample size of faculty included in the pilot group. Merriam (2009) stated, "a typical sample would be one that is selected because it reflects the average person, situation, or instance of the phenomenon of interest" (p. 78). The faculty selected for the pilot reflected each division of the college representing the average faculty member from each area of expertise. With the broad representation of faculty from the varied divisions, the study reflects the average faculty, their

situations as they relate to their responsibilities and curriculum, and the various interests associated with the varied divisions.

Another limitation of this study was the inability to measure the improvement of instructional quality over a longer period of time. Future studies may seek to conduct a longitudinal study over an extended period of time in order to measure multiple cycles of performance to assess levels of improvement. Additionally, it would be my expectation that the competencies researched and included on the observation instrument would also be used on other instruments within the evaluation system, such as the supervisor's instrument as well as the self-evaluation and student instruments, to ensure a consistent manner of measurement across all instruments.

A final limitation addresses the concern for researcher bias. A criticism for the utilization of an action research method is that the researcher is also a stakeholder with a vested interest in outcomes, which implies a bias. The researcher must ensure trustworthiness of the data. In addition to the methods taken to ensure trustworthiness, the researcher's positionality and subjectivity must be addressed to provide another means of transparency of the research. The following section offers this researcher's positionality and subjectivity statement.

Researcher Positionality

This study allowed me to practice research in action. Working with an action research team, I was challenged with leading change within the organization. The instructional content of my doctoral studies forced me to step outside of my "comfort zone" and view the study not only through a practitioner's lens but through a theoretical lens as well. Working in partnership with the action research team allowed me to not only practice action research but I was able to identify the theory that drove the practice.

My primary role within this study was as an internal consultant/participant researcher and an advocate for change in this research and procedural effort. These roles were influenced by my positionality at the sponsor site as a senior-level manager. My responsibilities within the college include focusing on institutional effectiveness and accountability. Fortunately, my position requires that I work with all divisions of the college and with many of the employees. Through this study, my position was an asset as well as a limitation. For the most part, my position was an asset to the study as I was not a "new face" asking for information. On the other hand, because I am an administrator, there was an instance of my position being viewed as just another administrator "poking around" in faculty "business" and asking questions about how instruction is provided.

As an internal consultant to this study, I possessed knowledge of the organizational structure and many of the policies and procedures already established at the college. Herr and Anderson (2005) state that the insider's positionality, in collaboration with other insiders, contributes to the knowledge base and improved practice as well as contributing to professional/organizational transformation. My positionality, along with the other members of the action research team, contributed to the knowledge base and informed practice at Public Community College. Through the action research process, the membership was able to inform the performance evaluation process with not only the academic literature but the results of internal research and documentation as well.

CHAPTER 4

CONTEXT AND CHRONOLOGY

The purpose for this study was to use an action research approach as a means to explore, inform, assess, and improve instructional quality. Four primary research questions provided the foundation to accomplish the purpose of this study. The research questions included:

1. How is instructional quality defined by college stakeholders?
2. What essential competencies are necessary to ensure instructional quality?
3. What elements should be included on an observation performance evaluation instrument that measures instruction quality?
4. In what ways does the development of a performance evaluation process, through an action research approach at a community college, inform and improve instructional quality?

This chapter unfolds the action research project. It starts with an overview of the study's research design and overall chronology. Then it describes the context and the client system. This is followed by course of events occurring throughout the study which represents the multiple cycles of action research.

Overview of Research Design

The research study was approved by the University of Georgia's Institutional Review Board (Appendix C). As an overview of the research design, entry was made into the system as an internal consultant/participant researcher in early 2012. Prior to entering the full system as a participant researcher, an initial meeting was conducted with the college president in June 2011

to ensure support from the college as well as secure a letter of consent (Appendix D) from the sponsor site. In spring 2012, meetings with the organization were held, and participants for the action research team were recruited. Team members participated in answering a questionnaire, assisted with the development of a research literature crosswalk, and adapted a performance observation instrument. In addition, the faculty members participated in the pilot. Finally, action research team members as well as the faculty affiliated with the pilot group participated in interviews. An overview of the research design and intervention chronology is presented in the following table.

Table 7
Intervention Chronology

Timeline	**Action Steps**
June 2011 – February 2012	• Entered organization as an internal consultant/participant researcher • Review of current policies, procedures, processes, and instruments
March 2012 – April 2012	• Meetings with the organization o Discussed expectations o Clarified roles o Developed timeline o Explored issues related to study o Discussed goals and objectives
May 2012	• Recruited study participants – faculty and administrators
June 2012 – October 2012	• Action research team meetings to review literature on evaluation sources and selection of methods to utilize • Introduction of various evaluation systems • Distribution of literature on competencies associated with exemplary instruction • Development of crosswalk
October 2012	• Questionnaire distributed to Public Community College faculty and selected administrators
November 2012	• Finalized crosswalk of competencies, literature and questionnaire results • Reviewed observation instruments
December 2012 – May 2013	• Action research team meetings for the selection of an observation instrument • Adapted instructional aids for utilizing instruments

Timeline	Action Steps
June 2013 – August 2013	• Conducted observations (utilizing new instrument) with pilot group of faculty – five serving on the action research team; five not on the development team • Post-interview observation interviews • Conducted exit interviews with faculty participants • Conducted exit interviews with AR team

Description of the Context

The researcher first approached the client system in early 2011. Over the next two years, the researcher and client system experienced multiple cycles of action research. The action research cycle included constructing, planning, actions, and evaluation. I will detail how the process of constructing was undertaken, how planning flowed from the action of construction, how actions followed and were implemented, and how evaluation was conducted (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010).

Client System

The setting for this study was Public Community College. Public Community College is a public, multi-campus, two-year institution. Public Community College offers occupational and technical programs leading to associate degrees, diplomas, and technical certificates of credit. Public Community College also provides the community with economic development, workforce development, customized business and industry training, continuing education, personal enrichment programs, and adult education services that support the educational, economic, and community development of the area citizens, communities, and companies.

Public Community College practices an open admissions policy. The admissions process consists of the evaluation of prior academic experience and assessment for postsecondary readiness of eligible applicants. Academic year 2012 enrollment for Public Community College totaled 8,822 students. The student population of Public Community College is comprised of

approximately 35% male and 65% female. The two largest ethnic groups represented are white, which reflects 80.8% of the student population, and black, which constitutes 12.2% of the student population. The age groups with the largest number of students are the under 21 category and the 21 to 25 category, which collectively represent 52.8% of the student population.

Carrying out the college's mission of providing high-quality education to citizens in our region has become more difficult each year. The college's budget has decreased each year since 2009. State funding has decreased by 17.6% while enrollment has increased. In addition to budget constraints, new state initiatives focusing on enrollment, graduation, and placement numbers support the need for an increased focus on accountability to ensure that the services that we offer meet the needs of our citizens as well as meeting the quality benchmarks set by state and accrediting officials.

With the growth of new challenges associated with accountability, accreditation, and budgeting, the role of current faculty and staff has expanded. The relationships and communication between faculty and administrators is essential. Public Community College can use the talents, networks, and skills of the faculty and staff to assist in developing policies, procedures, and evaluation systems that address the growing challenges and opportunities. With the realization of shrinking budgets and increased accountability, the administration of Public Community College, key stakeholders of this study, found value in this study as it sought to develop new procedures through the collaboration of faculty and staff with a focus on better accountability and increased quality.

Action Research Team Members

The involvement of action research team members was critical for choosing the interventions, selecting a performance evaluation instrument, gathering data, and discerning the

implications from the study. The strategies for enhancing support included constant and continuous communication, respect for an individual's time, understanding the current evaluation process, and listening to each individual as he or she provided input in defining quality instruction and ideas for evaluation instruments.

With the focus of this study being in the area of instructional quality, participation by faculty and academic affairs personnel was vital. Administrative members of the action research team included the vice president of academic affairs, associate vice president of academic affairs, and an academic dean. Together, these members represent 36 years of experience with Public Community College.

Faculty representation on the team reflected the five divisions of academic affairs. Within the business technologies division, there are eight associate degree programs, eight diploma programs, and 30 certificate programs. Joan, a program director and instructor on several of the campuses of Public Community College, has been at the college for 16 years. The general education division was represented by Jessie. Jessie, an instructor and division chair, has been employed at Public Community College since 2000 and teaches on multiple campuses. In the area of health technologies, Public Community College offers 13 associate degree programs, eight diploma programs, and 12 certificate programs. Amanda, an employee at Public Community College since 2011, represented the health technologies division. Dave, with the industrial technologies division, has been at Public Community College since 2005. Within the industrial technologies division, there are seven degree programs, 18 diploma programs, and 40 certificate programs. A faculty member from the public service technologies division served on the action research team. Betsey, employed since 2000, participated on the team. The public

service technologies division offers five associate degree programs, seven diploma programs, and 21 certificate programs.

Each of these members was selected for participation based on their role at Public Community College and their years of experience at the college. Each individual has participated in the current evaluation process multiple times and has also been involved in the college's accreditation, and, in some instances, programmatic accreditation process. Following the explanation of the action research process, each team member signed an IRB-approved participant consent (Appendix E).

Story and Outcomes

Action research focuses on research in action. This story is positioned in an organization of which I, the researcher, am a stakeholder as well. From the beginning, this study focused on action through the involvement of others in the decision making process and them making recommendations as to the direction of the study as it related to assessment and improvement of instructional quality. The action research cycles taken in the study are identified and discussed in the following sections.

Construction

Construction of this study began in early 2011 and was informed by my doctoral studies focusing on action research. At the time, Public Community College was preparing for a decennial reaffirmation by our regional accrediting agency. In preparation for reaffirmation, Public Community College conducted a compliance audit that focused on potential compliance issues such as faculty competence, faculty evaluation, and faculty development. Due to the growing reliance on adjunct faculty in higher education, this study began with the focus on ensuring that instructional quality was provided by adjunct faculty as compared to full-time

faculty. After reviewing the literature and discussing the focus of the study with college administrators, it soon became evident that ensuring quality instruction should include all faculty, part-time and full-time.

With whom? Following Schien's (1988) process of entering a group, two questions were considered: with whom and for what purpose? Focusing on the first question, several criteria were considered. The first addressed including personnel with responsibility, authority, and ability to influence the system and others. This criterion was met by initially meeting with the president and inviting him to the initial meeting of the action research team. The next criterion for consideration involved inviting those invested in the topic. The vice president of academic affairs, associate vice president of academic affairs, an academic dean, and faculty were the individuals involved in early discussions and stated their interest in proceeding with the study as action research team members. Schein (1988) stated that individuals that perceive a specific set of problems or symptoms that require attention should be included in the exploratory meeting. All of the individuals invited to the meeting had an interest in ensuring the college is providing quality instruction. The final criterion considered was inviting someone to the meeting that was familiar with the action research process. In my position as team leader, it was my role to share knowledge of action research and the literature related to the topic.

For what purpose? Schein's next question for consideration when entering a site is to determine and communicate the purpose. Initial team meetings focused on understanding the problem, gauging the involvement of the participants, discussing current processes, and formulating the next action steps for the study. Anderson (2010) explained that part of the process is for the parties to "discuss mutual expectations, clarify roles, and set expectations about the work to be done" (p. 105).

Initial conversations were conducted with the president of the college. The increasing accountability of ensuring quality instruction in each course was a growing concern with the administration of the college. The conversation with the president took several avenues of possible research and uncovered multiple areas for focus and discussion. These areas included the growing dependence of part-time faculty as compared to full-time faculty, the quality of distance education courses, learning support courses, and overall instructional quality. Overall, the ability to document the quality of instruction was the common component of the numerous areas discussed. The result of the conversation was his guarantee of support and his willingness to participate in future conversations.

During the construction phase, the purpose of the study was refined through discussions with the president and other administrative members. Team members were selected and their involvement realized. Participants of the study pledged to provide input and honest feedback as the conversations and actions focused around instructional quality and performance evaluation.

Planning and Action

Coghlan and Brannick (2010) stated, "doing action research in your own organization is political" (p. 127). Action research fosters courage, incites action, examines everything, emphasizes questioning, stresses listening, supports reflection, and endorses democratic participation (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010). The political issue was highlighted not only by focusing on quality but also asking questions of administration about how quality is assessed. Utilizing faculty and administration on the action research team helped to address the political issue, but the topic itself was political due to the presumed indication that quality was being questioned. The following table details the planning and action Public Community College

experienced. The action research process at Public Community College has experienced each of the characteristics mentioned by Coghlan and Brannick and is reflected in the following table.

Table 8
Organizational Action Research

Action	**Public Community College**
Fosters Courage	With the senior administration's support and encouragement, the action research team understood that there was a need for change in the area of faculty evaluation. An obstacle addressed on more than one occasion was the question concerning the use of results. In order for the team to support the work, conversations were held addressing the "why bother" question. A team member, Trevor, raised the concern of focusing on evaluation changes when there was no monetary award for faculty that proved outstanding instructional quality on an evaluation instrument—old or new. He stated, "there has to be a value placed on an exemplary evaluation or there is no incentive to do better." With no immediate solution concerning the current budget constraints, action research team members agreed to consider other options for awarding exemplary instruction. "We all understand the budget situation but there are other forms of rewards that could be considered by the college to encourage continuous improvement" stated Joan. The team fostered courage through their commitment in utilizing an evaluation source focusing on the assessment and improvement of instructional quality.
Incites Action	There were three interventions implemented with the understanding that following each intervention analysis of the results and further action were required. The end goal was to have a means to which the college could measure and assess instructional quality and use the process for the improvement of instructional quality. Trevor stated, "Through a collaborative effort, an evaluation process can be created that is general enough to be used for many people but specific enough to cover each specific area."
Examines Everything	The examination process involved the research, utilization, and recording of data from the college's faculty handbooks, employee handbook, organizational structure, accreditation documents, and current evaluation instruments. Melanie, a college administrator, stated, "Many of the instruments used were created by people that may have never been in the classroom. They just don't understand, and so I really like this process of everyone coming together and having some say into the process; really talking about it and giving a real good give and take."

Action	Public Community College
Emphasizes Questioning	One of the initial steps in the study was to "question" the current evaluation process administered at Public Community College. Judy stated, "Sometimes I wonder why we do performance evaluations. To me, there is no link between the performance evaluation process and improving instructional quality." The questions asked did not always produce answers that were understood by the members of the team. For instance, there was not a valid reason as to why the three evaluation instruments were selected other than the process had been conducted in that manner year after year. Public Community College performs annual evaluations of work performance of faculty, staff, and administrators. These evaluations are conducted in the spring of each year. Faculty are evaluated utilizing three instruments: self-evaluation, supervisor evaluation (including an observation piece), and student/course evaluations.
Stresses Listening	Following the dissemination and completion of the questionnaire, it was then the team's responsibility to "listen" to the responses. The act of listening was an instrumental part of this process. Team members stressed the importance of the administration listening to the faculty in the selection of an instrument and process that focused on providing useful information that would assist them in strengthening their instruction. Trevor stated, "By using a collaborative effort there should be enough input from all stakeholders so everything is covered and the evaluation is not biased towards or against any person or program."
Supports Reflection	Not only was reflection a part of the action research process through the analysis and reflection of the data, but team members also utilized reflection as a way to view competencies. Dave stated, "Review of the competencies keeps me on track as far as what I need to make sure I accomplish as a faculty member." Since many of the members serve as faculty or had at one time served in that capacity, reflection of the classroom teaching experience was a necessary process when considering the competencies associated with instructional quality. Andy stated, "Through reflection of the competencies, you think about how you do things in class and for what reasons you are doing them. It makes you stop and analyze your methods for how you teach."
Endorses Democratic Participation	Without the democratic participation of the action research team members, Public Community College would have created an evaluation instrument that included hundreds of competencies. Not all team members agreed on each competency or the way in which the competencies were

Action	Public Community College
	defined. One example of the democratic process was the conversation of interpersonal skills. Betsey stated, "I think the only problem, or the biggest problem with this whole category is that it's not a measurable. It's not something that you can look at and say it's measurable. So, it's going to be a biased opinion." The process taken was that each competency area was reviewed allowing for feedback and questions to be shared with the action research team members. Edits to the instrument were made based on the team's input. Jessie stated, "Well, it's going to be difficult to develop an instrument that does everything you want it to do without it being 50 pages long and I think the way that we have condensed it in what is presented is probably close to the best way that it's going to be."

During the planning and action phase, an action research team member, Trevor, asked the following question, "Do you think there is an institution that does not complete an evaluation? My basis is that a good instructor is a good instructor no matter if they are evaluated or not." This question required the team to pause and re-examine the purpose for the study, which was to explore, inform, assess, and improve instructional quality. Although performance evaluation was questioned, the overall purpose was to improve instructional quality. The question was addressed in such a way as to "listen" to the various perspectives of the team members. One perspective was improving instructional quality only when a complaint was made. Although this perspective provides an opportunity for improvement, it only addresses a select few faculty members and fails to document the quality of instruction for the remaining faculty members. This "pause" in the planning and action process was a critical incident in that a simple question brought the attention of team members' focus back to the purpose of the study and provided a learning experience for the group to openly discuss instructional quality and the ability and need for assessment.

This study included three interventions: the review of literature and dissemination of a questionnaire; the selection of a performance evaluation instrument; and the observation of a pilot group of faculty in their instructional environment utilizing the new instrument. Figure 4 reflects the interventions concept.

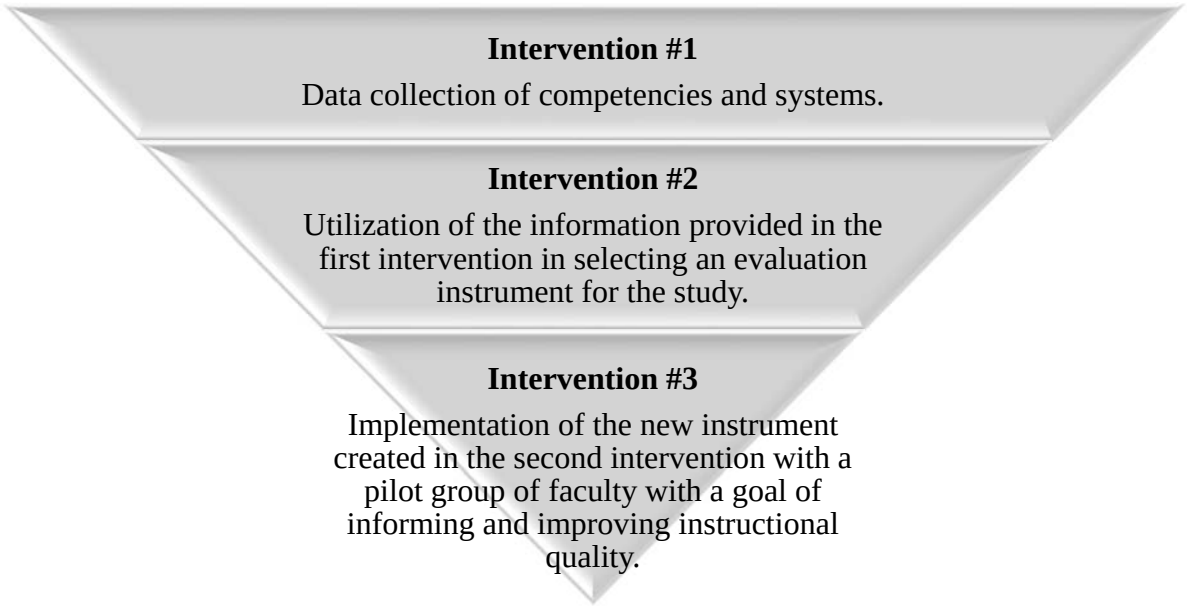

Figure 4
Interventions Concept

One step in the first intervention was to define teaching effectiveness and list the competencies associated with instructional quality. This was accomplished through the dissemination of a questionnaire to staff within the office of academic affairs and faculty (full-time and adjunct) regarding instructional quality. The two-item questionnaire asked:

1. How do you define effective teaching?
2. In your opinion, what are the competencies associated with instructional quality?

A crosswalk was then created that aligned the competencies found in the literature reviewing secondary and postsecondary evaluation systems along with the results from the internal questionnaire.

Following the determination of the competencies, a literature review was conducted on the various evaluation sources. The development of the crosswalk linking the competencies detailed in the research literature with the results of the internal questionnaire was beneficial in the creation of the evaluation instrument. Since the results of the internal questionnaire aligned with the research literature, the action research team "owned" the results and was receptive in creating an instrument supported by academic literature. The action research team elected to adapt observation procedures developed by James H. Stronge (2010) found in the Teacher Keys Evaluation System since it most closely utilized competencies identified through the first intervention of the action research study. Furthermore, the selection of the Stronge document was based on the structure of the instrument that included not only the competencies but a rubric tool as well. These research-based standards for assessing teacher excellence were the foundation of the Teacher Keys Evaluation System recently implemented with a pilot group of secondary school systems. The instrument (Appendix F) was adapted by the action research team for postsecondary use.

The source selected for this study was the observation portion of the college's overall evaluation system. The reason for this selection was based on the request of academic affairs. Recently, the student/course evaluation and the supervisor evaluation were assessed and changes made. The evaluation source that had not been reviewed since implementation was the observation portion of Public Community College's evaluation system. Based on this direct need, the observation piece was selected as the instrument for this study.

The second intervention involved the selection of a performance evaluation instrument. The action research team adapted an evaluation instrument developed by Stronge (2010). This instrument, found in the Teacher Keys Evaluation System, utilized competencies found on the

crosswalk. The selection of the Stronge (2010) document was based on the organization of the instrument. Each competency, also known as performance standard, was defined. In addition to the standard, sample indicators were provided. These were quality indicators that an observer may witness during an instructor's performance. A rubric is also included for each performance competency. This rubric has a rating scale ranging from *Did Not Observe* (0) to *Exemplary* (4). The performance competencies and the definitions selected for the Public Community College observation instrument are reflected in Table 9.

Table 9
Performance Competencies

Performance Competencies	**Definitions**
Assessment	The instructor gathers, analyzes, and uses data to measure student progress, guide instruction, and provide timely feedback.
Communication	The instructor communicates effectively with students in ways that enhance student learning.
Instructional Planning	The instructor plans—using state curricula and standards—effective instructional strategies, resources, and data to address the needs of all students.
Instructional Strategies	The instructor promotes student learning by addressing individual learning differences and by using effective instructional strategies.
Learning Environment	The instructor provides a well-managed, safe, orderly, student-centered environment that is conducive to learning, academically challenging, and encourages respect for all.
Professional Knowledge	The instructor demonstrates an understanding of the curriculum and subject content.

The first draft of the newly created Public Community College observation evaluation instrument included the performance competency of professionalism. Professionalism was defined as, "the instructor participates in professional growth opportunities to support student learning and contributes to the profession." During a meeting of the action research team, it was determined that many of the quality indicators were not observable in a classroom setting. This performance

competency was not appropriate for the observation instrument, therefore, it was deleted from the evaluation source.

Another change to the first draft was the removal of the performance competency identifying interpersonal skills. The conversation of the action research team centered around an evaluator's ability to observe many of the competencies such as integrity, hard-worker, compassionate, interesting, and so forth. One member, Amanda, made the following statement that led to the committee's agreement to remove the standard from the observation instrument.

> I think the only problem, or the biggest problem, with this whole category is that it's not measurable [during an observation]. It's not something that you can look at and say it's measurable. So, it's going to be a biased opinion. Whoever is the one looking at it, it's going to be their opinion of, "Are they compassionate?"

The third intervention was implemented summer semester, 2013. Utilizing the instrument selected in the second intervention, this intervention involved the evaluation of instruction of ten faculty members representing the five divisions at Public Community College.

I conducted the evaluation, which, in addition to the observation, involved a post observation interview with the participating faculty member. In preparation for the observation, I contacted the faculty members requesting permission to enter the class of their choice. With the faculty members participating on the action research team, no further explanation was needed. For the five members not serving on the team, an explanation of the process was provided along with the evaluation instrument and a consent form (Appendix G). Ten observations were scheduled over a two-week period. Each observation, which lasted approximately two hours, was followed by an interview with the faculty member. Each interview was professionally transcribed and the information coded for analysis.

Evaluation

Each intervention fed the next cycle of action research. The first intervention provided the data for the team to adapt the evaluation instrument, which was the second intervention. The final intervention utilized the evaluation instrument, formed from the information revealed in the first intervention. Within each intervention, the cycles of action research were evident. The below table reflects each intervention and the action cycle that took place within each.

Table 10
Action Research Cycles

Intervention	Constructing	Planning Action	Taking Action	Evaluating Action
#1	Collection of literature on instructional quality competencies and evaluation systems.	Selection of appropriate literature and determination of questions for Public Community College faculty and administrators.	Dissemination of questionnaire.	Development of crosswalk between questionnaire results and research literature for use in Intervention #2.
#2	Review of current evaluation instruments used at Public Community College and the collection of literature on current instruments used in education.	Determination that the evaluation source for this study would be the observation piece of the overall evaluation system.	Aligning the information provided in the crosswalk to the observation evaluation instrument currently used in secondary education.	Selection of a new performance evaluation instrument for use in the third intervention.
#3	Sharing the new evaluation instrument with faculty and administrators, and providing information about	Scheduling observation and interviews.	Conducting observations and interviews with faculty.	Utilizing data retrieved during the observations and interviews to inform and improve instructional quality.

Intervention	Constructing	Planning Action	Taking Action	Evaluating Action
	the observation process.			

As detailed in Table 10, each intervention was made up of individual action research cycles. From a broader perspective, the study can be viewed as one large cycle. The first intervention was constructing action by providing the information necessary for the other phases. The planning action phase involved the selection and adaptation of the instrument itself while the third intervention (taking action) was the utilization of the instrument with the pilot group of faculty followed by the interview sessions. The evaluation phase was the analysis of the observation and interview data.

Conclusion

The purpose for this study was to use an action research approach as a means to explore, inform, assess, and improve instructional quality. The three interventions sought to realize the purpose. Through the work of the action research team, the faculty and administration worked in collaboration to define instructional quality and to determine the essential observable competencies for ensuring instructional quality. In addition to the faculty serving on the action research team, other members of faculty agreed to be observed and provided their input as it related to the observation, the performance evaluation process, and instructional quality. The efforts of the action research team, along with additional faculty, led to a better understanding of instructional quality and initiated a change in the way instructional quality is viewed at the college.

The next action to be taken by Public Community College is the alignment of the evaluation sources with the instructional quality competencies determined through this study. The supervisor evaluation as well as the self-evaluation and student evaluation instruments

should measure these competencies. By aligning the evaluation sources, a complete evaluation system can be implemented. Trevor made the following assertion, "It is great that we have adapted an instrument to use in the faculty observation but we now need to ensure that all of our evaluation sources align. The competencies we determined as essential for instructional quality should be reflected on the other instruments to ensure we are truly assessing instructional quality." The full implementation of the observation instrument and post interview process at Public Community College will follow training and instrument norming sessions for those academic affairs personnel having responsibility for conducting observations.

Beyond Public Community College, the actions of the Public Community College action research team can be duplicated at any community college by seeking input from the key stakeholders, faculty, and administrators. Following the operational framework for this study, the stakeholders have an opportunity to evaluate their current processes and define instructional quality as it relates to their unique institution. The determination of performance competencies will inform their evaluation sources. A key for success is the collaborative effort of the stakeholders participating in the initiative for improving instructional quality through performance evaluation.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND LEARNINGS

The purpose for this study was to use an action research approach as a means to explore, inform, assess, and improve instructional quality. The four primary research questions providing the foundation to accomplish the purpose of this study are as follows (1) How is instructional quality defined by college stakeholders? (2) What essential competencies are necessary to ensure instructional quality? (3) What elements should be included on an observation performance evaluation instrument that measures instruction quality? and (4) In what ways does the development of a performance evaluation process, through an action research approach at a community college, inform and improve instructional quality?

This chapter presents findings from the review of current college documents, questionnaire results, participant observations, and interviews with faculty and staff that participated in the action research study at Public Community College. To protect the identity of team members, names and identifiable information were removed and pseudonyms were used.

Document and Processes Reviewed

A review of the full-time and adjunct faculty manuals disclosed assessments of each instructor's performance, which is performed annually. The manuals stated the purpose of the evaluation was to promote individual and institutional improvement. Evaluations are performed according to the following procedures: self-evaluation, student/course evaluations, and a supervisor evaluation composed of a written document and an observation of the instructor in the classroom. Following completion of the written documentation, an evaluation conference is

conducted. The purpose of the conference is to summarize the evaluation data. Any evaluation item that receives an overall rating of less than three requires an improvement plan.

Analysis of the two forms used during the evaluation process revealed that the supervisor's evaluation includes four sections, one of which focuses on instructional effectiveness. This section includes eight categories with a rating scale from one through five. A rating of one represents unsatisfactory work while a five represents outstanding. Upon further review, there was no additional explanation or detail provided on how each rating was defined.

The reaffirmation document detailed the evaluation process. At the beginning of the spring semester, the faculty member completes the faculty self-evaluation and submits it to the academic dean. The dean reviews the faculty self-evaluation and completes the supervisor evaluation. The dean schedules a meeting with the faculty member to review the results of the self- and supervisor evaluations and the class observation, which can take place any time in the year as long as the class observation is before the date of the evaluation meeting.

The findings of the study are organized by research question with categories and subcategories that emerged during data analysis and are briefly discussed in terms of related literature. Table 11 provides an overview of each research question, categories, and subcategories.

Table 11
Research Findings

Research Question	**Findings**	**Subcategory**
How is instructional quality defined by college stakeholders?	Instructional quality is defined as a collaboration.	• Faculty • Students
	Instructional quality is defined as respecting student diversity.	• Background • Learning styles
	Instructional quality is defined as student success.	• Internal to the college • External to the college

Research Question	Findings	Subcategory
What essential competencies are necessary to ensure instructional quality?	The assessment of student progress is an essential competency for ensuring instructional quality.	• Measures student progress • Guides instruction
	Effective communication with students is an essential competency for ensuring instructional quality.	• Promotes student learning
	Possessing the appropriate interpersonal skills is an essential competency for ensuring instructional quality.	• Appropriate attitudes useful to working with students
	Planning instruction (instructional planning) to address the needs of all students is an essential competency for ensuring instructional quality.	• State curricula and standards
	Utilizing various instructional strategies for addressing learning differences is an essential competency for ensuring instructional quality.	• Individual learning differences
	Providing a positive learning environment that is student-centered is an essential competency for ensuring instructional quality.	• Engaging students • Structure
	Possessing professional knowledge of the subject content is an essential competency for ensuring instructional quality.	• Link present content to past and future learning experiences • Understanding the curriculum and subject content
	Displaying professionalism through the support of student learning is an essential competency for ensuring instructional quality.	• Contributes to profession • Professional growth

Research Question	Findings	Subcategory
What elements should be included on an observation performance evaluation instrument that measures instruction quality?	Competencies defined as essential for instructional quality are an important element.	• Administrators and faculty • Clear and accurate descriptions
	Quality indicators reflecting the types of performance associated with each competency is an important element.	• Informative • Specific, observable, and measurable
	A detailed appraisal rubric with well-defined rating scales describing acceptable performance levels for each competency is an important element.	• Rating scales
In what ways does the development of a performance evaluation process, through an action research approach at a community college, inform and improve instructional quality?	Assessing instructional quality can be accomplished through defining instructional quality and researching essential competencies specific to the organization.	• Collaborative process • Procedural change and new tool
	Assessing instructional quality can be accomplished through reflective practice.	• Align performance with expectations • Implement continuous improvement opportunities of evaluation sources following implementation • Provide mentorship program and professional development opportunities following reflection
	Assessing instructional quality can result in organizational change.	• First-order • Second-order • Third-order

Instructional Quality Defined

The five faculty members who participated on the action research team as well as the three administrators from academic affairs were asked to review the definition of instructional quality as it had been established through the study. The definition of instructional quality established by the action research team stated:

> Instructional quality is defined as a collaborative effort between the faculty member and the student, and represents an instructor's knowledge of the subject and the ability to teach diverse students possessing multiple learning styles while holding students accountable for their learning. Instructional quality is accomplished by providing an environment conducive for learning with an overall goal of student success.

Each respondent indicated that the definition reflected his or her view of instructional quality. As reflected in the definition, three themes represent instructional quality. The themes emerging through this study included collaboration, appreciation of diversity, and student success.

Table 12
Defining Instructional Quality Findings

Research Question	**Findings**	**Subcategory**
How is instructional quality defined by college stakeholders?	Instructional quality is defined as a collaboration.	• Faculty • Students
	Instructional quality is defined as respecting student diversity.	• Background • Learning styles
	Instructional quality is defined as student success.	• Internal to the college • External to the college

Instructional Quality is Collaboration

Instructional quality at Public Community College is a collaborative partnership between the faculty member and the student. Faculty recognized the importance of their ability to present

their knowledge of the subject, but they also recognized the primary responsibility for learning belongs with the student. Arreola (2007) offered three perspectives when defining the role of a faculty member. These perspectives included:

- The interaction between a teacher and a student is conducted in such a way that the student is provided with the opportunity to learn.
- The interaction between a teacher and a student is conducted to promote and facilitate student learning.
- The interaction between a teacher and a student is conducted in such a way to cause the student to learn.

The results of the data analysis for this study aligned with Arreola's second perspective. Teaching as enabling learning, "assumes that a student has the primary responsibility for learning" (Arreola, 2007, p. 18). Although the primary responsibility remains with the student, the faculty member has the responsibility for enabling student learning through the promotion and facilitation of the learning (Arreola, 2007). Participants of this study viewed the theme of collaboration in the same manner as Arreola's second perspective. Gracie, a college administrator in this study, stated,

> Effective instructors create a framework for the student to receive the information and make the new material relevant to the student by providing a link between the new material and the student's previous knowledge or by providing a practical application of the new information.

Gracie's response highlights the faculty member's responsibility for providing the material and for promoting the link between the new information and previous knowledge, but it is the

student's responsibility to make the new material relevant. Another administrator, Sherrie, stated the following,

> Quality instruction is a facilitative process whereby the instructor introduces the concepts in such a way that a student can gain the knowledge. Although I believe the responsibility for learning resides in the learner, the responsibility for introducing the curriculum in a way that the majority of the students understand lies with the instructor.

Again, Sherrie's response to defining instructional quality focuses on the collaborative relationship between the faculty member and the student by which the faculty member facilitates the learning and the student is responsible for their learning. Both Gracie and Sherrie have administrative responsibilities in the area of academic affairs at Public Community College.

This question was also considered by faculty at Public Community College. Lucy, a faculty member in the area of health, defined instructional quality as, "a collaborative process between the teacher and the learner." Lucy goes on to say,

> The teacher is responsible for engaging the learner to actively participate. The teacher must be prepared and must give their best to the learner. The learner in return must put forth an effort to learn and give their best in order for instruction to be effective.

Another faculty member, Josie, who instructs in the area of general education, provided her definition of instructional quality, which also addressed the collaborative theme,

> Instructional quality is creating lessons where students are provided the opportunity to try out the concepts they read about and we lecture about and then giving them feedback on their application of the knowledge we're trying to

> convey. However, there is a balance to be struck between providing those opportunities and holding students accountable for grasping the material we present. It's something we are both responsible for in the classroom.

Finally, Betsey, a faculty member in the public services division stated, “In my opinion, instructional quality only takes place when learning occurs. For an instructor to simply say “I presented the materials,” falls very short of the benchmark of excellence. I want to inspire my students to attain [the knowledge].”

As stated, the research question addressed the definition of instructional quality by college stakeholders—administrators and faculty. Through the analysis of data, participants were identified as a faculty member or administrator as well as the different disciplines of the faculty to determine if there were any differences in defining instructional quality in one division of the college as compared to another division based on the stakeholder’s position. In the area of collaboration, the findings reflected that there were no disciplinary variations in the definition. Faculty, as well as administrators, agree that instructional quality requires a collaborative relationship between the instructor and students regardless of the discipline or topic being taught. Instructional quality cannot be realized without the active participation of each partner. The faculty member has responsibility for the source of knowledge and must possess content expertise. In addition, the faculty member must have the interactive skills that stimulate student’s interest and motivates them to learn (Arreola, 2007).

Instructional Quality is Respecting Student Diversity

One of the most common discussions held by the action research team in defining instructional quality was the ability for a faculty member to align his or her instruction to “meet” the needs of the diverse student population. Public Community College’s definition of

instructional quality includes the following statement: “ability to teach diverse students possessing multiple learning styles while holding students accountable for their learning.” This process involves the faculty member’s ability to apply a variety of instructional strategies, to communicate and interact with students around academic content, and to differentiate instruction based on the individual needs of all students (Stronge, 2010). The two subcategories emerging from the data were the social and academic backgrounds of our students, and recognizing and teaching to the differences in learning styles.

Background. As mentioned in an earlier chapter, Public Community College practices an open admissions policy. The student population of Public Community College consists of students immediately following high school or receiving their GED®, students returning to college for specific occupational training, students attending due to a manufacturing facility closing, and students with a bachelor and/or graduate degree returning to college to learn an occupational skill. Public Community College has a wide variety of students with a wide variety of academic and social backgrounds. Renee, a faculty member within the general education division, said,

> Students come with some barriers to learning, whether academic, physical, social, or psychological. The effective teacher works to eliminate or minimize these barriers and move students from their beginning level of interest and knowledge to a point of competency and appreciation for the subject matter.

Stronge (2007) stated, “The effective teacher truly believes that all students can learn. These teachers believe that they must know their students, their subject, and themselves.” (p. 29). Josie stated,

> Part of being an effective teacher, that is more universal, is taking the time to see each student as an individual, not simply lumping them into whatever group they appear to belong. I would say in general that people like to be seen as individuals, so when we forget our students have lives outside our classrooms, we are doing them a disservice in providing the most optimal learning environment for them.

A senior administrator with Public Community College, Melanie, stated an effective faculty member must have "the ability to use a variety of instructional strategies to reach different students with varying abilities." An administrator introduced earlier, Sherrie, summarized the subcategory stating, "Effective teaching takes into account that the student population is made up of people from varied academic and social backgrounds as well as different learning styles and time management understanding." The action research team determined that, for an effective teacher to exhibit instructional quality, the identification and accommodation of students' backgrounds is essential for student success.

Learning styles. As with understanding how the various backgrounds of our students affect learning, faculty must also recognize the learning styles of their students. Mel, an academic affairs administrator, stated, "Effective teaching involves teaching to multiple learning styles in order to deliver the intended lesson successfully to a larger percentage of the audience." Students learn in a variety of ways and at different rates; instructors should deliver their lessons utilizing numerous techniques, also known as differentiated instruction (Stronge, 2010). Utilizing differentiated instruction enables faculty to adjust the curriculum, materials, learning activities, and assessment techniques to ensure that all students can have different ways to process new knowledge and develop new skills (Stronge, 2010). Matthew, a study participant stated that a faculty member is effective when he is "able to vary the difficulty of the lesson with

the ability level of the student." During a post-observation interview of a health division class, Judy stated the following in reference to different learning styles,

> I do a little thing the first day of class, a learning inventory. It asks the students, Are you an organizer? Are you a giver? Are you an adventurer? Are you a thinker? It's interesting to see what they all said. I do that [because] it gives me a little bit better understanding of my students, Why are you doodling? Why are you distracted? Sometimes adventurers are doing more than one thing at a time. I've got one who's doodling. She's drawing pictures, but that's part of her learning process. I let her go. Those adventurer-types, they need to be moving, doing something else.

Another instructional tool that can be used in determining the varied learning levels of students is questioning them throughout the lesson. Stronge (2010) described the use of questioning as a tool that could be used to allow active involvement of students at different levels. If done properly, this tool can be highly effective. Of the ten classes that I observed, all ten used questioning as an engagement activity as well as a tool to measure learning among the diverse student population. One of the quality indicators on the observation evaluation instrument reads: "Solicits comments, questions, examples, and other contributions from students throughout lessons." During the question and answer sessions, there was not one instance where the instructor informed the student they were incorrect. Instead, the instructor would encourage the student to expand on their answer and offer suggestions toward the appropriate answer. This skill is reflected in the following response from one of the observed faculty members.

> Most of them (the students) are hesitant to participate; they're so afraid of getting the wrong answer. I try, even if they give me a wrong answer, to give them a positive response so they won't be afraid next time.

With the diverse student population at Public Community College, the action research team found it important that the definition of instructional quality address the ability for instructors to adapt their instruction to the meet the learning needs of all students. As Renee mentioned earlier, many of our students arrive in class with barriers that must be acknowledged. These barriers may include the fear of failure, having not attended school in 25 years; the barrier may be working a full-time job, caring for a family, and attending school part-time; or the barrier may be having a learning style that requires hands-on instruction. In order to offer quality instruction, it is imperative that faculty members have instructional strategies for recognizing the needs of their students and have the ability to remove those barriers allowing for student success.

Instructional Quality is Student Success

Upon analysis of the results from the questionnaire disseminated to all faculty and administrators of academic affairs, student success was a prevalent theme. Instructional quality is critical for student success. "Empirical research has consistently revealed that the teacher is the dominant school-related factor influencing academic growth" (Stronge, 2010, p. 95). The subcategories within student success that emerged were students' accomplishments internal to the institution as well as the success of the student upon leaving our institution. Sarah, a health division faculty member stated, "Students need to do much more than remember information; with that each student needs to use higher-order thinking skills and learning how to become a team member in the work setting."

Internal to the college. Student success is measured by various means. Within each course, students have competencies that must be learned. At the program level, students must possess knowledge and perform specific skills to accomplish the learning outcomes set by the program faculty. An industrial division faculty member, Peter, stated that instructional quality "engages students with a well-defined path, which guides them into developing the competencies that will prepare them for employment." Another participant of the study stated, "I usually consider effective teaching is when the students are learning the content, they are interested and excited about the subject, and they are able to use this content in a beneficial way." Another study participant commented, "For students to be successful, students need to become critical thinkers, [faculty must] motivate their students to think outside the box. It is one of my goals to inspire my students to be original thinkers and not mere reflectors of other men's thoughts."

External to the college. The mission of Public Community College is to provide "high-quality education and workforce development to the citizens in its region." The community college system works in partnership with the businesses and industries in its region. Through this relationship, training needs are identified and communicated to the college, which in turn, ensures the competencies within the curriculum match the needs of the industry. A study participant stated, "It is paramount that the instructor teaches from the standards and guides of the curriculum and present them in a way that the class views them as an important part of their aspiring academic and professional career." With a focus on instructional quality, Public Community College graduates successful students that then seek employment in their field, resulting in the development of the communities' workforce.

Other indicators of student success external to the institution are the various state and national credentialing examinations required of our graduates in order to practice in their field of

study. Faculty of these programs state the passage rate of their students reflects quality of instruction as well. Judy stated, "Our pass rates [for health occupations] are 100% so far. We have a lot of folks that get jobs. I think part of it is because we know what our job entails in significant detail."

The development of the definition of instructional quality at Public Community College proved to be a successful intervention in bringing awareness to the various functions involved in instruction. Faculty were able to have input along with the college's administration. Once instructional quality was defined, the next step was to determine the essential competencies necessary for ensuring instructional quality.

Essential Competencies for Instructional Quality

Prior to the development of a definition for instructional quality, Public Community College had not considered the competencies essential for instructional quality. As the action research team determined a definition of instructional quality, the various competencies were discussed. Historic data addressing specific competencies was non-existent at Public Community College. The literature reviewed for this study informed the five faculty members and the three administrators from academic affairs who participated on the action research team. A crosswalk was produced with the various competencies associated with exemplary instruction. The crosswalk, along with the results of the questionnaire from Public Community College, were presented to the action research team for its review and discussion. After months of consideration and review, the action research team determined the competencies essential for ensuring instructional quality in a community college setting. The essential competencies included: assessment, communication, instructional planning, instructional strategies,

interpersonal skills, positive learning environment, professional knowledge, and professionalism.

This section will elaborate on each competency.

Table 13
Essential Competencies Findings

Research Question	**Findings**	**Subcategory**
What essential competencies are necessary to ensure instructional quality?	The assessment of student progress is an essential competency for ensuring instructional quality.	• Measures student progress • Guides instruction
	Effective communication with students is an essential competency for ensuring instructional quality.	• Promotes student learning
	Possessing the appropriate interpersonal skills is an essential competency for ensuring instructional quality.	• Appropriate attitudes useful to working with students
	Planning instruction (instructional planning) to address the needs of all students is an essential competency for ensuring instructional quality.	• State curricula and standards
	Utilizing various instructional strategies for addressing learning differences is an essential competency for ensuring instructional quality.	• Individual learning differences
	Providing a positive learning environment that is student-centered is an essential competency for ensuring instructional quality.	• Engaging students • Structure
	Possessing professional knowledge of the subject content is an essential competency for ensuring instructional quality.	• Link present content to past and future learning experiences • Understanding the curriculum
	Displaying professionalism through the support of student learning is an essential competency for ensuring instructional quality.	• Contributes to profession • Professional growth

Assessment of Student Progress

Assessment was defined as "the instructor uses data to measure student progress, guide instruction, and provide timely feedback." Findings suggest two important subcategories of assessment. Assessment is essential for measuring student progress and for guiding instruction based on the assessment. Currently, Public Community College conducts an annual assessment at the program level, but the programs are not as structured at conducting assessment at the course level. Findings demonstrate the importance of frequent assessment to guide instruction based on the students' progress and learning.

Measures student progress. During the research study, evidence from the faculty and administration indicated the need to measure student progress more frequently. Dede, a past faculty member now a college administrator, commented, "Continuous assessment and feedback to students that encourages student improvement and challenges students to direct their learning, are competencies associated with quality instruction." Assessment of student progress can be accomplished in a number of ways. Assessment may include the use of homework, classroom quizzes, question and answer sessions, performance assignments, lab check-off activities, and providing verbal and written feedback. When questioned about essential competencies reflecting instructional quality, a study participant stated, "Continuous assessment and feedback to students that encourages student improvement and challenges students to direct their learning [are essential competencies]." Assessment is critical in providing quality instruction as it is used to determine the effectiveness of a lesson in terms of student learning, to evaluate student progress, and to guide instruction based on the results.

Guide instruction. Recognizing the knowledge gained by students allows an instructor to plan instruction. The results of an assessment may require an extended time for review

ensuring students grasp the concept previously taught. But, the assessment may also reflect that instruction should be accelerated if the students are accomplished in the area and ready to move forward. This practice is reflected by Deidra's comment, "How well an instructor develops and plans a course along with good evaluative and assessment skills helps with instructional quality." Deidra is a faculty member at Public Community College. By recognizing students' knowledge, faculty can adapt their instruction to meet the students where they are (Stronge, 2007).

Communication with Students

Communication was defined as "the instructor communicates effectively with students in ways that promote student learning." Findings demonstrate the importance of presenting the material clearly and being timely with feedback. Renee said, "The teacher obviously possesses more knowledge in the field of study than the student, but having the knowledge does not necessarily mean he or she can communicate that knowledge." Renee goes on to say, "Effective teaching occurs when the teacher uses the best tools available to communicate the information to students in a way that they can understand."

Other findings from the study participants exposed that instructors should clearly communicate expectations, foster good communication skills, possess good to excellent communication skills, and use various forms of communication. Being timely with communication was also identified as essential for promoting student learning. Mel stated, "An instructor that communicates well and has expertise in the area of study will be able to demonstrate common competencies synonymous with quality."

Communicating to the level of the student was a finding that is supported by Jessie's statement, "An ability to communicate effectively the information necessary for mastery of a concept or theory regardless of a student's physical, mental, or emotional ability reflects quality

instruction." Stronge (2010) commented, "Effective teaching cannot exist without effective communication (p. 75).

Communication skills included the clear presentation of materials; the explanation of directions, concepts, and lesson content; and the use of verbal and nonverbal communication techniques to foster positive interactions and the promotion of learning in the classroom. Another approach to communication is the ability of the instructor to encourage communication and interaction from his or her students. In an interview following a classroom observation, Max stated,

> When you have students in a room that have something else to add to the instruction, it is a useful instructional tool. I think the best thing about today was the fact that we did get some people involved who brought some pretty good comments. The guy on the back row has been a mid-level manager for 15 years. The lady up front, who brought up a couple extra points, worked for Red Cross. One of the guys on the back row actually owns his own business. We got some comments from some people, and I felt like that helps to add to instruction because that kind of gets everybody else involved.

Utilizing a variety of communication techniques, as Max presented above, promotes learning for both the student and instructor.

Possessing Interpersonal Skills

Interpersonal skills were defined as "the instructor possessing appropriate attitudes useful to working with students." Findings demonstrated the importance of faculty possessing the appropriate attitude as they interact with students. This category represents many personal qualities of faculty members. Although multiple skills were discussed by the participants of the

study as well as the literature, the most noteworthy were skills reflecting a caring nature and possessing the energy and enthusiasm for the subject material. Stronge (2007) stated, "the teacher's enthusiasm for teaching, learning, and their subject matter has been shown to be an important part of effective teaching, both in supporting positive relationships with students and in encouraging student achievement" (p. 27). Josie, an adjunct faculty member stated, "By creating an environment where students feel their voices will be heard and presenting yourself as a listening, caring instructor, students can voice their concerns and take ownership in the classroom." Stronge (2007) addressed interpersonal skills as, "A teacher's ability to relate to students and to make positive, caring connections with them plays a significant role in cultivating a positive learning environment and promoting student achievement" (Stronge, 2007, p. 26). Sherrie, an administrator mentioned earlier, stated, "My personal opinion taken from 20 years in education would be that most of our students need a positive influence that shows them how they can achieve their goals. Mutual respect is very important to our students and will serve them in modeling management style behavior in their future."

The following interpersonal skills were discussed in relation to instructional quality.

Table 14
Interpersonal Skills Findings

Competencies Coded as Interpersonal Skills	
Believe	Integrity
Clear	Interesting
Comfortable	Leader
Compassionate	Never have enough
Conflict management	Open
Courage	Passionate
Desire	Positive
Encouraging	Present
Energetic	Real
Enthusiastic	Respectful
Fair	Risk taker

Competencies Coded as Interpersonal Skills	
Friendly	Sensitive
Genuine	Teamwork
Hard worker	Tolerant
Humor	Vigilance
Imaginative	Vision

Following discussion of the interpersonal skills competency, it was decided that, for the observation instrument, the interpersonal skills competency would be removed. The conversation of the action research team centered around an evaluator's ability to observe, in one instance, many of the competencies such as compassionate, enthusiastic, genuine, and sensitive. One member, Betsey, made the following statement that supported the committee's decision to remove the competency from the observation instrument. "I think you can observe some of these, and I think [you can] exhibit these to a certain extent. But I have seen very enthusiastic instructors who were not very effective." But, from another perspective, "A very reserved person that you might think is not approachable, but the students learned a lot from them, may not receive a positive evaluation. I would hate for a person's bias, an evaluator's bias on what they see [determine] an effective teacher."

The action research team noted the importance of the interpersonal skills competency to be included on other instruments of evaluation utilized by the college. These instruments, including student evaluations and supervisor evaluations, should reflect the skills discussed in this study. It was felt that by working with an individual over a period of time, such as a semester, or multiple semesters, an evaluator would be better equipped to evaluate this competency.

Instructional Planning

Instructional planning was defined as "the instructor plans using state curricula and standards, resources, and data to address the needs of all students." Within the state's community college system, the curriculum and standards are set for each course. No matter which location the course is offered, the curriculum is the same. However, each faculty member has the academic freedom to teach the curriculum as they prefer. Suzy, a faculty member, stated,

> To ensure that our students receive high-quality education, instructors must first become familiar with required competencies for each class in which they will be teaching. It is very important that each division have learner expectations or learning outcomes. Instructors should prepare objectives for each class and plan activities to meet these objectives.

A few of the quality indicators reflecting instructional planning included: aligning lesson objectives to state curricula and standards, differentiating the instructional content to meet the students' developmental needs, and planning instruction effectively for content mastery, pacing, and transition (Stronge, 2010). Planning is preparing to take action and is accomplished by aligning the plans for teaching with the needs of the students.

Utilizing Various Instructional Strategies

Instructional strategies were defined as "the instructor promotes student learning by addressing individual learning differences and by using effective instructional strategies." Findings suggest that addressing individual learning differences and utilizing the appropriate instructional strategy are key for instructional quality. An action research team member, Trevor, made the following statement,

> In defining instructional quality, it is easy to say "it takes the right teacher" or "it takes the right student" but this is not really true. In every class, there are students who excel academically and those who struggle. The instructor must identify these students and allow each to perform at their level. The instructor must utilize the appropriate teaching strategies in order to accomplish instructional quality.

The primary difference between effective instructors and ineffective instructors does not involve the amount of knowledge they possess but instead the difference is the manner in which they deliver their knowledge and skills while interacting with their students (Stronge, 2010). Mel, stated,

> Effective teaching involves teaching to multiple learning styles in order to deliver the intended lesson successfully to a larger percentage of the audience. If the lesson is delivered in only one style for example, then there is a chance that a percentage of the students will have a difficult time learning the material.

A faculty member at Public Community College recalls a moment when his instructional strategy made a difference. Rick stated, "One of my best compliments came from a man that had a sixth-grade education and had worked in a factory all of his life. He came up to me and looked me in the eye and said, 'Ya know what? I understand you.' This has remained as one of my primary goals." Recognizing that all students are not at the same level and planning instructional strategies to meet those students where they are is an indicator of quality in an instructor.

Positive Learning Environment

Learning environment was defined as "the instructor provides a well-managed, safe, orderly, student-centered environment that is conducive to learning, academically challenging,

and encourages respect for all." The subcategories that emerged most frequently included the engagement of students and the structure of the instructional space.

Engage students. The engagement of students is reflected in three areas: the student's engagement with the faculty member, students' engagement with each other, and the student's engagement with the curriculum. Nancy, an adjunct faculty member in the health division, stated, "Effective teaching occurs when students are in a safe learning environment and constructively engaged with the instructor, one another, and the subject matter, and are increasing their knowledge of the subject matter in ways that they will retain." Questions and answers, from instructors to students and students to instructors, is a process that supports student engagement in learning and a teacher's ability to monitor the learning process (Stronge, 2007). This process was observed during each classroom evaluation conducted in this study. One form of engagement that addressed faculty to student, student to student, and student to the curriculum was the various lab activities observed during the pilot. When asked, "What was the best thing about today's lesson?" Connor replied, "We were actually able to do some brazing and soldering. I had to show them the right way to do it and how to use some of the tools that they're going to encounter as well. During the lab assignment, they actually started doing it themselves." Connor goes on to explain instances where students engage with other students, "A lot of the times as [students gain knowledge] and get more experience in the class, they tend to help each other a lot more, so I don't have as much time dragged down, and everybody can spread out and get the work done."

Structure. Being respectful of students and creating a safe environment where students feel comfortable in promoting their ideas is conducive to learning (Stronge, 2007). Stronge (2010) described a safe learning environment as a classroom where risk-taking is welcomed,

student questions are encouraged, and mistakes are embraced as a valuable part of learning. Structure, as it relates to the learning environment, included criteria associated with the physical arrangement of the classroom, discipline and routines, and the organization of learning activities (Stronge, 2010). Public Community College faculty discussed the learning environment as well. Lucy stated, "The environment must be conducive to learning while being safe and effective as well." Matthew, a faculty member in the health division, stated that faculty should not only provide an environment where students feel safe but faculty "must maximize instructional time to increase subject coverage and to give students the greatest opportunity to learn. In other words, be prepared for class and hit the ground running."

Professional Knowledge of the Subject Content

Professional knowledge was defined as "the instructor demonstrates an understanding of the curriculum and subject content." Findings suggest two areas of professional knowledge are essential to providing quality instruction. These areas include understanding the curriculum and subject content, and having the ability to link the present content to past and future learning experiences.

"Although knowledge, alone, will not suffice to make someone an effective teacher, it certainly is a basic building block to teaching. Thus, possessing the requisite professional knowledge is an essential ingredient to becoming a good teacher" (Stronge, 2010, p. 19). Melanie, one of Public Community College's senior administrators stated, "I have always subscribed to the body of literature that says effective teaching is a deep understanding of the subject matter."

Public Community College maintains a beneficial relationship with various businesses and industries in the region. It is imperative that graduates not only possess the academic

knowledge gained through the curriculum and standards but an in-depth knowledge of the occupational principles as well. Shelly, a part-time faculty member, stated instructional quality is "being comfortable with not only the curriculum but with the job force that we are preparing the students [to enter]." In addition, Sue, a full-time faculty member in the public service division, stated instructional quality is "being up-to-date in field through continuing education and back to industry activities."

Displaying Professionalism

Professionalism was defined as, "the instructor participates in professional growth opportunities to support student learning and contributes to the profession." The following skills were discussed in relationship to instructional quality.

Table 15
Professionalism Findings

Competencies Coded as Professionalism
Engages in activities outside the classroom intended for college and student enhancement.
Evaluates and identifies areas of personal strengths and weaknesses related to professional skills and their impact on student learning and sets goals for improvement.
Financial/budget management.
Handles administrative routines, policies, and procedures quickly and efficiently.
Participates in ongoing professional growth activities based on identified areas for improvement and incorporates learning into classroom activities.
Personnel management.
Respects and maintains confidentiality and assumes responsibility for professional actions.

The same outcome from the discussion of interpersonal skills occurred with professionalism. Following the review of this competency, it was decided that for the observation instrument, professionalism would be removed. The conversation of the action research team centered on an evaluator's ability to observe many of the skills listed above. Recognizing that many of the skills associated with professionalism were not exhibited in the classroom, it was determined that the competency would be removed from the observation instrument.

Measuring Instructional Quality through Performance Evaluation

Prior to this study at Public Community College, the observation instrument utilized as part of the overall evaluation system had not undergone a review since it was initially implemented. Analysis of the form used during an observation revealed that the instrument included three sections: environment for learning, organization of content, and communication. Each section included multiple statements and a rating scale. The rating scale consisted of SA, A, D, SD. The legend represented the outcomes of *strongly agree* (SA), *agree* (A), *disagree* (D), and *strongly disagree* (SD). Upon further review, there was no additional explanation or detail provided on how each rating was defined.

Utilizing the work of the action research team in defining instructional quality and determining the essential competencies, an instrument was adapted from Stronge (2010) that could aid in the evaluation of faculty at Public Community College. The components of the observation instrument included a definition, quality indicators, and a rubric. Each performance competency was defined. In addition to the competency, sample indicators were provided. A rubric was also included for each performance competency.

Upon completion of the new instrument, it was piloted with a group of faculty at Public Community College. This section will elaborate on each element of the observation instrument.

Table 16
Elements for Observation Instrument Findings

Research Question	**Findings**	**Subcategory**
What elements should be included on an observation performance evaluation instrument that measures instruction quality?	Competencies defined as essential for instructional quality are an important element.	• Administrators and faculty • Clear and accurate descriptions
	Quality indicators reflecting the types of performance associated	• Informative • Specific, observable, and measurable

Research Question	Findings	Subcategory
	with each competency is an important element.	
	A detailed appraisal rubric with well-defined rating scales describing acceptable performance levels for each competency is an important element.	• Rating scales

Each Competency Defined

As accomplished in an earlier intervention, the competencies essential for instructional quality were identified and defined. Findings realized for this section include the importance of the involvement of administrators and faculty, and providing clear and accurate descriptions for the evaluation instrument.

Administrators and faculty. Throughout the research and development process, communication and collaboration between the team members was essential. In the end, it was important that Public Community College had an instrument supported by the stakeholders with the ability to assess, inform, and improve instructional quality. One of the faculty members participating on the action research team made the following statement:

> When faculty and administrators are given the opportunity to provide input, it gives each member the feeling of ownership and produces a desire for the process to succeed. And, another important issue is by faculty and administrators participating in the development; they have a better understanding of the process.

Another team member in administration added to the conversation referencing the importance of faculty and administration coming together to develop a useful process and instrument. She stated:

> I think that having not only the faculty who are going to be reviewed and having the people that do the review collaborate on the instrument, the questions, the whole practice gives everyone the ownership of it. I think that's very important.

Not only was it important to receive input from the stakeholders, but it was also important that an instrument was created that provided clear and accurate information related to performance and expectations of the position being evaluated.

Clear and accurate descriptions. It was important that all stakeholders realized sufficient detail about the competency as well as the expected performance to ensure an accurate evaluation. For the members that served on the action research team, they were aware of the performance competencies and the performance expectations since they had participated on the committee that researched and adapted the instrument. One administrator commented, "The definitions provided for each competency are easily understood and leave some leeway for the evaluator." For the five faculty members not serving on the action research team, they were allowed an opportunity for review of the instrument upon the scheduling of their observation. An administrator serving on the team stated,

> I reviewed the literature, and these are all quite common in the literature and what you would expect from a faculty member to be able to do. Also, I like the fact that they are all action verbs and all things that can be measurable.

Once the performance competencies were defined, sample quality indicators were added. These indicators provided aspects of quality performance to not only assist the individual observing the class, but they were also useful in informing faculty members of the type of aspects associated with the performance competency.

Providing Quality Indicators

Quality indicators were provided for each performance competency. The indicators were provided to assist the observer in identifying specific, observable behaviors that may be performed by the faculty member. The evaluation instrument was clearly marked that the indicators were examples of performance that may be observed but were not limited to just the indicators provided.

Informative. When discussing the usefulness of the quality indicators for the faculty members preparing to be observed, Betsey stated, "The indicators were very helpful. As I prepared the lesson to be observed, having the sample indicators gave me tangible items that could be covered for the observer to be able to determine quality." The use of the instrument in preparation for her observation, informed her instruction.

Specific, observable, and measurable. The team discussed each competency's sample quality indicators to ensure they were specific, observable, and measureable. During this discussion, the quality indicators for the assessment performance competency were questioned. The sample quality indicators were specific behaviors, but several may not be observable if the observer is not provided course documentation prior to the observation. During the pilot, the observer retrieved the course standards and the class syllabi prior to the observation. This information was available through electronic means and did not require the faculty member to forward the document in advance. But, for future observations, it would be beneficial to receive a lesson plan and sample assessment documentation to provide the opportunity for an accurate evaluation of certain competencies.

After conducting the observations, there were a few indicators that were considered for removal from the instrument. One such indicator stated: "Uses grading practices that report final

mastery in relationship to content goals and objectives." Since the indicator focused on final mastery of a goal or objective, it was determined that rarely would this indicator be observed in a classroom setting since final mastery is usually the result of cumulative assessments of multiple skills, therefore it was removed. Another indicator discussed was: "Conveys the message that mistakes should be embraced as a valuable part of learning." Although this indicator was not observed in any of the ten classes, the faculty serving on the team stated that this conversation with the students was usually held at the beginning of the semester or during lab activities. After the discussion, the decision was made to leave the indicator on the evaluation instrument. Following the review and selection of the quality indicators, a rubric was created to assist in the evaluation process.

Detailed Appraisal Rubric

A rating scale, or rubric, was added to each performance competency. The rubric had a scale ranging from *Did Not Observe* (0) to *Exemplary* (4). Each level provided a description of how well the instructor satisfied the performance competency. Each level—*did not observe*, *ineffective*, *needs development*, *proficient*, and *exemplary*—related the measure of performance expected of instructors for each standard. The use of the rubric enabled the observer to acknowledge effective performance while providing the faculty member with a general description of what each rating entailed. When discussing the usefulness of the rubric, a faculty participant stated, "An instructor has the opportunity to achieve the 'exemplary' rating, which is the proverbial 'pat on the back' not often given to instructors. With the added benefit that tangible, attainable suggestions for improvement are included in the instrument."

In further discussions, an administrator, Melanie, raised the concern of "norming" the instrument. As stated, for the pilot there was only one observer. But, with hundreds of faculty

needing to be observed, multiple observers would be utilizing the instrument. The administrator stated:

> The only thing that I would be interested in is the norming process. In our case, since we have multiple observers for the faculty, I would be interested in there being two or three classrooms that all of the observers participated in using this rubric to evaluate how closely they scored the faculty member. This has been a point of contention in the past, where people being observed say, "Well they are just so much tougher. If I had so and so, I would have gotten exemplary." As with any rubric, I would be interested in conducting a norming session before it was rolled out.

As a function of implementing a new process, professional development would be necessary for not only the administrators but the faculty as well. As a part of professional development, the individuals selected as observers would participate in a few observations as one group followed by a meeting in order to discuss the individual scoring and conduct the norming session.

Informing and Improving Instructional Quality through Action Research

Members of the action research team worked in partnership to create this collaborative study that explored how Public Community College could inform and improve instructional quality. As a team, we defined instructional quality as well as determined the essential competencies; we created a new evaluation instrument for Public Community College; and we tested the instrument with a pilot group of faculty. Throughout the process, it was apparent the action research study itself created change in understanding instructional quality and the importance of having an assessment process.

The action of this team brought awareness to the faculty and administration in recognizing instructional quality through defining it and researching essential competencies specific to Public Community College and then creating an instrument and process that could not only be used to evaluate faculty but could also be used as an instructional tool in defining the college's expectations for quality instruction. In addition, the knowledge and action generated by the study initiated the practice of reflection; not only the reflective practice of faculty on their performance, but also the reflection of the continuous improvement process of the evaluation instrument and cycle.

Table 17
Informing and Improving Instructional Quality Findings

Research Question	**Findings**	**Subcategory**
In what ways does the development of a performance evaluation process, through an action research approach at a community college, inform and improve instructional quality?	Assessing instructional quality can be accomplished through defining instructional quality and researching essential competencies specific to the organization.	• Collaborative process • New instrument and procedural change
	Assessing instructional quality can be accomplished through reflective practice.	• Align performance with expectations • Implement continuous improvement opportunities of evaluation sources following implementation • Provide mentorship program and professional development opportunities following reflection
	Assessing instructional quality can result in organizational change.	• First-order • Second-order • Third-order

Defining and Research

The collaboration of the members on the action research team was imperative to the success of this study. Following the operational framework used for this study, stage one involved the members defining instructional quality and researching the competencies essential for quality. Once the team agreed on the definition and the competencies, it was then time to select the new evaluation instrument for use in observing classes (stage two). Again, a collaborative partnership was instrumental in researching tools currently used, selecting a tool, and working collaboratively to adapt the instrument for postsecondary use. A senior administrator participating on the team addressed the importance of collaboration by stating,

> I've always been a big believer that the people who are going to be evaluated should have some sort of input into the instrument, into the process; so they can at least get a sense of fairness, and they don't go out of it saying, "Well, they really don't know, but that's not indicative of what I do."

Stage three of the process involved the utilization of the new instrument with a group of faculty. In addition to the observation itself, a post interview between the observer and the faculty member was conducted following the classroom observation. The post interview led to stage four of the operational framework, reflection, which was a new practice associated with the observation.

Reflective Practice

Following the observation, an interview was held with the faculty member and the observer. This interview consisted of a question and answer session. The interview provided an opportunity for a reflection on practice and the exploration of what actually occurred in class as compared to what was intended. In reference to the interview, Jessie stated,

> Just on the questions that you asked of me, they were open-ended. With the open-ended questions, I'm forced to look at my performance and develop some sort of, I guess, ownership for that. Then you asked me how I felt about it and if there were areas I felt I could improve upon or I would change, and this forces me to think maybe in a different direction.

Align performance with expectations. Findings from the interview revealed the usefulness of the instrument in informing faculty of the expectations for instructional quality. For the faculty participating on the action research team, as well as the five faculty members that did not participate in defining and determining the competencies, each discussed how review of the instrument and the reflection on their performance informed their instruction. Following the review of the instrument, one faculty member stated, "That [referencing the quality indicators] would be a good idea to do something in this area so I've tried to add it in." Another participant stated, "Reviewing the expectations helps me remember what I need to be doing in the classroom. I think that it can help every instructor." The instrument proved to be helpful for both the administrators and faculty in aligning the performance of the faculty to the expectations for instructional quality.

Implement continuous improvement opportunities. One finding that was revealed addressed the need to continuously assess the instrument and the process. As new initiatives are implemented and priorities shift, the performance competencies, quality indicators, and the rubric need to be evaluated to ensure they are assessing the appropriate action. In addition to evaluating the instrument, the process for conducting the observation should be assessed as well. Joan made the following statement concerning the need for continuous improvement by addressing current processes:

> I'm totally honest here, and this is because of your study. My performance evaluation in the past 15 to 16 years that I've been here is just a process we go through. It's like, "Well, everybody gets a three, so we'll just kinda get a three" type of thing, but if they (administration) sat down and they actually talked about the specifics of it (performance evaluation) then I would feel as if they were more concerned in me developing and being a good instructor so then I would be more concerned with being developed and being a better instructor so I would need to change.

As with other areas of the college, continuous improvement is a goal. The area of performance evaluation should be among the items reviewed each year by both faculty and administration.

Provide opportunities following reflection. Through the interview process, faculty members noted that there were processes they would change in their instructional delivery in the future to allow students more time on a specific topic or possibly use a different instructional strategy to engage more students. As an administrator, this self-reflection identified areas for possible program development such as a mentorship program and professional development opportunities. Max, a faculty participant, stated, “Yeah, I think you can improve from evaluation and I think I have just from hearing what people have said. I try not to take it too personally and just think, *what does that tell me*?” Max continued the conversation referencing improvement and commented, “When it comes to teacher evaluations, a lot of times I walk out kind of thinking okay, I know what they didn't like, but I don't really know how to do it different or how I can improve." Max suggested a mentorship program. He stated that the observers see all the faculty, and they know the individuals that perform exemplary in certain areas. He suggested that the observers should recommend specific mentors for faculty that are weak in an area.

Professional development was also a topic raised during the interview. One faculty member stated, "I think what improves quality is someone who really likes their profession and seeks out all the newest and latest and greatest—a faculty member looking for new stuff for students to do." Through the interview process, professional development opportunities can be discovered and aligned with areas for improvement.

Organizational Change

Throughout the course of the study, the process of action research allowed for organizational change. First-order change is within a particular unit and will most likely be short lived if supplementary changes are not also occurring in the system (Burke, 2008). In the instance of this study, first-order change involved the members of the action research team. Through the first interventions, members of the team actively participated in defining instructional quality and the selection of essential competencies. This research brought forward literature and the results of internal information for the team members' consideration in accomplishing the selected interventions. If the study had not advanced beyond this point, the change would have been short lived and would not have gone beyond the individuals participating on the action research team.

Burke (2008) stated that second-order change moves beyond the particular unit. The point at which this study broadened the pilot of the evaluation instrument to faculty members not serving on the action research team, the organization experienced second-order change. This group of faculty had no prior knowledge of the work of the action research team. Through sharing the results of the team efforts and the literature, the change moved beyond the initial unit. The new unit not only learned of literature and the newly created evaluation instrument, they also agreed to join the pilot group. In addition to the expansion of the study to new faculty members,

the research information and intervention information was also shared with additional administrators.

Third-order change occurs when a process influences the organization (Burke, 2008). This level of change would occur if the actions of this team are implemented beyond the pilot group. The organizational process of faculty performance evaluation would move beyond the pilot group and become a standard practice of the college. In addition, the competencies determined essential for ensuring instructional quality would need to be extended to the other evaluation instruments within the college's evaluation system. For instance, the supervisor's instrument and the student evaluation process would need to be aligned with the competencies determined through this study. Further change would occur when all evaluators participated in norming the instruments. Faculty would also be included in informational sessions on the performance competencies, quality indicators, and rubrics.

Conclusion

The research questions for the study were answered by qualitative data including a review of the literature, questionnaire, document review, and coded transcripts of team meetings, researcher memos, and interviews of team members. A review of the literature produced information related to instructional quality and performance evaluation. An action research team worked in partnership to determine and implement a variety of interventions.

The study's findings produced the definition of instructional quality, determined the competencies necessary for ensuring instructional quality, adapted and piloted an observation performance evaluation instrument, and realized the impact of action research in informing and improving instructional quality. It was found that instructional quality is defined as a collaborative effort, having respect for student diversity, and student success. The action

research team also determined eight competencies necessary for ensuring instructional quality. Following a review of literature and current assessment instruments, the action research team adapted an instrument that consisted of the performance competency definition, sample quality indicators, and a rubric. Finally, the study documented how action research methodology was an approach for organizational change.

My role as an internal consultant and member of the action research team was a positive experience. Although the focus of the study questioned instructional quality, team members took a participatory approach in providing their input for the implementation of an effective evaluation process. I believe the active participation and positive nature of the team was a result of my position within the organization. As an administrator in the institutional effectiveness office, my responsibility is a focus on institution-wide, continuous assessment and improvement. I feel the members of the action research team viewed my participation in a non-threatening way and were willing to be open and honest in providing their input. I feel the faculty representatives appreciated being involved in the selection of the instrument and the evaluation process that will be used to evaluate their performance. If another administrator, such as an academic dean, had led this study, it is my opinion that the experience may not have been as positive simply due to the internal position of the consultant. An academic dean, simply due to his or her position within the college, is viewed differently by faculty. Having a direct superior question instructional quality may have led to a different result.

This study documented practice and theory that supported assessing instructional quality through performance evaluation. The findings provide insight into the assessment of instructional quality and the utilization of the results for improvement. In Chapter 6, I will provide conclusions derived from these findings and offer recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This action research study explored the means to inform and improve instructional quality. This chapter presents conclusions and implications drawn from a multi-year action research study. The chapter will begin with an overall summary of the study and its findings that addresses each research question detailed in Chapter 5 before discussing conclusions drawn from the study. Then, implications for practice will be discussed followed by recommendations for future research.

Summary of Findings

The Public Community College team consisted of a diverse group of faculty and administrators charged with using an action research approach as a means to explore, inform, assess, and improve instructional quality. Through a series of interventions, the action research study yielded findings on defining instructional quality, the essential competencies necessary to ensure instructional quality, the utilization of a newly adapted observation evaluation instrument with a pilot group of faculty, and the impact of action research on the college's ability to inform and improve instructional quality. Data was collected through interviews with faculty and administrators. Questionnaire results, researcher memos, and document review were also sources of data. An overview of the research findings presented in Chapter 5 serves as an introduction to the conclusions and implications that follow.

Defining Instructional Quality

The study with Public Community College revealed three themes when defining instructional quality. First, instructional quality is a collaborative effort between the faculty member and the student. Instructional quality cannot be realized without the active participation of each partner. The second theme revealed was the respect for student diversity. This theme included the social and academic backgrounds of students and the recognition of their different learning styles. The third theme was a focus on student success. Student success is measured by students' accomplishments internal to the institution as well as the success of the students upon leaving the institution.

Competencies of Instructional Quality

The study produced eight competencies necessary for ensuring instructional quality. These competencies included assessment, communication, interpersonal skills, instructional planning, instructional strategies, providing a positive learning environment, professional knowledge, and professionalism. For this study, focusing only on evaluation through observation, the competencies of interpersonal skills and professionalism were removed. But, if the competencies are expanded to additional evaluation instruments in the future, such as the supervisor evaluation instrument and student evaluations, these two competencies should be included.

Elements of an Observation Instrument

Competencies defined as essential for instructional quality, sample quality indicators reflecting the types of performance associated with each competency, and a detailed appraisal rubric are all elements that should be included on an observation performance evaluation instrument. First, the competencies are developed by both the faculty and administrators and

provide a clear and accurate description of instructional quality. Second, the sample quality indicators are easily modified to fit the type of faculty member and are specific, observable, and measureable aspects of quality performance. Finally, a detailed rubric with well-defined scales describing acceptable performance levels for each competency is an element that should be included on the observation instrument.

Action Research Impact on Instructional Quality

The action research study produced three impacts on the college. First, it facilitated the adaptation of an observation performance evaluation instrument through a collaborative partnership between faculty and academic administrators. Prior to this study at Public Community College, the observation instrument utilized as part of the overall evaluation system was ineffective in assessing instructional quality. The new instrument was then piloted with a group of faculty. Following the observation, an interview was conducted with each faculty member. This action was a new process for the college. Second, informing and improving instructional quality was accomplished through reflective practice. The collaborative action of the team included the alignment of faculty performance with expectations for instructional quality and communicating the results. In addition, the continuous reflection of the evaluation instrument as well as the process following implementation can inform and improve instructional quality. Also, the collaborative action of the team showed that professional development opportunities are necessary. Finally, informing and improving instructional quality can result in organizational change.

Conclusions

The findings from the data inform three conclusions from the study. The conclusions address the development of an evaluation process, an evaluation system, and action research as

each relates to assessing instructional quality. The following section will introduce each conclusion and position what was learned through this research within the existing literature on the topic that guided the development of the study.

Conclusion 1: The development of an institution-specific performance evaluation process is essential for the assessment of instructional quality.

Based on this study, it can be concluded that the process used to develop the performance evaluation process is as important, if not more important, than the assessment tools themselves. Rather, performance evaluation can be viewed as a complex process that should involve input from faculty and administrators. Seldin (2006) stated, "Faculty evaluation has many facets. It is an exercise in observation and judgment. It is a measurement and feedback process. It is an inexact, human method that must meet key requirements if it is to succeed" (p. 1). Seldin's comment demonstrates the importance of making the performance evaluation process essential.

This study revealed the significance of "starting over" when it came to utilizing the observation performance evaluation instrument for ensuring instructional quality. Through the collaborative work of the action research team, instructional quality was defined and the competencies determined. On multiple occasions, team members commented about the feeling of ownership in the development of the process and instrument. As Joan commented, "It provides a sense of 'buy in' by faculty into the tool used to evaluate them and will, therefore, make most follow the guidelines set forth by the tool." This finding supports the study conducted by Shao, Anderson, and Newsome in 2007 that evaluated 1,300 administrators and faculty. The collaborative action research process of the Public Community College study provided an avenue for administrators and faculty to discuss the differences between the two stakeholder groups and produced an evaluation process that was supported by each group.

Because the action of performance evaluation is not prescriptive and involves multiple variables such as the individual conducting the evaluation, the instruments being utilized, and the environment in which the evaluation is being conducted, there is not one standard evaluation process or instrument that can be utilized by all institutions. As this study found, an existing instrument may be closely aligned with an institution's needs, but it still must be adapted to "fit" the institution and the subjects it will be used to evaluate. This fit was found to begin with the college stakeholders as standard bearers for the institution determining their definition of instructional quality. Through defining instructional quality functions, competencies essential for ensuring instructional quality should be determined. Once this phase has been accomplished, the instrument being utilized to evaluate faculty must be established.

For a true understanding of the expectations of performance for each competency, sample quality indicators were established and provided on the evaluation instrument. It is in this area that the evaluation instrument can be tailored for specific job expectations based on the type of faculty and institution using the performance evaluation.

This study illustrated how the use of reflective practice was a method that informed and improved instructional quality among the faculty participating in the pilot. As stated earlier, a participant, Jessie, of the study commented,

> Just on the questions that you asked of me, they were open-ended. With the open-ended questions, I'm forced to look at my performance and develop some sort of, I guess, ownership for that. Then you asked me how I felt about it and if there were areas I felt I could improve upon or I would change, and this forces me to think maybe in a different direction.

In 1992, a study of 250 faculty members was conducted by Spencer and Flyr. From this study an assertion was made that the majority of the faculty indicated the formal evaluation process never or only occasionally led to instructional improvement. The study at Public Community College sought to ensure that the formal evaluation process not only informed instructional quality but provided an avenue to improve quality. Through the action research process, Public Community College administrators and faculty reflected and confirmed that the process was useful in informing and improving instructional quality.

When addressing the topic of reflection, North (1999) stated, "Faculty members appreciate the opportunity to speak to the evaluators, to direct them to one or another aspect of teaching performance, to provide interpretation, to share thoughts, and to add their person to the evidence" (p. 190). An important factor in improving teaching effectiveness is reflecting on their own practice (Stronge, 2007). Through the actions of this study, the interview component following the observation was added to the evaluation process. As a result, faculty and administrators realized the value of this reflective process. It also provided an opportunity to review the evaluation instrument and discuss possible areas that were not observed. Through the interview, the faculty member and observer are able to reflect on the lesson and discuss any discrepancies in the performance of the faculty member and the evaluation by the observer. This reflection provides the opportunity for discussion on the alignment of performance with the expectations of the job. Hence, reflection, following the observation session, is a method for informing and improving instructional quality.

The interview session in conjunction with the observation provided an opportunity for the exploration of what actually occurred in class as compared to what was intended. The Public

Community College action research team recommended the process of not only utilizing the new observation instrument but also the implementation of the post-observation interview. This strategy proved successful in this study.

Conclusion 2: Instructional quality is a broad and complex construct therefore multiple assessments are needed for evaluation.

As a result of this study, a new observation performance evaluation instrument was adapted for use by Public Community College. But, as noted in the Findings section, in many instances not all competencies can be observed in a classroom setting. Therefore, the observation evaluation source is recognized as just one component of a full evaluation system. Fite (2006) stated,

> Experts on faculty evaluation agree on the importance of multiple data sources and the need for different kinds of evidence in the evaluation of faculty performance. Yet many institutions fail to follow the guidelines presented by experts to ensure the faculty evaluation fairly and accurately captures the multiple dimensions of faculty performance (p. 191).

This study found that there are many components necessary for determining instructional quality. These components are broad and complex in that it requires determining a definition, selecting essential competencies, and developing or adapting the instruments necessary for assessing instructional quality. Each of these findings is essential processes each institution must undergo to create a collaborative practice.

This study illustrated how the creation of an observation evaluation instrument involved defining instructional quality and the determination of the essential competencies while securing "buy-in" from faculty and administrators. To achieve the success of creating an evaluation

system that ensures instructional quality, an institution must also utilize additional forms of evaluation such as supervisor, student, and self. It is the challenge of the institution to align the instruments to ensure the assessment of instructional quality is comparative.

Conclusion 3: Action research as a method of organizational development utilizes the expertise and knowledge among college faculty and academic administrators, strengthens collaboration, and cultivates system change.

In this study, action research provided a means of bringing together the efforts of faculty and academic administrators with a focus on assessing instructional quality. Through the implementation of the interventions developed by the team, the collaboration of the participants provided the support needed in selecting an instrument and a process for ensuring instructional quality.

"Any successful faculty evaluation system must be predicated upon and reflect the values, priorities, traditions, culture, and mission of the institution" (Arreola, 2007, p. xvi). The expertise and knowledge of college personnel provided the level of input necessary to address these characteristics of Public Community College. Participating on the action research team, members felt secure voicing their opinions, which, in the end, strengthened the collaboration between faculty and administration, cultivating system change.

Through defining instructional quality, review and selection of the performance competencies, and the reflection of practice, individual learning was experienced by the participants serving on the action research team. Even those faculty members that did not serve on the action research team but were observed experienced individual learning. Collective learning, through action research of the team members, was also achieved. Through the development of the crosswalk organizing the varied literature on performance competencies and

the review, discussion, and selection of the evaluation instrument, team members provided their insight and expertise in the development of an evaluation process that was viewed as an institutional process.

The cultivation of instructional quality was driven by the collaborative process. This study provided an opportunity for a standard institutional practice to be evaluated. As a result, a new instrument and process were adapted and piloted. Ultimately, this process created the opportunity for system-level development by expanding the knowledge of instructional quality, understanding how to assess instructional quality, and realizing how best to use the results to inform and improve instructional quality.

The process taken by the Public Community College action research team can be adapted by other two-year institutions in the development of evaluation sources and processes that assess instructional quality as it relates to their unique institutions. The determination of performance competencies by college faculty and administrators will inform their evaluation sources. A key for success is the collaborative effort of the stakeholders participating in the initiative for improving instructional quality through performance evaluation.

The following table reflects a summary of the literature reported through the various instructional evaluation systems and how each related to this study. Each resource is detailed by the level of the educational system and the focus of the literature. The final column in the table reflects the relationship and results of the literature to this action research study.

Table 18
Instructional Evaluation Systems

Resource	**Evaluation System**	**Relationship and Results**
Arreola (1997)	• Focus: Postsecondary Education • Development of an evaluation system	• The perspective of the role of a faculty member • This study aligned with Arreola's second perspective

Resource	Evaluation System	Relationship and Results
		• Performance evaluation process is essential for each institution • This study did not find that adding weights to specific competencies was necessary—primarily due to level of the institution where publication and research are not key responsibilities of faculty
Chickering and Gamson (1987)	• Focus: Postsecondary Education • Seven principles for good practice	• Faculty/student collaboration • The use of reflection with student learning • This study confirmed the principles for good practice that focus on the contact between the faculty and students, the consideration of multiple approaches to learning, and the engagement of students in learning
Hirst (1982)	• Focus: Postsecondary Education • Identification of effective teaching competencies	• Accountability of faculty • Ensuring evaluation forms are useful in informing faculty • This study reinforced the need for faculty involvement in the selection of effective teaching competencies and the use of performance evaluation for instructional improvement
Kember & Ginns (2012)	• Focus: Postsecondary Education • Scholarship of teaching	• Performance competencies associated with exemplary instruction

Resource	Evaluation System	Relationship and Results
		• Focus of performance evaluation should be to improve instruction • This study confirmed that the aim or purpose of evaluating faculty should be improving the quality of teaching and providing a better learning environment
Kennedy (2000)	• Focus: Secondary Education • Dimensions considered critical for effective teaching	• Performance competencies associated with exemplary instruction • This study expanded the use of secondary education competencies to the post-secondary level of teacher evaluation
Seldin and Associates (1995, 1997, 1999, 2006)	• Focus: Postsecondary Education • Evaluation of faculty performance	• Faculty evaluation, inexact human method • This study confirmed the importance of faculty self-reflection in performance evaluation and also expanded the use of the ingredients of effective teaching
Stronge (2010) Teaching Keys, Stronge (2011)	• Focus: Secondary Education • Research-based standards for assessing teacher excellence	• Adapted secondary evaluation form for post-secondary use • Used components of the evaluation form • This study found that some information was not applicable for post-secondary use—specifically parental information but found that many of the competencies could be expanded for use in post-secondary education

Implications

One theory, referencing the evaluation of faculty, denied the ability for assessment to be conducted since there are no standards by which teaching could be measured. Although the standards, or competencies, are unique to each institution, there are standards by which to measure instructional quality. As illustrated by this study, it is the responsibility of each institution to determine what those standards for instructional quality are and what evaluation sources should be used to assess them.

This study sought to address the gap in literature on performance evaluation in higher education, specifically at the community college level. However, the results of this study found that the institution type, community college or four-year/research university, does not change the recommendation for policy implications, as detailed below. As the conclusions found, the development of the performance evaluation process is essential for each institution no matter the level of degree the college/university is awarding. Of more significance is the participation of the faculty and administration in the development and review of the evaluation process and the inclusion of the performance evaluation process within an institution's annual assessment cycle.

This study presented multiple implications for informing and improving instructional quality through performance evaluation. These implications include the value of instituting a collaborative, continuous improvement performance evaluation process, alignment of the evaluation instruments with performance expectations, professional development opportunities, and the creation of policy associated with faculty performance evaluation.

Collaborative Continuous Improvement

Building on the progress made thus far at Public Community College, the next step is to utilize the work of the team and expand the information determined through this study to the

remaining evaluation instruments, which include supervisor, self, and student evaluations. Completing this work will create an evaluation system at Public Community College. "Most often a system is not a system but a series of parts that are very loosely integrated, if at all (Miller, Finley, and Vancko, 2000, p. 13). This study has allowed for the development of an integrated evaluation system at Public Community College. But, the work does not end with the creation of the system. As with any other institutional process, continuous evaluation and improvement are expected. The creation of a performance evaluation system is no different. Utilizing the same process, action research, an assessment of the evaluation system and the process must be evaluated each year to ensure the assessment of instructional quality is based on accurate performance competencies, quality indicators, and rating scales.

Alignment of Performance Expectations

The study confirmed the importance of the faculty and administrators' ability to recognize instructional quality and align the evaluation instrument to performance expectations. Through the continuous evaluation and improvement process, this concept is critical to the success of an evaluation system. Instructional quality demands continual growth, not only for the faculty member but administrators as well. In order to maintain the continual growth, the system that measures it, must grow also.

Professional Development

As a result of this study, professional development can be viewed in two ways. These two avenues include: professional development for conducting the evaluation process itself and the professional development of faculty following their evaluation. First, the communication of how the evaluation process was created and the research that was involved is necessary for the

full community to understand. In addition, professional development opportunities are required of the individuals utilizing the instruments.

Second, it is important to realize the significance of providing professional development opportunities for faculty completing the evaluation process. For performance evaluation to accomplish improved instructional quality, learning opportunities must be made available for those faculty requiring additional assistance. These professional development opportunities can be accomplished through internal resources such as a mentorship program or resources external to the institution, which includes academic conferences.

Policy Inferences

Although the development of a performance evaluation process for the assessment of instructional quality is essential for each institution, there are opportunities for policy development within the college setting. The policy implications include the utilization of an informative instrument and the implementation of an assessment cycle to review the performance evaluation process as well as the instruments being utilized.

First, although the competencies found on an evaluation instrument are unique to each institution, the components of the instrument should be informative. These components include the performance competency and its definition as determined by college stakeholders; a set of quality indicators reflecting those specific, observable, measurable aspects of each major job responsibility; and a detailed appraisal rubric with well-defined rating scales describing acceptable performance levels for each competency.

Additionally, the evaluation instruments and performance evaluation process should not be a static process within a college. The annual assessment cycle of an institution should include the performance evaluation process. As illustrated by this study, faculty and administrators

should assess the definition of instructional quality as well as the competencies associated with exemplary instruction annually to ensure the alignment between the college's expectations of performance and the instruments used to assess those expectations.

Future Research

This study raised opportunities for future study. These opportunities include the replication of this study to include other forms of evaluation and exploring alternative approaches to assessing instructional quality.

One recommendation for future research includes the replication of this work in other areas of evaluation. This study explored the assessment of instructional quality through observation. Reproduction of this study with evaluations utilized by supervisors, peers, and students may provide additional avenues for improving instructional quality. Also, future study opportunities exist in the replication of this study at other two-year institutions as well as other types of higher education environments.

The replication of this study would also further the validity and reliability of the assessment instrument. Currently, the instrument has only been utilized with a pilot group of faculty. Expanding the use of the instrument with additional faculty will provide an opportunity for further assessment of the evaluation source itself. In addition, utilizing the new evaluation instrument over multiple performance evaluation periods would allow for the measurement of improved instructional quality over a longer period of time.

Another area for future research includes the exploration of alternative ways for assessing instructional quality. This study utilized assessment through performance evaluation. The assessment method utilized in this study focused on observation of faculty. There are other

avenues that may produce valuable information. One such avenue may be the utilization of student learning outcomes as an indicator of improved instructional quality by a faculty member.

Finally, additional research addressing the institutional type as it relates to the evaluation of faculty could be expanded. Although defining instructional quality and the selection of the performance competencies are unique to each institution, a study across a longer period of time focusing on specific institutional types would add to the literature on faculty performance evaluation within higher education.

Summary

This study illustrated how action research supports organizational learning for informing and improving instructional quality through performance evaluation. Findings indicated a definition of instructional quality and reported eight competencies necessary for ensuring quality. The findings provided insight into the assessment of instructional quality through performance evaluation and the utilization of results for improvement. By following the framework used in this study, administrators and faculty can work collaboratively in realizing the competencies associated with quality instruction at their institutions.

The action research methodology provided an opportunity for the review and change of the performance evaluation process that too often becomes simply a “check-off” assignment and does little to improve instructional quality. The ability for a team of faculty and administrators to sit at the same table and discuss and agree upon the alignment of performance expectations and an evaluation instrument that measures those expectations supports the value of the action research method. Through the implementation of the three interventions, this study set change into motion and facilitated a new assessment process that focused on improving instruction and provided the means in which to attain quality.

References

AAUP. (2006). *Policy documents and reports.* Washington, DC.

Ackerman, A. (1996). *Faculty performance review and evaluation: Principles, guidelines, and successes.* Paper presented at the 5th Annual International Conference of the National Community College Chair Academy, Phoenix, AZ.

Alfred, R., Shults, C., & Seybert, J. (2007). *Core indicators of effectiveness: For community colleges*. Washington, DC: Community College Press.

American Association of Community Colleges. (2013). Community college fact sheet: Building a nation of learners by advancing America's community colleges. Washington, DC.

Anderson, D. L. (2010). *Organization development: The process of leading organizational change*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Angelo, T. A., & Cross, K. P. (1993). *Classroom assessment techniques: A handbook for college teachers* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc.

Appling, S. E., Naumann, P. L., & Berk, R. A. (2001). Using a faculty evaluation triad to achieve evidence-based teaching. *Nursing and Health Care Perspectives, 22*, 247-251.

Arbaugh, J. B., & Hornik, S. (2006). Do Chickering and Gamson's seven principles also apply to online MBAs? . *The Journal of Educators Online, 3*(2).

Arreola, R. A. (2007). *Developing a comprehensive faculty evaluation system: A guide to designing, building, and operating large-scale faculty evaluation systems* (3rd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc.

Bain, K. (2004). *What the best college teachers do*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Berk, R. A. (2005). Survey of 12 strategies to measure teaching effectiveness. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, 17*(1), 48-62.

Billimek, T. E. (2004). *A comparative study of faculty performance in public texas community colleges granting tenure versus public texas community colleges not granting tenure.* Doctoral dissertation, Capella University, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Burke, W. W. (2008). *Organization change* (Second ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publicatons, Inc.

Cashin, W. E. (1999). Student ratings of teaching: Uses and misuses. In P. Seldin (Ed.), *Changing practices in evaluating teaching: A practical guide to improved faculty performance and promotion/tenure decisions*. Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing Company, Inc.

Chickering, A. W., & Gamson, Z. F. (1987). Seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education. *AAHE Bulletin, 39*, 3-7.

Coghlan, D., & Brannick, T. (2010). *Doing action research in your own organization* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Cornell University. (2011). *Cornell University Teaching Evaluation Handbook.* Ithaca, NY.

DeZure, D. (1999). Evaluating teaching through peer classroom observation. In P. Seldin (Ed.), *Changing practices in evaluating teaching* (pp. 70-96). Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing Company, Inc.

EmpowerED Georgia. (2011). Complete college initiative: NCLB for higher education? Retrieved from EmpowerED Georgia website: http://www.empoweredga.org/Articles/complete-college.html

Farh, J. L., Werbel, J. D., & Bedeian, A. G. (1988). An empirical investigation of self-appraisal-based performance evaluation. *Personal Psychology, Inc., 41*, 141-156.

Fish, W. W., & Wickersham, L. E. (2009). Best practices for online instructors: Reminders. *Quarterly Review of Distance Education, 10*(3), 279-284.

Fite, D. (2006). Using evaluation data for personnel decisions. In P. Seldin (Ed.), *Evaluating faculty performance: A practical guide to assessing teaching, research, and service*. San Francisco, CA: Anker Publishing Company, Inc.

Foote, E. (1998). Faculty evaluation in community colleges. *Community College Journal of Research & Practice*, *22*(7), 693.

Gappa, J. M., Austin, A. E., & Trice, A. G. (2007). *Rethinking faculty work: Higher education's strategic imperative* (1st ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1988). Do inquiry pardigms imply inquiry methodologies? In D. M. Fetterman (Ed.), *Qualitative approaches to evaluation in education: The silent scientific revolution.* (pp. 89-115). London: Praeger.

Hellriegel, D., Jackson, S. E., & John W. Slocum, J. (2008). *Managing a competency-based approach* (11 ed.). Mason, OH: Thomson Higher Education.

Herr, K., & Anderson, G. L. (2005). *The action research dissertation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Hirst, W. A. (1982). *A study to identify effective classroom teaching competencies for community college faculty*. Doctoral Dissertation, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas.

Hoyt, D. P., & Pallett, W. H. (1999). *Appraising teaching effectiveness: Beyond student ratings. IDEA Paper*.

Hutchings, P., Huber, M. T., & Ciccone, A. (2011). Getting there: An integrative vision of the scholarship of teaching and learning. *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, 5*(1), 1-14.

Junker, B. W., Weisberg, Y., Matsumura, L. C., Crosson, A., Wolf, M. K., Levison, A., & Resnick, L. (2006). Overview of the instructional quality assessment. *National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST), CSE Technical Report 671*, 1-80.

Kember, D., & Ginns, P. (2012). *Evaluating teaching and learning: A practical handbook for colleges, universities, and the scholarship of teaching*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Langdon, K., & Osborne, C. (2001). *Performance Reviews*. New York: DK Publishing, Inc.

Linksz, D. (1990). Institutional inventory: Principles for good practice in undergraduate education (Fall ed., pp. 29). Catonsville, MD: Catonsville Community College.

Maxwell, J. A. (2005). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

McNiff, J., & Whitehead, J. (2009). *Doing and writing action research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Miao, K. (2012). Performance-based funding of higher education: A detailed look at best practices in 6 states. Washington DC: Center for American Progress.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Miller, R. L., Finley, C., & Shedd-Vancko, C. (2000). *Evaluating, improving, and judging faculty performance in two-year colleges*. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey.

North, J. D. (1999). Administrative courage to evaluate the complexities of teaching. In P. Seldin (Ed.), *Changing practices in evaluating teaching: A practical guide to improved faculty performance and promotion/tenure decisions*. San Francisco, CA: Anker Publishing Company.

Nwagwu, E. C. (1998). How community college administrators can improve teaching effectiveness. *Community College Journal of Research & Practice, 22*(1), 11.

Pallett, W. (2006). Uses and abuses of student ratings. In P. Seldin (Ed.), *Evaluating facutly performance: A practical guide to assessing teaching, research, and service*. San Francisco, CA: Anker Publishing Company, Inc.

Patton, M. Q. (2008). *Utilization-focused evaluation* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.

Ruona, W. E. A. (2005). Analyzing qualitative data. In R. A. Swanson & I. E. F. Holton (Eds.), *Research in organizations: Foundations and methods of inquiry* (pp. 233-263). San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

Schein, E. H. (1988). *Process consultation: Its role in organization development* (Second ed. Vol. One). Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Seldin, P. (1995). Improving College Teaching *Improving College Teaching*. Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing Company.

Seldin, P. (1999). *Changing practices in evaluating teaching*. Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing Company, Inc.

Seldin, P. (2006). *Evaluating faculty performance*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc.

Shao, L. P., Anderson, L. P., & Newsome, M. (2007). Evaluating teaching effectiveness: Where we are and where we should be. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 32*(3), 355-371.

Smith, B. (2007). Student ratings of teaching effectiveness: An analysis of end-of-course faculty evaluations. *College Student Journal, 41*(4), 788-800.

Spencer, P. A., & Flyr, M. L. (1992). The formal evaluation as an impetus to classroom change: Myth or reality? Riverside, CA: Riverside Community College.

Stringer, E. T. (2007). *Action research* (Third ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.

Stronge, J. H. (2007). *Qualities of effective teachers* (2nd ed.). Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Stronge, J. H. (2010). *Evaluating what good teachers do: Eight research-based standards for assessing teacher excellence*. Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education, Inc.

Stronge, J. H., & Xu, X. (2011). Teacher keys effectiveness system: Research synthesis of Georgia teacher assessment on performance standards. Williamsburg, VA: William and Mary.

U.S. Department of Education. (2006). A test of leadership: Charting the future of U.S. higher education. Washington, DC.

University of Michigan. (2011). *Methods of evaluating teaching*. Ann Arbor, MI.

Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Appendix A – Crosswalk of Competencies

Questionnaire Response	Arreola, 2007	Chickering & Gamson, 1987	Hirst, 1982	Kember & Ginns, 2012	Kennedy, 2000	Seldin & Associates, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2006	Snell & Mekies, 1995	Stronge, 2010	Teaching Keys, 2011, GA K-12	Popham, 2012	Competency or Performance Standards
Aligning intended learning outcomes, instruction, and assessment to effectively keep track of students' progress.									x		Assessment
Aligns student assessment with the established curriculum and benchmarks.								x			Assessment
Analyzes student assessments to determine the degree to which the intended learning outcomes align with the test items and student understanding of objectives.									x		Assessment
Collaborates with others to develop common assessments, when appropriate.								x			Assessment
continuous assessment										x	Assessment
Develops tools and guidelines that help students assess, monitor, and reflect on their own work.								x			Assessment
Gives homework and offers feedback on the homework.									x		Assessment
good evaluative and assessment										x	Assessment

Questionnaire Response	Arreola, 2007	Chickering & Gamson, 1987	Hirst, 1982	Kember & Ginns, 2012	Kennedy, 2000	Seldin & Associates, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2006	Snell & Mekies, 1995	Stronge, 2010	Teaching Keys, 2011, GA K-12	Popham, 2012	Competency or Performance Standards
Interprets information from teacher-made tests and standardized assessments to guide instruction and gauge student progress by examining questions missed to determine if the student has trouble with the content or the test structure.									x		Assessment
learning outcomes										x	Assessment
Plans a variety of formal and informal assessments aligned with instructional results to measure student mastery of learning objectives.								x			Assessment
Provides constructive and frequent feedback to students on their progress toward their learning goals.								x			Assessment
Reflect on their own classroom performance in order to improve it						x					Assessment
Reinforces learning goals consistently throughout the lesson.								x			Assessment
Reteaches material and/or accelerates instruction based on assessment to pace instruction appropriately for student interest and learning.								x			Assessment

Questionnaire Response	Arreola, 2007	Chickering & Gamson, 1987	Hirst, 1982	Kember & Ginns, 2012	Kennedy, 2000	Seldin & Associates, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2006	Snell & Mekies, 1995	Stronge, 2010	Teaching Keys, 2011, GA K-12	Popham, 2012	Competency or Performance Standards
student accountability and self-management										x	Assessment
student success										x	Assessment
Systematically analyzes and uses data to measure student progress, to design appropriate interventions, and to inform long- and short-term instructional decisions.								x			Assessment
Use feedback from students and others to assess and improve their teaching						x					Assessment
Uses assessment techniques that are appropriate for the developmental level of students.				x							Assessment
Uses open-ended performance assignments.									x		Assessment
Using high-quality homework and classroom quizzes to review student performance on key knowledge and skills, and providing meaningful and timely feedback.									x		Assessment
Clearly explain subject matter						x					Communication

Questionnaire Response	Arreola, 2007	Chickering & Gamson, 1987	Hirst, 1982	Kember & Ginns, 2012	Kennedy, 2000	Seldin & Associates, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2006	Snell & Mekies, 1995	Stronge, 2010	Teaching Keys, 2011, GA K-12	Popham, 2012	Competency or Performance Standards
Collaborates and networks with colleagues and community to reach educational decisions that enhance and promote student learning.								x			Communication
Communicate high expectations	x	x				x			x	x	Communication
Communicate to the level of their students						x					Communication
Communicates high, but reasonable, expectations for student learning.								x			Communication
Creates a climate of accessibility for students by demonstrating a collaborative and approachable style.								x			Communication
Demonstrates sensitivity to the social and cultural background of stakeholders (community, students, and colleagues).								x			Communication
Engages in ongoing communication and shares instructional goals, expectations, and progress with students in a timely and constructive manner.								x			Communication

Questionnaire Response	Arreola, 2007	Chickering & Gamson, 1987	Hirst, 1982	Kember & Ginns, 2012	Kennedy, 2000	Seldin & Associates, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2006	Snell & Mekies, 1995	Stronge, 2010	Teaching Keys, 2011, GA K-12	Popham, 2012	Competency or Performance Standards
Explains directions, concepts, and lesson content to students in a logical and sequential manner.								x			Communication
Gives regular feedback and reinforcement.		x							x	x	Communication
language proficiency										x	Communication
listen to feedback from students						x				x	Communication
Offer clear explanations and directions.									x		Communication
Offers timely and specific feedback									x		Communication
Possesses strong communication skills.									x		Communication
Provide frequent feedback to students on their performance						x				x	Communication
Recognize the levels of involvement ranging from networking to collaboration.									x		Communication
Use informal contacts at school events, the grocery store, and at other community places to keep the lines of communication open.									x		Communication
Uses modes of communication that are appropriate for a given situation.								x			Communication
Uses multiple forms of communication between school and									x		Communication

Questionnaire Response	Arreola, 2007	Chickering & Gamson, 1987	Hirst, 1982	Kember & Ginns, 2012	Kennedy, 2000	Seldin & Associates, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2006	Snell & Mekies, 1995	Stronge, 2010	Teaching Keys, 2011, GA K-12	Popham, 2012	Competency or Performance Standards
home.											
Uses precise language, correct vocabulary and grammar, and appropriate forms of oral and written communication.								x			Communication
Uses verbal and non-verbal communication techniques to foster positive interactions and promote learning in the classroom and school environment.								x			Communication
Aligns and connects lesson objectives to state curricula and standards, and student learning needs.								x			Instructional Planning
Analyzes and uses student learning data to inform planning.								x			Instructional Planning
Collaborate with one or more teachers while planning, rather than plan lessons alone.									x	x	Instructional Planning
Construct a blueprint of how to address the curriculum during the instructional time.									x		Instructional Planning
Course management	x										Instructional Planning
Develops appropriate course, unit, and daily plans, and is able to adapt plans when needed.								x			Instructional Planning

Questionnaire Response	Arreola, 2007	Chickering & Gamson, 1987	Hirst, 1982	Kember & Ginns, 2012	Kennedy, 2000	Seldin & Associates, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2006	Snell & Mekies, 1995	Stronge, 2010	Teaching Keys, 2011, GA K-12	Popham, 2012	Competency or Performance Standards
Develops critical and creative thinking by providing activities at the appropriate level of challenge for students.								x			Instructional Planning
Develops plans that are clear, logical, sequential, and integrated across the curriculum (*e.g.,* lesson plans, and syllabi).								x			Instructional Planning
Differentiates the instructional content, process, product, and learning environment to meet individual developmental needs.								x			Instructional Planning
Facilitate planning units in advance to make intra- and interdisciplinary connections.									x		Instructional Planning
Identifies and plans for the instructional and developmental needs of all students.								x			Instructional Planning
input into the planning										x	Instructional Planning
Instructional design	x										Instructional Planning
Plan for the context of the lesson to help students relate, organize, and make knowledge become a part of students' long-term memory.									x		Instructional Planning

Questionnaire Response	Arreola, 2007	Chickering & Gamson, 1987	Hirst, 1982	Kember & Ginns, 2012	Kennedy, 2000	Seldin & Associates, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2006	Snell & Mekies, 1995	Stronge, 2010	Teaching Keys, 2011, GA K-12	Popham, 2012	Competency or Performance Standards
Plan instruction in a multi-sourced manner.									x		Instructional Planning
Planning and informing of the evaluation criteria			x								Instructional Planning
Planning and informing students of course content			x								Instructional Planning
Planning and practicing classroom techniques			x								Instructional Planning
plans a course										x	Instructional Planning
Plans instruction effectively for content mastery, pacing, and transitions.								x			Instructional Planning
Sequence material to promote student's cognitive and development growth.									x		Instructional Planning
Take into account the abilities of their students and the students' strengths and weaknesses, as well as their interest level.									x		Instructional Planning
Use knowledge of available resources to determine what resources they need to acquire or develop.									x		Instructional Planning
Use student assessment data to plan what goals and objectives to address.									x		Instructional Planning
access to technology and competence										x	Instructional Strategies

Questionnaire Response	Arreola, 2007	Chickering & Gamson, 1987	Hirst, 1982	Kember & Ginns, 2012	Kennedy, 2000	Seldin & Associates, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2006	Snell & Mekies, 1995	Stronge, 2010	Teaching Keys, 2011, GA K-12	Popham, 2012	Competency or Performance Standards
Adapts teaching to address student learning styles									x	x	Instructional Strategies
allow students to succeed										x	Instructional Strategies
Bloom's Taxonomy										x	Instructional Strategies
Builds upon students' existing knowledge and skills.								x			Instructional Strategies
Clarity of presentation						x	x				Instructional Strategies
clearly defined										x	Instructional Strategies
Communicates and presents material clearly, and checks for understanding.								x			Instructional Strategies
consistency										x	Instructional Strategies
Demonstrates ability to engage and maintain students' attention and to re-capture or refocus is as necessary.								x			Instructional Strategies
Develops higher-order thinking through questioning and problem-solving activities.								x			Instructional Strategies
diverse needs										x	Instructional Strategies
Draw inferences from models and use analogies						x					Instructional Strategies

Questionnaire Response	Arreola, 2007	Chickering & Gamson, 1987	Hirst, 1982	Kember & Ginns, 2012	Kennedy, 2000	Seldin & Associates, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2006	Snell & Mekies, 1995	Stronge, 2010	Teaching Keys, 2011, GA K-12	Popham, 2012	Competency or Performance Standards
Effectively uses appropriate instructional technology to enhance student learning.								x			Instructional Strategies
Emphasizes time on task		x									Instructional Strategies
Engages students in authentic learning by providing real-life examples and interdisciplinary connections.								x			Instructional Strategies
Excellent management skills, organized, discipline issues, etc.									x		Instructional Strategies
fosters critical thinking										x	Instructional Strategies
good understanding of learning and teaching styles, theories, and delivery methods	x									x	Instructional Strategies
Group process/team building	x										Instructional Strategies
I understand you										x	Instructional Strategies
Innovativeness					x						Instructional Strategies
Involves students in appropriate and challenging learning activities, such as cooperative learning, to enhance higher-order thinking skills.									x		Instructional Strategies
knowing your student population										x	Instructional Strategies

Questionnaire Response	Arreola, 2007	Chickering & Gamson, 1987	Hirst, 1982	Kember & Ginns, 2012	Kennedy, 2000	Seldin & Associates, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2006	Snell & Mekies, 1995	Stronge, 2010	Teaching Keys, 2011, GA K-12	Popham, 2012	Competency or Performance Standards
Knows that instructional strategies that use students' prior knowledge in an inquiry-based, hands-on format facilitate student learning.									x		Instructional Strategies
Manage details of learning						x					Instructional Strategies
Maximizing instructional time									x		Instructional Strategies
Monitoring					x						Instructional Strategies
Motivate students				x		x				x	Instructional Strategies
multiple forms of instruction										x	Instructional Strategies
Oral presentation					x					x	Instructional Strategies
Paces instruction appropriately with adequate preview and review of instructional components.								x			Instructional Strategies
preparedness							x			x	Instructional Strategies
Provide clear expectations for assignments						x					Instructional Strategies
Provides academic rigor, encourages critical and creative thinking, and pushes students to achieve goals.								x			Instructional Strategies
Public speaking	x										Instructional Strategies

Questionnaire Response	Arreola, 2007	Chickering & Gamson, 1987	Hirst, 1982	Kember & Ginns, 2012	Kennedy, 2000	Seldin & Associates, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2006	Snell & Mekies, 1995	Stronge, 2010	Teaching Keys, 2011, GA K-12	Popham, 2012	Competency or Performance Standards
Relevance				x							Instructional Strategies
Respects diverse talents and ways of learning		x									Instructional Strategies
Skills - can motivate students						x					Instructional Strategies
Skills - can organize and emphasize					x	x					Instructional Strategies
Skills - can pose and elicit questions and examples						x					Instructional Strategies
Solicits comments, questions, examples, and other contributions from students throughout lessons.								x			Instructional Strategies
Stays involved with the lesson at all stages so that adjustments can be made based on feedback from the students.									x		Instructional Strategies
Stays involved with the lesson at all stages so that adjustments can be made based on feedback from the students.								x			Instructional Strategies
Stimulate interest										x	Instructional Strategies
Strategic decision making					x						Instructional Strategies
strong emphasis on content										x	Instructional Strategies
students knowledge and skills										x	Instructional Strategies

Questionnaire Response	Arreola, 2007	Chickering & Gamson, 1987	Hirst, 1982	Kember & Ginns, 2012	Kennedy, 2000	Seldin & Associates, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2006	Snell & Mekies, 1995	Stronge, 2010	Teaching Keys, 2011, GA K-12	Popham, 2012	Competency or Performance Standards
students opportunities to ask questions and promote ideas										x	Instructional Strategies
Tactical decision making					x						Instructional Strategies
Targeting areas of strength and weakness to provide appropriate remediation.									x		Instructional Strategies
teach the same topic over and over										x	Instructional Strategies
teaching techniques										x	Instructional Strategies
technology										x	Instructional Strategies
Think of teaching as a form of parenting						x					Instructional Strategies
Try to give students confidence						x					Instructional Strategies
Try to keep students - and themselves - off balance						x					Instructional Strategies
Use active, hands-on student learning						x					Instructional Strategies
Uses a variety of appropriate teaching strategies, which may include grouping, cooperative, peer and project-based learning, audiovisual presentation, lecture, discussions and inquiry, practice and application, questioning, etc.								x			Instructional Strategies

Questionnaire Response	Arreola, 2007	Chickering & Gamson, 1987	Hirst, 1982	Kember & Ginns, 2012	Kennedy, 2000	Seldin & Associates, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2006	Snell & Mekies, 1995	Stronge, 2010	Teaching Keys, 2011, GA K-12	Popham, 2012	Competency or Performance Standards
Uses a variety of instructional strategies, as no one strategy is universally superior with all students									x		Instructional Strategies
Uses multiple levels of questioning aligned with students' cognitive abilities.									x		Instructional Strategies
Uses remediation, skills-based instruction, and differentiated instruction to meet individual student's learning needs.									x		Instructional Strategies
Uses research-based strategies to enhance the time students spend with teachers by making instruction student-centered.									x		Instructional Strategies
variety of media										x	Instructional Strategies
Vary their instructional modes						x					Instructional Strategies
Willing to explain subject matter, in or out of the classroom						x					Instructional Strategies
Approachable						x	x				Interpersonal Skills
Believe all students can learn at high levels, high expectations.									x		Interpersonal Skills
clear and fair										x	Interpersonal Skills
comfortable										x	Interpersonal Skills

Questionnaire Response	Arreola, 2007	Chickering & Gamson, 1987	Hirst, 1982	Kember & Ginns, 2012	Kennedy, 2000	Seldin & Associates, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2006	Snell & Mekies, 1995	Stronge, 2010	Teaching Keys, 2011, GA K-12	Popham, 2012	Competency or Performance Standards
compassion										x	Interpersonal Skills
Conflict management	x										Interpersonal Skills
courage										x	Interpersonal Skills
desiring to make a difference										x	Interpersonal Skills
encouraging										x	Interpersonal Skills
enthusiastic										x	Interpersonal Skills
Friendly							x				Interpersonal Skills
hard-worker										x	Interpersonal Skills
Have a positive attitude						x					Interpersonal Skills
Integrity						x					Interpersonal Skills
Interested in the subject matter and in teaching itself						x					Interpersonal Skills
Interesting							x				Interpersonal Skills
Interpersonal skills / teamwork										x	Interpersonal Skills
Leadership					x						Interpersonal Skills
Never have enough						x					Interpersonal Skills
passion for the subject area										x	Interpersonal Skills
Personal - energetic						x					Interpersonal Skills

Questionnaire Response	Arreola, 2007	Chickering & Gamson, 1987	Hirst, 1982	Kember & Ginns, 2012	Kennedy, 2000	Seldin & Associates, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2006	Snell & Mekies, 1995	Stronge, 2010	Teaching Keys, 2011, GA K-12	Popham, 2012	Competency or Performance Standards
Personal - enthusiastic for subject and teaching						x					Interpersonal Skills
Personal - imaginative						x					Interpersonal Skills
Personal - open						x					Interpersonal Skills
Personal - possess a sense of humor						x					Interpersonal Skills
Personal qualities and attitudes useful to working with students						x				x	Interpersonal Skills
Personify enthusiasm for area of competence						x					Interpersonal Skills
Personify enthusiasm for life itself						x					Interpersonal Skills
Personify enthusiasm for students						x					Interpersonal Skills
positive influence										x	Interpersonal Skills
present										x	Interpersonal Skills
Present themselves in class as "real people"						x					Interpersonal Skills
Really want to be good teachers						x					Interpersonal Skills
Respect for students			x			x				x	Interpersonal Skills
Sensitivity					x						Interpersonal Skills
Take risks						x					Interpersonal Skills
Teacher-student relationships				x						x	Interpersonal Skills
Tolerance for stress					x						Interpersonal Skills

Questionnaire Response	Arreola, 2007	Chickering & Gamson, 1987	Hirst, 1982	Kember & Ginns, 2012	Kennedy, 2000	Seldin & Associates, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2006	Snell & Mekies, 1995	Stronge, 2010	Teaching Keys, 2011, GA K-12	Popham, 2012	Competency or Performance Standards
vigilance										x	Interpersonal Skills
vision										x	Interpersonal Skills
Academically challenging environment									x		Learning Environment
Actively listens and pays attention to students' needs and responses.								x			Learning Environment
Adept at organizing and maintaining an effective classroom environment									x		Learning Environment
atmosphere										x	Learning Environment
Cares about students as individuals and makes them feel valued.									x		Learning Environment
Conveys the message that mistakes should be embraced as a valuable part of learning.								x			Learning Environment
Create a class environment which is comfortable for students						x					Learning Environment
Create well-managed classrooms by identifying and teaching desirable behaviors to students.									x		Learning Environment
Culturally competent and attuned to students' interests									x		Learning Environment

Questionnaire Response	Arreola, 2007	Chickering & Gamson, 1987	Hirst, 1982	Kember & Ginns, 2012	Kennedy, 2000	Seldin & Associates, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2006	Snell & Mekies, 1995	Stronge, 2010	Teaching Keys, 2011, GA K-12	Popham, 2012	Competency or Performance Standards
both in and out of schools.											
Discipline and routines									x		Learning Environment
Emphasizes continuous improvement toward student achievement.								x			Learning Environment
Encourages active learning		x									Learning Environment
Encourages cooperation among students		x									Learning Environment
Encourages productivity by providing students with appropriately challenging and relevant material and assignments.								x			Learning Environment
Encourages student-faculty contact		x									Learning Environment
Encourages students to explore new ideas and take academic risks.								x			Learning Environment
engage the imagination										x	Learning Environment
Engagement of students							x		x	x	Learning Environment
Establishes clear expectations for classroom rules, routines, and procedures and enforces them consistently and appropriately.								x			Learning Environment

Questionnaire Response	Arreola, 2007	Chickering & Gamson, 1987	Hirst, 1982	Kember & Ginns, 2012	Kennedy, 2000	Seldin & Associates, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2006	Snell & Mekies, 1995	Stronge, 2010	Teaching Keys, 2011, GA K-12	Popham, 2012	Competency or Performance Standards
Establishes good discipline, effective routines, smooth transitions, and ownership of the environment as components of establishing a supportive and collaborative climate.									x		Learning Environment
Fairness						x					Learning Environment
feel comfortable										x	Learning Environment
Fosters relationships that exhibits belief in the students, and where respect and learning are central so students feel safe taking risks that are associated with learning.									x		Learning Environment
Good classroom management is preventive rather than reactive.									x		Learning Environment
Has a sense of "with-it-ness," which can be translated as being aware of when routines need to be altered or an intervention may be needed to prevent behavior problems.									x		Learning Environment
Maximizes instructional time.								x			Learning Environment

Questionnaire Response	Arreola, 2007	Chickering & Gamson, 1987	Hirst, 1982	Kember & Ginns, 2012	Kennedy, 2000	Seldin & Associates, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2006	Snell & Mekies, 1995	Stronge, 2010	Teaching Keys, 2011, GA K-12	Popham, 2012	Competency or Performance Standards
Physical arrangement of the classroom									x		Learning Environment
Promotes a climate of trust and teamwork within the classroom.								x			Learning Environment
Promotes respect for and understanding of students' diversity.								x			Learning Environment
Provides transitions that minimize loss of instructional time.								x			Learning Environment
Responds to disruptions in a timely, appropriate manner.								x			Learning Environment
Acknowledges his or her perspective and is open to hearing their students' views.								x	x		Professional Knowledge
Active learning				x							Professional Knowledge
always be learning										x	Professional Knowledge
Challenging beliefs				x							Professional Knowledge
confident in their material and their guidance										x	Professional Knowledge
Content expertise	x									x	Professional Knowledge
convey knowledge										x	Professional Knowledge
Demonstrates ability to link present content with past and future learning experiences, other subject areas, and real world								x			Professional Knowledge

Questionnaire Response	Arreola, 2007	Chickering & Gamson, 1987	Hirst, 1982	Kember & Ginns, 2012	Kennedy, 2000	Seldin & Associates, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2006	Snell & Mekies, 1995	Stronge, 2010	Teaching Keys, 2011, GA K-12	Popham, 2012	Competency or Performance Standards
experiences and applications.											
Demonstrates accurate and current knowledge of subject matter.								x			Professional Knowledge
Demonstrates skills relevant to the subject area(s) taught.								x			Professional Knowledge
Determines and teaches the essential knowledge and skills through effective instruction									x		Professional Knowledge
distill the subject										x	Professional Knowledge
Effectively addresses appropriate curriculum standards.								x			Professional Knowledge
emotional intelligence										x	Professional Knowledge
Epistemology	x										Professional Knowledge
Exhibits instructional techniques relevant to the discipline taught.								x			Professional Knowledge
experience in field										x	Professional Knowledge
Flexible, adaptable, will search for what works.				x					x		Professional Knowledge
industry wisdom										x	Professional Knowledge
Instructional research	x										Professional Knowledge

Questionnaire Response	Arreola, 2007	Chickering & Gamson, 1987	Hirst, 1982	Kember & Ginns, 2012	Kennedy, 2000	Seldin & Associates, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2006	Snell & Mekies, 1995	Stronge, 2010	Teaching Keys, 2011, GA K-12	Popham, 2012	Competency or Performance Standards
Integrates key content elements and higher level thinking skills in instruction.								x			Professional Knowledge
Is certified in his or her field, resulting in higher levels of student achievement on standardized tests									x		Professional Knowledge
Is culturally competent									x		Professional Knowledge
knowledge in the field of study						x	x			x	Professional Knowledge
Learning theory	x										Professional Knowledge
many types of work										x	Professional Knowledge
Offer real-world, practical examples						x					Professional Knowledge
Organization of subject matter				x		x	x		x	x	Professional Knowledge
Policy analysis and development	x										Professional Knowledge
Possesses a great deal of knowledge about the content- and curriculum- areas taught, and knows how the material fits into the educational landscape									x		Professional Knowledge
Practice/clinical skills	x										Professional Knowledge
Problem analysis					x						Professional Knowledge
Provide the relevance of information to be						x					Professional Knowledge

Questionnaire Response	Arreola, 2007	Chickering & Gamson, 1987	Hirst, 1982	Kember & Ginns, 2012	Kennedy, 2000	Seldin & Associates, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2006	Snell & Mekies, 1995	Stronge, 2010	Teaching Keys, 2011, GA K-12	Popham, 2012	Competency or Performance Standards
learned											
Research techniques	x										Professional Knowledge
Seeks to know about the cultures and communities from which students come									x		Professional Knowledge
Skills - can clarify ideas and point out relationships						x					Professional Knowledge
Skills - masters of a subject						x					Professional Knowledge
Skills - reasonable, imaginative, and fair in managing the details of learning						x					Professional Knowledge
Skills in instruction						x					Professional Knowledge
Understand fundamental concepts				x							Professional Knowledge
attendance										x	Professionalism
continuing education										x	Professionalism
Demonstrates flexibility in adapting to school change.								x			Professionalism
Engages in activities outside the classroom intended for college and student enhancement.								x			Professionalism
Evaluates and identifies areas of personal strengths and weaknesses related to professional skills and their impact on student learning and sets goals for improvement.								x			Professionalism

Questionnaire Response	Arreola, 2007	Chickering & Gamson, 1987	Hirst, 1982	Kember & Ginns, 2012	Kennedy, 2000	Seldin & Associates, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2006	Snell & Mekies, 1995	Stronge, 2010	Teaching Keys, 2011, GA K-12	Popham, 2012	Competency or Performance Standards
Financial/budget management	x										Professionalism
Handles administrative routines, policies, and procedures quickly and efficiently.								x			Professionalism
Maintains professional demeanor and behavior (*e.g.,* appearance, punctuality, and attendance).								x			Professionalism
Models caring, fairness, respect, and enthusiasm for learning.								x			Professionalism
Participates in ongoing professional growth activities based on identified areas for improvement and incorporates learning into classroom activities.								x			Professionalism
Personnel management	x										Professionalism
Respects and maintains confidentiality and assumes responsibility for professional actions.								x			Professionalism

Appendix B - Questionnaire

From: Popham, Heidi

Dear Colleague,

As many of you know, I am currently enrolled in a doctoral program at the University of Georgia. The purpose for my research is to define instructional quality, determine the essential competencies considered necessary, and to form a realistic image of exemplary instruction. Once exemplary instruction is identified, how best can it be measured? Additional information is provided in the attached Consent Form.

You were selected as a possible participant because of your status as a faculty member, academic affairs representative, or college administrator. I am contacting you today to ask you to contribute to this research by answering the below questions. Completing the following questions should take approximately 5-10 minutes of your time.

You can return your completed questions via email to [redacted] or, if you prefer to remain anonymous, fax your response to Heidi Popham at [redacted] or mail your answers to me at [redacted]. Your contribution to this project would be greatly valued and appreciated.

Thank you!
Heidi

Questions

My current position at the college is:

- ☐ **Faculty Member**
  - ☐ Full-time
  - ☐ Part-time (Adjunct)

  - ☐ Traditional Courses
  - ☐ Online Courses
  - ☐ Hybrid Courses

  - ☐ Business Technologies
  - ☐ General Education Division
  - ☐ Health Technologies
  - ☐ Industrial Technologies
  - ☐ Public Service Technologies

☐ **Administrator**
  ☐ Academic Affairs
  ☐ Other

As an administrator/faculty member of [redacted] College, please answer the following questions as they relate to our institution.

1) How do you define effective teaching?

2) In your opinion, what are the competencies associated with instructional quality?

Appendix C - University of Georgia Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval

From: Kate Pavich
Sent: Friday, November 04, 2011 9:50 AM
To: Lorilee R Sandmann
Cc: Heidi KATHYRN Popham
Subject: IRB Approval - Sandmann/Popham

PROJECT NUMBER: 2012-10185-0
TITLE OF STUDY: Improving Instructional Quality Utilizing Performance Evaluation at a Technical College
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Dr. Lorilee R. Sandmann

Dear Dr. Sandmann and Ms. Popham,

The University of Georgia Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed and approved your above-titled proposal through the exempt (administrative) review procedure authorized by 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) - Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless (i) the information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human participants can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the participants; and (ii) any disclosure of the human participants' responses outside the research could reasonably place the participants at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the participants' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Please remember that any changes to this research proposal can only be initiated after review and approval by the IRB (except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the research participant). Any adverse events or unanticipated problems must be reported to the IRB immediately. The principal investigator is also responsible for maintaining all applicable protocol records (regardless of media type) for at least three (3) years after completion of the study (i.e., copy of approved protocol, raw data, amendments, correspondence, and other pertinent documents). You are requested to notify the Human Subjects Office if your study is completed or terminated.

Good luck with your study, and please feel free to contact us if you have any questions. Please use the IRB number and title in all communications regarding this study.

Regards,
Kate
--
Kate Pavich
IRB Coordinator
Human Subjects Office
627A Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center
University of Georgia
Athens, GA 30602-7411
kpavich@uga.edu
Phone: 706-542-5972
Fax: 706-542-3360
http://www.ovpr.uga.edu/hso/

Appendix D – Consent Letter from Sponsor Site

[redacted]

June 17, 2011

Lorilee R. Sandmann, Ph.D.
College of Education
Department of Lifelong Education, Administration, and Policy
University of Georgia
Room 413, River's Crossing
Athens, GA 30602

Dear Dr. Sandmann,

As the President of [redacted], I fully support Heidi Popham and the research she will be completing at [redacted] as partial requirement to complete a doctoral degree.

The action research that will be completed is in regard to her dissertation to measure instructional quality through performance evaluation. Ms. Popham will utilize a team approach to conduct the initial data collection from documents already produced by the college. In addition to that information, the team will work with faculty and administrative focus groups. Minutes of the team meetings will be recorded.

Once again, I fully support Heidi Popham with her research efforts and am in full agreement that the research takes place at [redacted]

Sincerely,

[redacted]
President

[redacted]

Appendix E – Action Research Team Member Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

I, _____, agree to participate in a research study titled "Improving Instructional Quality Utilizing Performance Evaluation at a Technical College" conducted by Heidi Popham from the Department of Lifelong Education, Administration, and Policy, at the University of Georgia (706-233-2443) under the direction of Dr. Lorilee R. Sandmann, Department of Lifelong Education, Administration, and Policy, University of Georgia (706-542-4014). I understand that my participation is voluntary. I can refuse to participate or stop taking part at any time without giving any reason, and without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. I can ask to have all of the information about me returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

The reason for this study is to focus on understanding how instructional quality is defined, the essential characteristics considered necessary, and forming a realistic image of what exemplary instruction looks like. Once there is an understanding of instructional quality, how best can it be measured? With a focus on performance evaluations, an action research team will assess the various instruments currently used to determine how and if instructional quality is measured. With a goal of developing a new instrument and procedure that both faculty and administrators support, the team will implement the new process with a pilot group of administrators and faculty and assess the results to determine if the new method is successful in measuring and documenting instructional quality. The study will not benefit me directly, however, the results of this research will add to the knowledge of defining instructional quality and measuring and documenting exemplary instruction through performance evaluation.

If I volunteer to take part in this study as a member of the Action Research Team, I will be asked to do the following things:

1. I will answer questions about instructional quality which will take approximately 30 minutes
2. Take part in a focus group or interview to further define and list characteristics that reflect exemplary instruction which will take approximately one hour
3. Take part in the analysis of current performance evaluation processes which will take approximately one hour on several occasions
4. Participate in the development of a new evaluation tool that includes the characteristics identified which will take approximately one hour twice a month
5. Participate in determining the study procedures (focus groups, interviews, data analysis) and sequence (procedure dates) which will take approximately one hour on several occasions
6. My part in this study will last approximately five months

No discomforts or stresses are expected during this research. In addition, there are no risks expected by participating in this research.

The results of this participation will be confidential with direct identifiers, and will not be released, unless otherwise required by law. I realize that my responses/information may potentially be linked/traced back to me, for example, through the minutes of team meetings, focus groups, or interview sessions. I have the right to review the minutes of the meetings/groups that I am a participant. Paper records will be used during this study. The information will be secured in a locked file cabinet drawer. Additionally, information will be stored electronically. The electronic information will be stored in a password protected file. The only people that will have access to the individually-identifiable information are the Action Research Team members. The research information will be maintained for five years.

The researcher will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project, and can be reached by telephone at: (706) 233-2443.

My signature below indicates that the researcher has answered all of my questions to my satisfaction and that I consent to volunteer for this study. I have been given a copy of this form for my records.

Heidi K. Popham	_____	_____
Name of Researcher	**Signature**	**Date**

Telephone: (706) 233-2443
Email: hpopham@uga.edu

_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	**Signature**	**Date**

Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 629 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu.

Appendix F – Faculty Classroom Observation Instrument and Aids

Public Community College
Faculty Classroom Observation Instrument and Aids

Instructor: _____ **Date:** _____

Evaluator: _____

Classroom Observation Instrument

Mark the observed rating of performance for each competency of instructional quality – please refer to each performance competencies' observation aid for explanatory information.

Performance Competencies	Rating	Comments
Assessment	_____ Exemplary (4) _____ Proficient (3) _____ Needs Development (2) _____ Ineffective (1) _____ Did Not Observe (0)	
Communication	_____ Exemplary (4) _____ Proficient (3) _____ Needs Development (2) _____ Ineffective (1) _____ Did Not Observe (0)	
Instructional Planning	_____ Exemplary (4) _____ Proficient (3) _____ Needs Development (2) _____ Ineffective (1) _____ Did Not Observe (0)	
Instructional Strategies	_____ Exemplary (4) _____ Proficient (3) _____ Needs Development (2) _____ Ineffective (1) _____ Did Not Observe (0)	
Learning Environment	_____ Exemplary (4) _____ Proficient (3) _____ Needs Development (2) _____ Ineffective (1) _____ Did Not Observe (0)	
Professional Knowledge	_____ Exemplary (4) _____ Proficient (3) _____ Needs Development (2) _____ Ineffective (1) _____ Did Not Observe (0)	

Adapted from James H. Stronge, Evaluating What Good Teachers Do (2010)

Faculty Classroom Observation Instrument Aid

Performance Competency: Assessment

The instructor uses data to measure student progress, guide instruction, and provide timely feedback.

Sample Quality Indicators *(examples may include, but are not limited to)*

The instructor:

- Aligns student assessment with the established curriculum and benchmarks.
- Plans assessments aligned with instructional results to measure student mastery of learning objectives.
- Reinforces learning goals consistently throughout the lesson.
- Reteaches material and/or accelerates instruction to pace instruction appropriately for student interest and learning.
- Uses assessment techniques that are appropriate for the development level of students.
- Uses homework and classroom quizzes to review student performance on key knowledge and skills, and providing meaningful and timely feedback.
- Uses open-ended performance assignments.
- Uses tools and guidelines that help students assess, monitor, and reflect on their own work.

Exemplary (4) *In addition to meeting the requirements for Proficient -*	**Proficient (3)** *Proficient is the expected level of performance.*	**Needs Development (2)**	**Ineffective (1)**	**Did Not Observe (0)**
The instructor continually demonstrates expertise and leads others to determine and develop strategies and instruments that are appropriate for the content and student population and guides students to monitor and reflect on their own academic progress.	The instructor consistently uses assessment strategies and instruments that are appropriate for the content and student population and provides timely feedback.	The instructor uses a limited selection of assessment strategies, is not consistent in linking the assessment to intended learning outcomes, **or** does not use assessment to plan/modify instruction.	The instructor chooses inadequate assessment strategies, **or** assesses infrequently, **or** the assessment tools are not appropriate for the content or student population, **or** does not report on student progress in a timely manner.	None of the quality indicators were observed.

Adapted from James H. Stronge, Evaluating What Good Teachers Do (2010)

Faculty Classroom Observation Instrument Aid

Performance Competency: Communication

The instructor communicates effectively with students in ways that promote student learning.

Sample Quality Indicators *(Examples may include, but are not limited to)*

The instructor:

- Communicates and presents material clearly, and checks for understanding.
- Communicates high, but reasonable, expectations for student learning.
- Communicates to the level of their students.
- Engages in ongoing communication and shares instructional goals, expectations, and progress with students in a timely and constructive manner.
- Explains directions, concepts, and lesson content to students in a logical and sequential manner.
- Provides constructive and frequent feedback to students on their progress.
- Uses modes of communication that are appropriate for a given situation.
- Uses precise language, correct vocabulary and grammar, and appropriate forms of oral and written communication.
- Uses verbal and non-verbal communication techniques to foster positive interactions and promote learning in the classroom.

Exemplary (4) *In addition to meeting the requirements for Proficient -*	**Proficient (3)** *Proficient is the expected level of performance.*	**Needs Development (2)**	**Ineffective (1)**	**Did Not Observe (0)**
The instructor continually uses communication techniques in a variety of situations to proactively inform, network, and collaborate with students to enhance learning.	The instructor communicates effectively and consistently with students in ways that enhance student learning.	The instructor is not consistent in communicating with students **or** communicates in ways that only partially enhance student learning.	The instructor does not adequately communicate with students. Poor acknowledgment of concerns, response to inquiries, or encouraging involvement.	None of the quality indicators were observed.

Adapted from James H. Stronge, Evaluating What Good Teachers Do (2010)

Faculty Classroom Observation Instrument Aid

Performance Competency: Instructional Planning

The instructor plans using state curricula and standards, effective instructional strategies, resources, and data to address the needs of all students.

Sample Quality Indicators *(examples may include, but are not limited to)*

The instructor:

- Aligns and connects lesson objectives to state curricula and standards.
- Develops appropriate course, unit, and daily plans, and is able to adapt plans when needed.
- Develops critical and creative thinking by providing activities at the appropriate level of challenge for students.
- Develops plans that are clear, logical, sequential, and integrated across the curriculum (*e.g.*, lesson plans, and syllabi).
- Differentiates the instructional content, process, product, and learning environment to meet individual developmental needs.
- Identifies and plans for the instructional and developmental needs of all students.
- Plans instruction effectively for content mastery, pacing, and transitions.

Exemplary (4) *In addition to meeting the requirements for Proficient -*	**Proficient (3)** *Proficient is the expected level of performance.*	**Needs Development (2)**	**Ineffective (1)**	**Did Not Observe (0)**
The instructor continually seeks and uses multiple data and real world resources to plan instruction to meet the individual student needs and interests in order to promote student accountability and engagement.	The instructor consistently plans using state curricula and standards, uses effective instructional strategies, resources, and data to address the diverse needs of all students**.**	The instructor is not consistent in using state curricula and standards, **or** is inconsistent using effective instructional strategies, resources, **or** data in planning to meet the needs of all students.	The instructor does not plan, **or** plans without adequately using state curricula and standards, **or** without using effective instructional strategies, resources, **or** without using data to meet the needs of all students.	None of the quality indicators were observed.

Adapted from James H. Stronge, Evaluating What Good Teachers Do (2010)

Faculty Classroom Observation Instrument Aid

Performance Competency: Instructional Strategies

The instructor promotes student learning by addressing individual learning differences and by using effective instructional strategies.

Sample Quality Indicators *(examples may include, but are not limited to)*

The instructor:

- Demonstrates ability to engage and maintain students' attention.
- Develops higher-order thinking through questioning and problem-solving activities.
- Effectively uses appropriate instructional technology to enhance student learning.
- Encourages productivity by providing students with appropriately challenging and relevant material and assignments.
- Engages students in active learning and maintains interest.
- Engages students in authentic learning by providing real-life examples.
- Paces instruction appropriately with adequate preview and review of instructional components.
- Provides academic rigor, encourages critical and creative thinking, and pushes students to achieve goals.
- Solicits comments, questions, examples, and other contributions from students throughout lessons.
- Stays involved with the lesson at all stages so that adjustments can be made based on feedback from the students.
- Uses a variety of appropriate teaching strategies, which may include grouping, cooperative, peer and project-based learning, audiovisual presentation, lecture, discussions and inquiry, practice and application, questioning, etc.
- Uses materials, technology, and resources to provide learning experiences that challenge, motivate, and actively involve the learner.

Exemplary (4) *In addition to meeting the requirements for Proficient -*	**Proficient (3)** *Proficient is the expected level of performance.*	**Needs Development (2)**	**Ineffective (1)**	**Did Not Observe (0)**
The instructor's instructional delivery consistently optimizes students' opportunity to learn by engaging students in higher-order thinking skills and processes to address different learning needs.	The instructor promotes student learning by addressing individual learning differences and by using effective instructional strategies.	The instructor is not consistent in addressing individual learning differences and/or uses limited instructional strategies.	The instructor offers instruction that does not challenge students by providing appropriate content **or** does not address differences in students' learning styles.	None of the quality indicators were observed.

Adapted from James H. Stronge, Evaluating What Good Teachers Do (2010)

Faculty Classroom Observation Instrument Aid

Performance Competency: Learning Environment

The instructor provides a well-managed, safe, orderly, student-centered environment that is conducive to learning, academically challenging, and encourages respect for all.

Sample Quality Indicators *(Examples may include, but are not limited to)*

The instructor:

- Actively listens and pays attention to students' needs and responses.
- Conveys the message that mistakes should be embraced as a valuable part of learning.
- Creates a climate of accessibility for students by demonstrating a collaborative and approachable style.
- Emphasizes continuous improvement toward student achievement.
- Encourages student-faculty contact.
- Encourages students to explore new ideas and take academic risks.
- Establishes clear expectations for classroom rules, routines, and procedures and enforces them consistently and appropriately.
- Maintains professional demeanor and behavior (e.g., appearance, punctuality, and attendance.)
- Models caring, fairness, respect, and enthusiasm for learning.
- Promotes a climate of trust and teamwork within the classroom.
- Promotes respect for and understanding of students' diversity.
- Responds to disruptions in a timely, appropriate manner.

Exemplary (4) *In addition to meeting the requirements for Proficient -*	**Proficient (3)** *Proficient is the expected level of performance.*	**Needs Development (2)**	**Ineffective (1)**	**Did Not Observe (0)**
The instructor uses resources, routines, and procedures to consistently provide a positive, well-managed, safe, and orderly environment that is conducive to learning, academically challenging, and encourages respect for all.	The instructor provides a well-managed, safe, and orderly environment that is conducive to learning, academically challenging, and encourages respect for all.	The instructor is inconsistent in providing a well-managed, safe, and orderly environment that is conducive to learning, academically challenging, and encourages respect for all.	The instructor poorly addresses student behavior, displays a negative attitude toward students, ignores safety standards, **or** does not otherwise provide an orderly environment that is conducive to learning, academically challenging, or encourages respect for all.	None of the quality indicators were observed.

Adapted from James H. Stronge, Evaluating What Good Teachers Do (2010)

Faculty Classroom Observation Instrument Aid

Performance Competency: Professional Knowledge

The instructor demonstrates an understanding of the curriculum and subject content.

Sample Quality Indicators *(examples may include, but are not limited to)*

The instructor:

- Acknowledges his or her perspective and is open to hearing their students' views.
- Demonstrates ability to link present content with past and future learning experiences, other subject areas, and real world experiences and applications.
- Demonstrates accurate and current knowledge of subject matter.
- Effectively addresses appropriate curriculum standards.
- Exhibits instructional techniques relevant to the discipline taught.
- Integrates key content elements and higher level thinking skills in instruction.
- Possesses a great deal of knowledge about the content- and curriculum- areas taught, and knows how the material fits into the educational landscape.

Exemplary (4) *In addition to meeting the requirements for Proficient -*	**Proficient (3)** *Proficient is the expected level of performance.*	**Developing/ Needs Development (2)**	**Ineffective (1)**	**Did Not Observe (0)**
The instructor consistently demonstrates extensive knowledge of the subject matter, continually enriches the curriculum, and guides others in enriching the curriculum.	The instructor demonstrates an understanding of the curriculum and the subject content by providing relevant learning experiences.	The instructor is not consistent in demonstrating an understanding of the curriculum and subject content, **or** lacks fluidity in using the knowledge in practice.	The instructor fails to demonstrate an understanding of the curriculum and subject content, **or** does not use the knowledge in practice.	None of the quality indicators were observed.

Adapted from James H. Stronge, Evaluating What Good Teachers Do (2010)

Appendix G – Non-Action Research Team Member Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

I, _____, agree to participate in a research study titled "Improving Instructional Quality Using Performance Evaluation as the Measure" conducted by Heidi Popham from the Department of Lifelong Education, Administration, and Policy, at the University of Georgia (706-233-2443) under the direction of Dr. Lorilee R. Sandmann, Department of Lifelong Education, Administration, and Policy, University of Georgia (706-542-4014). I understand that my participation is voluntary. I can refuse to participate or stop taking part at any time without giving any reason, and without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. I can ask to have all of the information about me returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

The reason for this study is to focus on understanding how instructional quality is defined, the essential characteristics considered necessary, and forming a realistic image of exemplary instruction. Once there is an understanding of instructional quality, how best can it be measured? With a focus on performance evaluations, an action research team will assess the various instruments currently used to determine how and if instructional quality is measured. With a goal of developing a new instrument and procedure that both faculty and administrators support, the team will implement the new process with a pilot group of administrators and faculty and assess the results to determine if the new method is successful in measuring and documenting instructional quality. The study will not benefit me directly, however, the results of this research will add to the knowledge of defining instructional quality and measuring and documenting exemplary instruction through performance evaluation.

If I volunteer to take part in this study as a member of the Pilot Group, I will be asked to do the following things:

1. I will answer questions about instructional quality which will take approximately 30 minutes
2. I approve the usage of the new assessment instrument in a performance evaluation.

No discomforts or stresses are expected during this research. In addition, there are no risks expected by participating in this research.

The results of the questionnaire will be confidential with direct identifiers, and will not be released, unless otherwise required by law. Paper records will be used during this study. The information will be secured in a locked file cabinet drawer. Additionally, information will be stored electronically. The electronic information will be stored in a password protected file. The results of the performance evaluation, used for research purposes, will be confidential with indirect identifiers. Paper records will be used during this study. The information will be secured in a locked file cabinet drawer. The coded data will be maintained in a different location. Additionally, information will be stored electronically. The electronic information will be stored in a password protected file. The coded data file will be maintained on a separate computer. I realize that my responses/information may potentially be linked/traced back to me, for example, through the minutes of team meetings, focus groups, or interview sessions. I have the right to review the minutes of the meetings/groups that I am a participant. The only people that will have access to the individually-identifiable information are the Action Research Team members. The research information will be maintained for five years.

The researcher will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project, and can be reached by telephone at: (706) 233-2443.

My signature below indicates that the researcher has answered all of my questions to my satisfaction and that I consent to volunteer for this study. I have been given a copy of this form for my records.

Heidi K. Popham	_____	_____
Name of Researcher	**Signature**	**Date**
Telephone: (706) 233-2443		
Email: hpopham@uga.edu		

_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	**Signature**	**Date**

Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 629 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu.