INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISION AND THE ROLE OF

HIGH SCHOOL DEPARTMENT CHAIRS

by

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(Under the direction of DR. SALLY J. ZEPEDA)

ABSTRACT

The study examined the perspectives of three high school department chairs and their work at providing instructional supervision to the teachers with whom they work. The study sought to understand the perspectives about supervision of the high school department chairs in three subject areas—math, science, and social studies—all considered high-stakes areas. Purposeful sampling was used to select three high school department chairs from one high school in northeast Georgia. Data were collected in semi-structured face-to-face interviews and analyzed using the constant comparative method. Data from each case were analyzed separately and then across cases in which three common propositions emerged: 1) High school department chairs experienced role conflict and ambiguity relative to providing instructional supervision, 2) The meaning of instructional supervision for the department chairs was intuitive and reflected differentiated approaches, and 3) Constraints, namely time and lack of emphasis, created obstacles for the department chairs. Findings of this study indicate that high school department chairs are unaware of their job description, are not given support to practice instructional supervision, and experience both role conflict and ambiguity in the course of completing the work of the department chair position. One implication of this study is that department chairs "negotiate" their roles relative to instructional supervision and have an "intuitive" sense of instructional supervisory practices.

INDEX WORDS: Instructional supervision, High school department chairs, Role theory, High-stakes testing

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DEDICATION

I don't suppose I ever figured the light at the end of the tunnel was anything other than a locomotive bearing down on me. Yet, here I am, writing the dedication that will be placed inside this work, easily the most emotional piece I have ever written.

I am dedicating this work, this challenge, to my Dad and Mom, Paul and MaryAnna Kruskamp. It is through your constant love and prayers that I have experienced success in this project. Our Sunday evening phone calls, when you would ask, "How is IT going?" Words cannot express what your love and support have meant to me. You have encouraged me, and believed in me, and I love you so much!

To my loving wife, Carol, for your ever present love, support, and patience as I worked through the hard times, the times that I wanted to give up the fight, and settle for less than my best. You wouldn't let me. You believed in me. The many nights and weekends that you rearranged your life to make room for my writing, my trips to Athens, and my inattention to our life together, I owe you so much, and I love you so much!

And to my children, this dissertation is proof that we can stick it out to the end, that we can finish the race, that we can do it. You kids, Paul, Peter, Jose', Helen, Kate, and Nick, you don't know how many times my thoughts of you gave me the courage to continue the challenge of completing this assignment. This is as much your accomplishment as it is mine. And I love you so much!

And to my sisters, Peggy, Dorothy, Dianne, MaryAnn, and Teresa, I dedicate this work to you, too. I have tried to do this right, to see it through for you, for all of us. And I love you so much!

And I thank the Good Lord, in Whom I have faith. And I love you so much!

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this study was a worthy goal, the countless times you persisted in believing that I could

accomplish this goal, leaves me in awe of your friendship.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

In the broadest sense, this study examined the perspectives of three high school department chairs and their work at providing instructional supervision to the teachers with whom they work. The study sought more specifically to understand the perspectives about instructional supervision of the high school department chairs in three areas—math, science, and social studies—all considered high-stake areas in the county in which the study was conducted.

The work and role of the high school department chair has been examined by many who seek to understand the relationship between the work of the position to the roles assumed while fulfilling this work (Bliss, Fahrney, & Steffy, 1996; Van Duzer, 1969; Weller & Weller, 2002; Wettersten, 1992). Results indicate that the department chair's role includes multiple tasks, and the role of high school department chairs lies somewhere between a teacher and an administrator (Mayers, 2001; Weller & Weller, 2002). Wettersten (1992) found that high school teachers tend to identify their department chairs, rather than their school principals, as the instructional leaders of the school; however, Mayers (2001) reported that the work of the high school department chair was too encumbered by quasi-administrative detail to enable the department chair to emerge as an instructional leader. Yet, in the available research on the department chair, no reference to instructional supervision, an aspect of instructional leadership, could be found.

Instructional leadership is a broad construct that encompasses a variety of roles and tasks that range from the technical to the interpersonal (Weller & Weller, 2002). Broadly, instructional leadership includes such work as the supervision of instruction (Haughey & MacElwain, 1992; Hoerr, 1996; Kleine-Kracht, 1993), the evaluation of the curriculum (Begley, 1994; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1998), and the oversight of change and school improvement (Gainey & Webb, 1998). Others, when describing instructional leadership, have included any actions designed to improve conditions for teaching and learning (Carter & Klotz, 1992; Daresh, Gantner, Dunlap, & Hvizdak, 2000)—all loosely coupled to the intents of instructional supervision.

Given the prevalence of the high school department chair in the American high school, it appears logical to examine very specifically the role of the high school department chair as instructional leader related to instructional supervision. This study sought to examine the work of the high school department chair related to the supervision of instruction—what are the perspectives of high school department chairs on supervising the teachers within their respective departments? This question emerges, in part, from the elevated role of the high school department chair in most high schools in Georgia and the accountability movement trickling down to the schools in the state of Georgia.

During the last several years in Georgia, schools have experienced the press for accountability through such measures as high-stakes testing, the elimination of social promotion, and the reporting of test results in school report cards. With the passage of the *A Plus Education Reform Act of 2000*, a new era of teacher evaluation and accountability was ushered into the state. Combined with other high-stakes measures of student achievement, such as the Performance Achievement tests developed by the school

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system in which this study was conducted, teachers are experiencing a demand for accountability in their instructional practices as well as the improved academic achievement of their students. According to Darling-Hammond (2002), high-stakes testing is being used to encourage accountability and over one-half of the 47 states that use high–stakes assessments, make use of the scores to either measure student achievement or school performance, or both.

In light of the demand for teacher accountability, it seems appropriate to understand the work high school department chairs do to supervise the instruction of the teachers within their departments. To study this aspect of the work of high school department chairs, it is essential to understand the perspectives that the participants— three high school department chairs—believe about instructional supervision.

In the system in which this study was conducted, the Board of Education had an established job description for department chairs listing both evaluation and supervision as primary functions to be performed by the department chair as a complement to the work of the principal. As quasi-administrators in the subject system, high school department chairs are required to undergo state-approved training in the evaluation of teacher performance, and they are expected to supervise teaching as it occurs in the classroom. Stated in this job description for high school chairs is an expectation for the department chair to supervise first, and then to evaluate.

The supervisor-evaluator tension has been reported extensively in the supervision literature as being a conflict of interest and intent for principals (Glickman, 1993; Sergiovanni, 1992). Yet, no literature could be found explicating this issue in the

literature on role of the high school department chair who is expected to be a support and then, simultaneously, often expected to be an evaluator.

According to Glatthorn (1990), Glickman (1990), and Zepeda (2003) instructional supervision is an ongoing formative process with the improvement of a teacher's instructional practices as its intent. Evaluation, on the other hand, is summative and results in a rating or judgment of the teacher's professional performance (McGreal, 1983; Pajak, 1993; Zepeda, 2003). Could there be a built-in conflict inherent in the work of department chairs and their work with teachers and instructional supervision?

Role theory illustrates how an individual acts out an "office," or a position of employment, couched in a specified environment of expectations delivered by individuals within the organization (e.g., subordinates, equals, supervisors, customers, suppliers), the goals of the company or organization, and the individual's expectations (Huse, 1980; Katz & Kahn, 1978). The individual's ability to satisfy the members of the organization or role-set determines how much role conflict or ambiguity is experienced (Katz & Kahn, 1978). In some cases, a role will involve expectations that the individual cannot or, by choice, will not meet. This role conflict generally must be resolved for the individual to sustain the position of employment within the organization. If the individual fails to comprehend the expectations of a position (as opposed to not doing what is expected), role ambiguity results. In this scenario, the person may be frustrated because he or she is unable to comply with the expectations of the position since the expectations are not clear or vary widely. According to Katz and Kahn (1978), role ambiguity is a source of increased stress in the work environment.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the perspectives of three high school department chairs that, by virtue of their job description, were required to supervise and evaluate the teachers in their respective departments—mathematics, science, and social studies—all high-stakes subject areas. This study sought to portray the perspectives of the participants related to the supervision they were expected to provide to the members of their respective departments. With accountability of school personnel being emphasized through such means as standardized tests, it is important to understand how high school department chairs work with teachers they are required to supervise.

Statement of the Problem

The work of a high school department chair includes many responsibilities that assist with the overall running of the school in addition to the department. These responsibilities include the scheduling of classes and assigning teachers to teach these classes, ordering supplies and instructional materials, including textbooks, overseeing departmental budgets, meeting with and assisting the administrative team, as well as other duties (Mayers, 2001; Mayers & Zepeda, 2002; Weller, 2001; Weller & Weller, 2002; Wettersten, 1992). Also, important among these tasks and responsibilities are supervising and often evaluating the teachers in their departments as reported in the findings of numerous qualitative and quantitative studies (Mayers, 2001; Mayers & Zepeda, 2002; Verchota, 1971; Weller, 2001; Weller & Weller, 2002; Wettersten, 1992). However, to date, no research studies could be found that have focused solely on the aspects of high school department chairs supervising teachers.

The focus of this study was on the work of department chairs pertaining to the instructional supervision of classroom teachers. As such, the purpose of this study was to examine the perspectives of three high school department chairs as they provided instructional supervision in a school in a county that employs high-stakes testing in which the participants served as department chairs. The researcher chose to examine the perspectives of the social studies, science, and mathematics department chairs, as these department chairs supervise in high-stakes content areas in which achievement tests are administered to students in the tenth grade.

Research Questions

The overall purpose of this research was to examine the perspectives of three high school department chairs as they provide instructional supervision to the teachers in their respective departments (social studies, science, and math). The researcher sought to ascertain the perspectives of high school department chairs regarding instructional supervision in an environment of increased accountability vis-à-vis the presence of high-stakes achievement tests in the district in which they work. The researcher sought to answer:

1. What does instructional supervision mean to the department chairs?
2. What does instructional supervision look like in practice?
3. Are there organizational constraints that get in the way of department chairs supervising teachers?

Theoretical Framework

The methodological framework that guided the collection, analysis, and interpretation of the data in this study was symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969; Crotty, 1998; Silverman, 2000). According to Silverman (2000), symbolic interactionism is "an overall framework for looking at reality" (p. 77). Symbolic interactionism "at its heart is the notion of being able to put ourselves in the place of others" (Crotty, 1998, p. 8). Crotty further stated that symbolic interactionism was about "taking the place of the other" (p. 84). This research, which was conducted in a high school, sought to record the perspectives of high school department chairs as they supervised the teachers in their departments. This research sought to get as close to the people being studied as possible to obtain, first hand, their reality and their experiences, while providing instructional supervision.

Theoretical Significance

The theoretical significance of this research was found in three areas— instructional supervision, accountability, and role theory. With so little research available to document the work of department chairs in the area of instructional supervision, this study will add to the body of knowledge by examining the perspectives of chairs as they reflect on their experiences associated with instructional supervision. As these department chairs share their perspectives on instructional supervision, role conflict, ambiguity, and tensions associated with fulfilling their work will be examined as well.

The findings of this study will provide knowledge of the perspectives of teacher-leaders as they fulfill their roles as department chairs, and in particular, as they instructionally supervise the teachers in their departments.

Assumptions

Throughout the period of this research, the following assumptions were held to be true by the researcher:

1. The perspectives expressed by the high school department chairs were their own honest opinions.

2. The perspectives expressed by the high school department chairs were freely given.

3. The high school department chairs fully participated in the instructional supervision of teachers in their departments.

4. The high school department chairs were the best source of data for this study.

5. The work of department chairs is important to the high school.

Definition of Terms

The following definition of terms helped to anchor this study in the context of a high-stakes school system in Georgia and included:

1. High School Department Chair – a position of leadership over an area of curriculum specialization in a high school involving supervision of faculty within that area as well as management of all departmental resources associated with that area of curriculum.

2. Instructional Supervision – an ongoing formative process leading to the improvement of a teacher's instructional practices.

3. Evaluation – a summative process leading to a judgment or rating of a teacher's instructional practices.

4. Role Ambiguity – confusion and/or misunderstanding that results when a person is in a position and does not fully comprehend all of the expectations of that position, usually characterized by job stress.

5. Role Conflict – results when a person in a position fails to comply fully with known expectations of that position.

6. Performance Achievement Tests – a high-stakes assessment test measuring student achievement of the standards-based curriculum in the areas of math, science, and social studies.

7. High-stakes Environment – a system that takes into account student achievement on national and system-wide tests as markers of success.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study included:

1. The researcher was a former member of this group of department chairs approximately five years before the study.

2. The sample consisted of three high school department chairs—one each from math, science, and social studies.

3. The study was conducted at a single large high school in northeast Georgia.

Significance of the Study

Based on a literature search, including the seminal *Handbook on Supervision* (Firth & Pajak, 1998), it is deduced that there is inadequate research on the work of high school department chairs, particularly in the areas of instructional supervision. Moreover, no research could be found that examined the high school department chair and instructional supervision, teacher evaluation, or closely related areas such as peer

coaching or mentoring. With this in mind, this study can provide knowledge that can be used in the future by system and local school administrators who oversee the work of department chairs as well as high school department chairs who supervise teachers within their departments. Results of this study may be used to assist school system administrators, building principals, and department chairs in making instructional supervision more useful.

Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 included a background and rationale for the study, the purpose of the study, a statement of the problem, the research questions, as well as both the theoretical significance and framework for examining the perspectives of high school department chairs who provide instructional supervision to teachers in high-stakes subjects. In addition, the assumptions of the study, definition of terms, limitations of the study, and the significance of the study were provided. Chapter 2 reviewed the related literature including the overview of the research on high school department chairs, role theory, and instructional supervision, as well as accountability and high-stakes learning environments. In Chapter 3, data collection methods, namely the case study qualitative approach, methods of qualitative data analysis, and issues pertaining to subjectivity, validity, and reliability were discussed. Findings from the data were reported in Chapter 4, and a discussion of the findings with conclusions and implications were provided in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Wettersten (1992) asserted that the teachers in their departments recognize high school department chairs, not principals, as the instructional leaders. Several authors have suggested a similar role for the high school department chair as the instructional leader (Hord & Murphy, 1985; Mayers, 2001; Siskin, 1991; Weller, 2001; Weller & Weller, 2002). The construct of instructional leadership is very broad; however, instructional leaders assume many roles including work focused on the development of curriculum, the supervision of instruction, and the assessment of the overall academic program.

The purpose of this study was to examine the perspectives of three high school department chairs on the instructional supervision of the members in their respective departments—math, science, and social studies—all high-stakes subject areas. This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What does instructional supervision mean to the department chairs?

2. What does supervision look like in practice?

3. Are there organizational constraints that get in the way of department chairs supervising teachers?

This study was designed to examine the work of high school department chairs specifically related to instructional supervision. To date, no research that examined the department chair's role or work as the provider of instructional supervision could be

located. Therefore, this study is significant and timely due to the environment of increased accountability of teachers and the expectation for high school department chairs to supervise teachers who are being held accountable for student learning.

A qualitative approach, employing case study methods, was used for this research to describe the perspectives of high school department chairs that provided instructional supervision to the members of their departments—all high-stakes areas in the county in which data were collected. This chapter presents the three areas of literature in which this study is grounded—high school department chairs, role theory, and instructional supervision. A discussion of accountability is provided to understand perhaps better the work of high school department chairs that, in this study, worked in a "high-stakes" environment.

The High School Department Chair

The origin of the high school department chair has its roots in the growth of the American high school (Fenske, 1997; Marsh & Codding, 1999; Novack, 1958; Orris, 1988). As student populations outgrew the one room schoolhouse and additional classrooms were added to deal with this growth, it became necessary to create a position that would be responsible for the management of the facility as well as the day-to-day operations. Thus, the position of the "principal teacher" was created (Orris, 1988). With the continued growth of schools, principal teachers were unable to manage adequately the supervision of the teaching staff. According to Verchota (1971), "Departments were conceived when principals realized that they needed help in supervising instruction and attending to certain administrative details associated with instruction" (p. 128). This

development led to the use of veteran teachers supervising other teachers in their subject

fields, and these teachers became known as department heads (Kidd, 1965).

According to Williams (1964), departments, or subject areas, were not closely

supervised until after the First World War. With increased attention directed toward

teaching techniques and instructional materials, it became necessary for principals to

appoint teachers to act as heads of the departments and to assist in the supervision and

management of the teachers within the departments. Ironically, the research on the

department chair as instructional leader did not appear in the literature until the mid-

1990s.

Hipps (1965) and Novack (1958) summarized that the department head arose

from the belief that high schools should be patterned after colleges with departmental

organization. As Callahan (1971) asserted:

> The department head position appears in the organizational charts and faculty
> rosters of school districts in every state. The reason for this is simple: the
> chairmen fills an administrative vacuum created by the rapid growth of public
> education in America during this century. (p. 21)

Given the original intent for the emergence of the position of the high school

department chair—assisting with the supervision of members within the department—it

is important to understand the perspectives of high school department chairs and their

work with providing instructional supervision. Moreover, the understanding of the work

of the high school department chair and instructional supervision is especially critical in

light of the accountability movement.

The Role of the High School Department Chair

A prevalent theme found in high school department chair literature is that of the

misunderstood or varied role they play in the typical American comprehensive high

school (Hord & Murphy, 1985; Koch, 1930; Manlove & Buser, 1966; Mayers, 2001; Metty, 1969; Weller & Weller, 2002). In the first documented study of the high school department chair, Koch (1930) examined the department chair's role and concluded, "there can be no denying that the headship is in confusion" (pp.348-349). Koch's findings about role confusion and ambiguity of the department chair served as a beginning point to further research on this position. The early work of Koch is notable especially in light of scientific studies in the 1970s and 1980s in which the seminal works of Katz and Kahn (1978) and Huse (1980) have been used as a means of furthering the examination of roles—ambiguity and conflict.

Later, Manlove and Buser (1966) in their study on the department chair found a "sizable number of teachers, principals, and [department] heads perceived the position…to be one of the least understood positions in the school system" (p. 104). In a survey of 273 principals from 19 states, Manlove and Buser reported that:

- There is disagreement as to the qualifications of department heads presently holding the positions.
- Both teachers and department heads perceive more conflicts between what are and should be the functions of department heads than do principals.
- There is some disagreement among teachers, principals, and heads of departments as to the characteristics most essential for the position. (p. 104)

In discussing the misunderstood role of the high school department chair, Hord and Murphy (1985) wrote, "The role of the department chairperson or department head can be portrayed as one of 'paper pusher' at the one extreme and as 'commander-in-chief' at the other, depending on who is describing the role" (p. 2).

Research that is more recent continues to document the role confusion and difficulties explaining exactly what role, responsibility, and work a high school department chair assumes. For example, Weller and Weller (2002) wrote, "No one

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universally accepted job description exists which delineates the roles and responsibilities of this important mid-management position, despite the current trend to use the position as a training ground for the principalship" (p. 1). Similarly, Mayers (2001) reported, "Despite 70 years of history and approximately 40 studies, examination of high school department chairs is deficient both in depth and breadth" (p. 15).

Much of the research on the high school department chair is devoted to quantifying or describing the tasks, functions, and responsibilities that have been assigned to the position (ASCD, 1948; Engroff, 1976; Koch, 1930). A study completed by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development in 1948 produced a list of eleven general tasks that high school department chairs were responsible for including:

- Selecting textbooks;
- Scheduling department meetings;
- Initiating new teachers;
- Surveying instructional materials;
- Appraising and reorganizing courses;
- Requisitioning instructional supplies;
- Planning for efficient use of supplies and equipment;
- Preparing instructional materials;
- Planning remedial instruction
- Requisitioning repair or replacement of equipment; and,
- Developing new courses. (pp. 10-11)

The ASCD results, like Koch's (1930) earlier results, were obtained from quantitative methods—questionnaires—to provide an analysis of the work of department chairs through frequency measures (ASCD, 1948). A study by Engroff (1976) outlined the responsibilities of department chairs, or as they were called, "Interdisciplinary Learning Community Leaders (ILCL)." In this study, budgetary and scheduling duties were ranked as the most important role responsibility of the ILCL or department chair. Still,

the work of the high school department chair as instructional leader had not yet emerged in the research or in popular literature.

Research Pertaining to the High School Department Chair

Several studies of more recent vintage have been directed at observing the role and duties of department chairs. A 1987 study by Anderson produced a list of duties showing what were considered the most important and least important duties performed by the department chair. Allocating resources and communicating with teachers and administrators were identified as the most important responsibilities of the high school department chair. Providing staff development was identified as a low priority responsibility.

In another study, high school department chairs reported that their work with other department chairs was an important duty (DeRoche, Kujawa, & Hunsaker 1988). Orris (1988) with input from department chairs, teachers, and administrators developed a list of duties of high school department chairs. This research reported agreement by all parties on what department chairs did, but not on the amount of time spent completing the duties.

A 1990 study by Adduci, Woods-Houston, and Webb marked the first qualitative study of high school department chairs. Six factors were identified as contributing to role ambiguity for department chairs. These factors included:

- Equivocal job descriptions;
- Conflicting functions;
- Vague goals;
- Ineffective staff development;
- Lack of agreement by principals and central administrators; and,
- Inadequate resources. (p. 16)

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Adduci, et al. (1990) offered two recommendations to reduce the role ambiguity experienced by the high school department chairs. These recommendations included the need to reach consensus among principals, central office personnel, and department chairs, as well as the need to provide staff development to support department chairs in understanding the expectations of their roles. Korach (1996) addressed the need for consensus on the role of high school department chairs among local and district administrators.

Mayers' (2001) study examined the role of the high school department chair during the first year of implementing a block schedule. Although this study focused on change and the role of the high school department chair, Mayers reported, "each of the five department chairs reported surprise about the existence of a job description" (p. 134). Moreover, Mayers' participants reported, "that a clear understanding of the work of the department chairs by the administration" served to complicate efforts at any type of "systematic change in practices by the department chairs to assist teachers in improving their instructional practices" (p. 135). Because of the unique position of the high school department chair—between being a teacher and being an administrator—some researchers have referred to high school department chairs as "middle managers" (Bowman, 2002; Hannay & Ross, 1999; Weller & Weller, 2002; Wettersten, 1993) who are "neither fish nor fowl" (Wettersten, 1993).

In Wettersten's study (1993), participants used such terms as "liaisons," "bridges," and "middle managers" to describe the roles they played as high school department chairs. Hannay and Ross (1999) also concluded that the role of department

chair was a middle manager. Bowman (2002) looked at both post secondary and

secondary education department chairs and he concluded:

> The real work of academic department chairs demands a diverse set of leadership
> capabilities: well-honed communication skills, problem-solving skills, conflict-
> resolution skills, cultural-management skills, coaching skills, and transition-
> management skills. In the end, however, department chairs do not manage
> departments or even functions. (p. 6)

The purpose of the present study was to examine the perspectives of high school

department chairs regarding the supervision of the teachers within their respective

departments. Although no studies were found that specifically examined the instructional

supervisory role of the department chair, several authors have addressed the role or the

prominence of the department chair's work, in part, as an instructional leader (Johnson,

1990; Siskin, 1991; Wettersten, 1992). In Wettersten's (1993) case study of four

department chairs, factors that contributed to the establishment and to the fulfillment of

the position of department chair as an instructional leader were identified as:

- The amount of responsibility and support given to the chair by the building
  principal and other members of the administrative team.
- The credibility of the chair as a capable and trustworthy leader in the eyes of
  teachers in the chair's department.
- The chair's ability to share leadership within the departments by recognizing
  and utilizing instructional leadership abilities of teachers in a spirit and
  practice of collegiality.
- The chair's understanding of the vision and goals of the principal and
  administrative team as well as those of department members and the
  utilization of these understandings to bridge both groups as a communicator,
  interpreter, and facilitator. (pp. 187-189)

Wettersten asserted that the primary work of the department chair should be to serve as a

"'bridge' between teachers and administrators, [and this] illustrates a unique leadership

role for high school department chairs who embody both teaching and administrative

positions" (p. 4).

Qualitative Research on the High School Department Chair

Until the early 1990s, much of the research on the high school department chair was quantitative and focused on the role of the chair and the work patterns of the department chair. Qualitative research attempts to answer questions with the researcher in the field, observing, questioning, and interacting with the participants of the study. The shift in research on the high school department chair from quantitative to qualitative methods produced many results. Adduci, Woods-Houston, and Webb (1990) were the first to examine the work of department chairs qualitatively. They conducted structured interviews with 56 high school department chairs in 9 schools in a single school system. In addition to the individual interviews, they used content analysis methods to examine the system job description and the local ones that emerged in each of the nine sites.

The findings of Adduci, et al. were important because they attempted to describe the factors that contributed to role ambiguity for high school department chairs. These findings led to recommendations that school systems needed to provide specialized staff development, to reconfigure job descriptions to match the work that high school department chairs do at the site, and to provide resources (e.g., secretarial support) to high school department chairs so that they could accomplish the work assigned to them.

Wettersten (1993) studied the leadership practices of exemplary department chairs by conducting one-time interviews with 65 high school department chairs in the Chicago Public Schools and surrounding suburban schools. Similarly, Hannay and Denby (1994) studied department chairs using random interviews with 35 department chairs from 15 secondary schools in a single district.

In addition to the shift from quantitative to qualitative methods, another shift in research focus of studies of the high school department chair emerged. This shift was away from researching role theory and ambiguity to examining the position of the high school department chair in the hierarchy of the school. Figure 2.1 summarizes how and where high school department chairs believed, they "fit in" the structure of the school. Across all studies from Siskin (1991) to Mayers (2001) to Weller and Weller (2002), all results have confirmed the "neither fish nor fowl" image that Wettersten (1992; 1993) created to describe the position of the high school department chair.

Given the preponderance of the "middle manager" or the "in the middle" description of high school department chairs as demonstrated in Figure 2.1, a look at the middle manager position seems appropriate. Siskin (1991; 1997), Mayers (2001), and Weller and Weller (2002) directly associate the high school department chair with the middle position—somewhere between building administrators and classroom teachers. In fact, Wettersten (1992; 1993) uses the image of "neither fish nor fowl" to portray the position in the hierarchical organization of department chairs, i.e., that department chairs are neither administrators nor teachers. These authors' images of high school department chairs support the contention that this position is parallel with the middle manager position found in business and industry. Sethi (1999) writing about middle managers for a business audience refers to middle managers as "the bridge between the visionary ideals of the top and the often chaotic reality of those on the front line of business." Bellman (1998) wrote that the middle manager's "job is not to make corporate policy, it is to support the decisions and goals of other people" (p. 29). Both Sethi (1999) and Bellman

(1998) could easily be writing about the position of the high school department chair in

the traditional high school organizational hierarchy.

Researcher	Self-reported Position in the School	Metaphors Used to Describe This Position
Siskin (1991)	In the middle	"in another world" (p. 134)
Wettersten (1993)	Conduit between administrators and teachers	"middle managers," "liaisons," "buffers," "bridges," and "linchpins" (p. 288).
Bliss, Fahrney, and Steffy (1996)	Somewhere between teachers and administrators	" … ill-defined, quasi-administrative position" (p. 37).
Siskin (1997)	In the middle	"ringleaders" in a "36-ring circus" (p. 606).
Mayers (2001)	In the middle	"department chairs on deserted islands not belonging in either camp— teaching or administrative" (198).
Weller & Weller (2002)	Middle Managers	"middle men"

Figure 2.1. Images of Department Chairs in the Hierarchy of Schools

Mayers' (2001) research on the high school department examined the work of

high school department chairs in the midst of change from a traditional to a 4x4 block

schedule. His findings, similar to Adduci et al. (1990), reported that high school

department chairs needed time, resources, and training. However, Mayers (2001) and

then Mayers and Zepeda (2002) reported that staff development was not enough in that

department chairs needed sustained support over time and that department chairs needed

time to accomplish their work. Mayers' (2001) study, although not one on instructional

leadership, paved the way for the present study. Mayers further reported that the five

department chairs felt that "being a leader" was important, but that they felt "torn

between what was right and what was required" of them by their administrators (p. 148).

Instructional Leadership and the High School Department Chair

Johnson (1990) alluded to the importance of the department chair as the

instructional leader by indicating, "Departments were found to be key professional

groups for teachers, and their most frequent professional interactions and regular collegial

relationships were with department peers, rather than teachers from other departments"

(p. 169). Further emphasizing the importance of high school departments, and in so

doing the instructional leadership of the department chair, Johnson (1990) reported:

> Departments could, at their best, be places where staff are protected, encouraged,
> supported, and given opportunities to be creative and improve their practice, they
> serve as units through which teachers could initiate change, both inside and
> outside their classrooms. (p. 172)

In a study of high school departments, Siskin (1997) discussed four key aspects

relating to the relative importance of the structure of the high school:

1. They [departments] represent a strong boundary in dividing the school;
2. They provide a primary site for social interaction;
3. They have, as administrative units, considerable discretion over the micro-
   political decisions affecting what and how teachers teach; and
4. As knowledge categories, they influence the decisions and shape the actions
   of those who inhabit them. (p. 34)

Siskin's (1991) work, just as Johnson's (1990), illustrated the high profile of the

academic departments in the high school, and in so doing, illustrated the importance of

the department chair as the instructional leader of the department. Yet, role conflict and

ambiguity appear to plague those who assume the position of high school department

chair (Mayers, 2001; Mayers & Zepeda, 2002; Weller, 2001).

Section Summary

Weller and Weller (2002) summarized the conflict that has beleaguered the

position of the high school department chair as nestled "in the middle status" of the work

they assume—department chairs are in the middle of teachers and administrators. Early studies of the high school department chair were mainly quantitative and examined the role of the chair in the overall hierarchy of the school (Kidd, 1965; Koch, 1930; Verchota, 1971). Later studies on the work of the high school department chair turned to qualitative research designs to explore *in situ* the work that these professionals do. From the research—both qualitative and quantitative—role conflict and ambiguity appears to be a common finding across research about those who assume the position of high school department chair (Mayers, 2001; Mayers & Zepeda, 2002; Weller, 2001; Weller & Weller, 2002).

Although widely studied, the work and role of the high school department chair is elusive concerning the specifics of instructional leadership (Mayers, 2001; Mayers & Zepeda, 2002; Orris, 1988; Wettersten; 1993). Korach (1996) addressed the need for consensus on the role of high school department chairs among local and district administrators. Mayers' (2001) study examined the role of the high school department chair during the first year of implementing a block schedule.

Job descriptions that are incompatible with the realities of the day-to-day work of the high school department chairs adds to the confusion and ambiguity of the work expected of the professionals who assume the work of department chair (Mayers, 2001; Mayers & Zepeda, 2002). A further examination of role theory might provide a deeper understanding of the complexities and uncertainties of the work of high school department chairs.

Role Theory

Based on the prevalence of findings in the research on high school department chairs related to role confusion and ambiguity, it appears logical to examine the construct of role theory. Role theory describes an individual's behavior within a group or an organization (Katz & Kahn, 1978; Huse, 1980). Huse (1980) stated, "Each individual within an organization has a unique set of characteristics and the role filled by the individual provides the building block, or link, between the individual and the organization" (pp. 52-53).

Katz and Kahn (1978) reported that all persons fulfill roles and that it is through these roles that a person is known as by others. According to Huse (1980), a person's behavior is a combination of the individual's expectations as well as the expectations of those persons associated with that person. Huse summarized, "…a 'role' is the sum total of expectations placed on the individuals by supervisors, peers, subordinates, vendors, customers, and others…" (p. 53). Katz and Kahn (1978) described role behavior as a set of recurring actions that along with the actions of others result in an expected outcome.

In their discussion of role theory, Katz and Kahn (1978) described how an individual or "focal person" acts out an "office" or position of employment couched in an environment of expectations held by fellow employees (both on the same level of the organizational hierarchy as well as above or below). These expectations are perceived or received by the focal person and are filtered by that person's intellectual and emotional background. The focal person, in fulfilling his or her office, must decide how to comply (or to what degree he or she will comply) with the expectations of the "role senders" or

"role-set." This measure of compliance consists of certain activities and will be the focal person's "response" to the collection of expectations perceived from his or her role-set.

According to Katz and Kahn (1978), the process of receiving expectations, whether from within or outside of the individual, deciding on a response, and acting this response out through appropriate activities, which are then observed by the role-senders, is cyclical. The focal person's "role-set" may be satisfied with the response and continue to send or communicate the same expectations, or the role-set may not be satisfied, and will modify or alter their expectations. Again, the focal person will receive these sent expectations and the process continues. Within this process, the focal person is being modified by the messages received from others. The focal person observes the responses to his or her activities or role-behaviors and may choose to increase, decrease, or leave unchanged the level of compliance to sent expectations.

Role Conflict

The individual's ability to satisfy his or her role-set determines how much role conflict or role ambiguity is experienced by the individual (Katz & Kahn, 1978; Huse, 1980). In some cases, a role will involve expectations that a person cannot or will not meet. This results in role conflict (Katz & Kahn, 1978; Huse, 1980). Huse (1980) asserted, "Role conflict occurs when the manager knows what is expected of him, but is not able to comply with all of the expectations" (p. 53). Katz and Kahn (1978) described role conflict as, "The simultaneous occurrence of two or more role expectations such that compliance with one would make compliance with the other more difficult" (p. 204). Katz and Kahn (1978) comment on the source of role conflict stating:

Role conflict is typically envisaged as a disagreement between two or more role-senders, but two or more expectations of the same role-sender may be in conflict, and conflict can occur between expectations of the role-set and those of the focal person for himself or herself. Conflict may also be generated between two or more roles held by the same person – for example, the role of worker and mother—although the study of such inter-role conflicts takes us outside the immediate boundaries of the organization. (p. 204)

Role conflict continues if the individual fails to comprehend the expectations sent by the role-set (as opposed to knowing but not doing) and role ambiguity results (Katz & Kahn, 1978; Huse, 1980).

Role Ambiguity, Conflict, and Research on the High School Department Chair

Huse (1980) reported, "Role ambiguity occurs when the individual has insufficient knowledge of the expectations" (p. 53). Katz and Kahn (1978) asserted:

In its prototypical form, role ambiguity simply means uncertainty about what the occupant of a particular office is supposed to do. But there may be uncertainty as well about many other aspects of a role, including the membership of the role-set, the ends to be served by role enactment, and the evaluation of present role behavior. (p. 206)

The present study sought to examine the perspectives of high school department chairs as providers of instructional supervision to faculty members in their departments. High school department chairs have long suffered from an identity crisis, and the literature indicates that the tasks and activities carried out by department chairs vary from one system to the next, even from one school to another within the same system (Bliss et al., 1996; Engroff, 1976; Van Duzer, 1969; Weller & Weller, 2002).

In a 1996 study of department chairs in Kentucky high schools, Bliss et al. (1996) found that department heads reported that expectations and responsibilities had increased greatly, but there was still no consensus about what their roles were. Moreover, they reported that even though chairs perceived that they were assuming more instructional

leadership, that in fact, members of their departments did not view chairs as helpful in meeting needs in such areas as "improvement in teaching" and with "assessment techniques." The Kentucky study concluded that department chair roles needed to be aligned with the on-going goals of restructuring.

In a New Jersey study of over 200 high school department chairs, ambiguity and conflict in role perspective of department chairs was documented (Kottkamp & Mansfield, 1985). Weller and Weller (2002) reported about role ambiguity in the high school department chair's role:

> Many teachers who become department heads find themselves in a role dilemma. They question whether they are colleagues or administrators, or both. Role ambiguity is due in part to the lack of a written job description and the mistrust many teachers have of administrators. (p. 6)

Although the role of the high school department chair in instructional supervision is not clear (Bliss et al., 1996; Engroff, 1976; Kottkamp & Mansfield, 1985; Weller, 2001; Wettersten 1993), it appears logical that the department chair would provide instructional leadership to the members of their respective departments.

Section Summary

Katz and Kahn (1978) and Huse (1980) provided a basis for understanding how and why a person behaves a certain way within a group or organization. Katz and Kahn observed that others know people through their actions, which are dictated by the role they are currently fulfilling. Huse described behaviors as being the manifestation of a person's response to both external and internal expectations.

When a role involves expectations that a person has difficulty fulfilling, role conflict is the result (Huse, 1980; Katz & Kahn, 1978). Katz and Kahn (1978) described role conflict as a situation involving expectations that a person either has difficulty

complying with or will not fulfill for some reason. If a person does not understand the expectations of a role, a person experiences role ambiguity (Huse, 1980).

Many authors, particularly in relation to the tasks and functions that the holder of this position is expected to complete (Bliss et al., 1996; Engroff, 1976; Mayers, 2001; Mayers & Zepeda, 2002; Van Duzer, 1969; Weller &Weller, 2002), have studied the role of the high school department chair. Studies that have focused on the role of the high school department chair have revealed that the occupants of these positions often encounter role conflict and ambiguity (Bliss et al., 1996; Kottkamp & Mansfield, 1985; Mayers & Zepeda, 2002; Weller & Weller, 2002).

According to Weller and Weller (2002), the role ambiguity that is experienced by high school department chairs is due in large measure to the failure of school systems to produce clear job descriptions for the position. As instructional leader, the work of the high school department is sketchy relative to the instructional supervision they provide to the members within the academic study, and this is the focus of the current study.

Instructional Supervision

The review of the related literature on the high school chair is extended to the area of instructional supervision. Throughout the search, attention was paid to any mention of the high school chair's role as a supervisor of teachers, in particular, that of instructional leader or supervisor. The brief account of the department chair in the American high school contains several references to the supervisory role of the department chair, with the function of supervision listed as a reason for the existence of the department chair position (Fenske, 1997; Marsh & Codding, 1999; Novack, 1958; Orris, 1988). However, it is offered from the literature, that this role, instructional supervisor, has taken a

secondary role to the many administrative functions that have been required of high school department chairs over the years. Currently, in this era of increasing calls for teacher accountability, it is crucial that emphasis is placed on the chairs' role in school improvement (i.e., the work that high school department chairs do to accomplish this call for accountability).

One of the primary items on a typical high school department chair job description is instructional leadership vis-à-vis instructional supervision, curriculum development, and assessment of student work (Mayers & Zepeda, 2002; Weller & Weller, 2002). However, to date no study could be located that examined independently the area of instructional supervision and the high school department chair. Given the need for accountability and high-stakes performance for both students and teachers, there is a need to examine the perspectives of high school department chairs relative to instructional supervision in key content areas associated with high-stakes assessment— math, science, and social studies.

The purpose of the present study was to examine the perspectives of high school department chairs in their work as instructional supervisor of the members of their respective departments. A comprehensive search of the literature has not yielded a single study that has specifically examined the department chairs' role in the supervision of instruction. The most comprehensive source of research in the field of instructional supervision is the *Handbook of Instructional Supervision* (Firth & Pajak, 1998). Although the *Handbook* covers in detail the work of many people—assistant principals, curriculum coordinators, and middle school lead teachers—the book does not include any research on the high school department chair as a provider of instructional supervision.

Research on the high school department chair has traditionally been confined to the duties and responsibilities of the chair (Anderson, 1987; Engroff, 1976; Orris, 1988). Studies that are more recent examined the role of the department chair more thoroughly by recording the perspectives of the high school department chair using qualitative methods, by examining the perspectives of the chairs themselves (Mayers, 2001; Mayers & Zepeda, 2002; Wettersten, 1993). The present study is situated to uncover the perspectives of high school department chairs and instructional supervision in a high-stakes environment.

The Varied Intents of Instructional Supervision and Teacher Evaluation

Supervision, or instructional supervision, has often been coupled with the evaluation of teachers. Though supervision and evaluation are certainly associated processes, they do not share the same intents (Glanz, 2000; Glatthorn, 1990; Glickman, 1990; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1998). Acheson and Gall (1997) writing about the differences between supervision and evaluation stated:

> One of the most persistent problems in supervision is the dilemma between (1) evaluating a teacher in order to make decisions about retention, promotion, and tenure, and (2) working with the teacher as a friendly critic or colleague to help develop skills the teacher wants to use and to expand the repertoire of strategies that can be employed. (p. 209)

The intents of instructional supervision are bundled under the construct of teacher development, and Zepeda (2003) reported the work of many in her synthesis of the intents of instructional supervision. In short, the intents of instructional supervision are to promote:

- Face-to-face interaction and relationship building between the teacher and the supervisor;
- Ongoing learning;

- The improvement of students' learning through improvement of the teacher's instruction.
- Data-based decision making.
- Capacity building of individuals and the organization.
- Trust in the process, each other, and the environment.
- Change that results in a better developmental life for teachers and students and their learning. (p. 20)

According to Glatthorn (1990) and Glickman (1990), supervision was a formative process while evaluation was summative. Acheson and Gall (1997) pointed out that supervision and evaluation serve the same purposes, "the improvement of instruction" (p. 48). These same authors believed that supervision could be "the heart of a good evaluation system" (p. 60), and McGreal (1983) observed that all supervisory roads lead to evaluation. However, according to Sullivan and Glanz (2000), most teachers fail to reap the benefits of instructional supervision since it is often replaced with evaluation.

Although supervision should ideally lead to teacher evaluation (McGreal, 1983), the intents of teacher evaluation serve different purposes, namely promotion, retention, and making other personnel decisions. Evaluation signals a summative assessment on a teachers' performance that culminates in a teacher rating. High school department chairs "in the middle" of teachers and administrators (Weller & Weller, 2002), could by the nature of their job descriptions get caught in the conflict of being a "coach" or a "judge" by the very role they assume as high school department chairs. This role conflict—critic or friendly colleague—can be exacerbated with a poorly defined job description, which has been reported in the research on high school department chairs (Adduci, et al., 1990).

In an attempt to reduce the gap and friction that develops in the debate over instructional supervision and evaluation, Peterson (2000) compiled a list of 12

stipulations to be followed by those involved in both the supervision and evaluation of

teachers:

1. Emphasize that the function of teacher evaluation should be to seek out, document, and acknowledge the good teaching that already exists.
2. Use good reasons to evaluate.
3. Place the teacher at the center of evaluation activity.
4. Use more than one person to judge teacher quality and performance.
5. Limit administrator judgment role in teacher evaluation.
6. Use multiple data sources to inform judgments about teacher quality.
7. When possible, include actual pupil achievement data.
8. Use variable data sources to inform judgments.
9. Spend the time and other resources needed to recognize good teaching.
10. Use research on teacher evaluation correctly.
11. Attend to the sociology of teacher evaluation.
12. Use the results of teacher evaluation to encourage the development of a personal professional dossier, publicize aggregated results, and support teacher promotion systems. (pp. 4-12)

Many authors have described instructional supervision in varied ways, including a

discussion of the myriad forms instructional supervision can take in any given school

(Costa & Garmston, 1994; Glatthorn, 1990, 1997).

The Forms of Supervision—Developmental and Differentiated Approaches

Supervision has many forms. It may be informal or formal; it may be clinical or

some modification of the original clinical supervisory model (e.g. action research); or it

may be differentiated or developmental (Zepeda, 2003). The early developers of clinical

supervision reflected that the practices of supervision should focus on the teacher as the

active learner in the process (Cogan, 1973; Goldhammer, 1969). Cogan (1973) expected

teachers to be professionally responsible and able to be, "analytical of their own

performance, open to help from others, and self-directing" (p. 12). According to

Acheson and Gall (1997), the term, clinical, in clinical supervision is not used to

"connote pathology" but rather to indicate a "face-to-face relationship between teacher

and supervisor and a focus on the teacher's actual behavior in the classroom" (p. 9).

Acheson and Gall (1997) described clinical supervision in this manner:

> In brief, clinical supervision is a model of supervision that contains three phases: planning conference, classroom observation, and feedback conference. The most distinctive features of clinical supervision are its emphases on direct teacher-supervisor interaction and on the teacher's professional development. (p. 11)

Glickman (1981) portrayed supervision as developmental, requiring the supervisor to identify the developmental stage of the teacher and then to use appropriate techniques to assist the teacher's professional growth. Glickman wrote, "Effective supervision must be based on matching orientations of supervision with the needs and characteristics of teachers" (p. 40). Glickman further stated, "the goal of instructional supervision is to help teachers learn how to increase their own capacity to achieve professional learning goals for their students" (p. 3).

Glatthorn (1990) called for a supervision that was differentiated. According to Glatthorn "Too often clinical supervision is offered from a 'one-up' vantage point: the supervisor who knows the answer, is going to help the teacher, who needs to be improved" (p. 17). Glatthorn proposed that instructional supervision be a process that each school or system developed based on their specific needs: "a process approach, in which each school develops its own homegrown model, one responsive to its special needs and resources" (p. 179).

Differentiated supervision, according to Glatthorn (1997) would allow teachers to choose from a menu of both supervisory and evaluative options. Glatthorn (1990) believed that differentiated supervisory approaches allowed supervisors to concentrate on teachers who needed their time and effort most, rather than conducting perfunctory classroom observations of all teachers merely to satisfy district policies.

Glatthorn (1990) expected "regardless of experience or competence, all teachers will be involved in three related processes for improving instruction: teacher evaluation, staff development, and informal observations" (p. 179). Furthermore, Glatthorn's view of differentiated supervision concluded that all teachers were to be involved in "two or more" of the following developmental processes:

- Intensive development (mandatory use of the clinical supervision model);

- Cooperative development (developmental, socially mediated activities such as peer coaching or action research); or,

- Self-directed development (developmental activities teachers direct on their own).

Differentiated supervision, to be successful, needs an environment conducive to nurturing collegial relationships that are based on "cooperation and mutual assistance' (Glatthorn, 1990, p. 177).

Given the close proximity of department chairs to the teachers in their department, they are in an ideal position to provide support, guidance, and encouragement. Moreover, department chairs by virtue of their subject area expertise are in a solid and credible position to make classroom observations to supervise the instructional program as it unfolds in classrooms. However, to date no research on the high school department chair and supervision could be found in the literature. Moreover, to date, no dissertation on the high school department chair and supervision could be located.

Supervision for the high school department chair can be complex, even more so for the professionals who occupy the position of chair in that in many states, the high school department chair is recognized as an administrator who has full authority to evaluate teachers. Yet, it is expected that high school department chairs will coach and nurture the teachers in their departments. Role confusion and ambiguity for the high school department chair is an established theme in the literature of the department chairs. Moreover, the role confusion of administrator as both supervisor and evaluator has been explicated in the literature as well (Glickman, 1993; Gordon, 1997; Sergiovanni, 1992; Smyth, 1998; Zepeda & Ponticell, 1998; Zepeda, 2003). Given the "in the middle" status of department chairs (Weller & Weller, 2002), and the "neither fish nor fowl" (Wettersten, 1993) nature of the department chair as neither teacher nor administrator, the examination of supervision from the perspectives of department chairs is critical to explore.

Section Summary

Instructional supervision, in short, is a process intended to assist the professional teacher to improve his or her teaching skills. To be effective, the classroom teacher must perceive the supervisor as someone who, by his or her presence and actions, is there to collaborate with the teacher, not to instruct the teacher. Supervision has many forms—clinical models, peer mediated models (e.g., peer coaching, action research). Moreover, supervision can be informal or formal.

Supervision that is developmental (Glickman, 1981, 1990) and differentiated (Glatthorn, 1990, 1997), takes into account the needs of teachers—what is necessary to help them improve classroom practices. What makes sense for meeting one teachers

needs might not make sense in meeting another teachers' needs. Knowing what

supervisory approach to use with any given population of teachers is predicated on

knowing the needs of teachers, and this knowledge can only be achieved by supervisors

who invest the time and energy into the process of working with teachers.

Regardless of how the role of instructional supervision has been attached to the

work of high school department chair, it is appropriate that this important function be

understood in the context of both high-stakes and increased teacher accountability.

<center>Accountability</center>

Although the intents of supervision are more concerned with the developmental

growth of teachers, another function of supervision is to ensure the oversight of the

academic program by working with teachers who implement a curriculum—the sum of

which is the instructional program. Accountability has maintained momentum in

educational circles in recent years as both educators and the public; politicians in

particular, enter into the fray commonly referred to as the educational reform movement

(Smith & Wohlstetter, 2001). With the publication of the 1983 report *A Nation at Risk* up

to and including the reauthorization of the Public Law 107–110 Elementary and

Secondary Education Act, the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, the American public is

aware of accountability.

For the past two decades, Americans have searched for ways to improve

educational systems and it appears that the public understands results—testing, and much

of the discourse surrounding accountability in education centers on what accountability

means in theory versus practice. For example, Ashbaugh and Kasten (1992) asserted that

accountability is simply that schools are answerable to the public for student outcomes, and Schrag (1995) positioned:

> Whether they work in private or public schools, teachers are employees paid a salary for doing a particular job – teaching fourth grade or high school physics. No one denies that teachers ought to be answerable for what they do, but what does that mean? (p. 642)

Schrag (1995) also argued that 'Nurturing a pedagogical culture of collaboration should lie at the heart of efforts to improve teacher accountability" (p. 644). However, as Fisher (2002) noted:

> During the past decade, significant attention has been devoted to improving student achievement via accountability models typically focusing on student outcomes rather than teacher processes. In other words, current systems of accountability are based on testing data, reading scores, and similar variables. (p. 46)

This study sought to discover the perspectives of three high school department chairs, specifically what their perspectives were on the instructional supervision of teachers within their departments—all representing high-stakes subject areas—math, social studies, and science. Smith and Wohlstetter (2001) discussed the increased attention to accountability indicating that accountability is a result of the failure of school districts to meet the public demand that education prepare students for "entering the internationally competitive economy of the 21st Century" (p. 500).

Testing and Student Achievement

The use of student test scores as a measure of student achievement in American schools has been documented as far back as 1840 (Haladyna, Haas, & Allison, 1998). According to Tanner (1993, 1998) historical events such as the Cold War, Sputnik, social protests, the back to basics movement, and the fear of economic domination from foreign

competitors lead to renewed focus and blame being placed on education for the failures

the nation has witnessed.

According to Bond (2002), testing is categorized as high-stakes when:

Its use is mandated and its outcomes determine such important decisions as: (a) graduation, promotion, or placement of students, (b) sanction or reward for teachers or administrators, or (c) allocation of resources or certification of schools or educators. (pp. 18-19)

Large-scale high-stakes testing to measure school or individual teacher accountability

continues to persist and even to expand (Jaeger, 1989).

Many school system assessments, both at the district and state levels, now

produce annual *School Report Cards* that use standardized test scores to assist in rating

student achievement and school performance. The measures or "grades" that are

obtained from these report cards are often published by the media and used as indicators

of success or failure of the system or individual schools for which the grade is a reflection

(Bracey, 2001; Rothman, 1988).

The production of school report cards and the publication of these scores have

served to underscore for the public the perception that test scores can be used as an

indicator of the quality of the education provided to students (Mehrans, 1998). Serving

as a caution to the reliance on test scores as a major predictor of school performance,

Stiff (2001) reported that the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) held

the position that the current use of high-stakes testing marked a "major retreat from

fairness, accuracy, and educational equity" and undermined "the quality of education and

the equality of opportunity" (p. 9).

Linn (2000) listed several reasons for the political appeal of tests as a measure for educational accountability and reform:

- Testing was relatively inexpensive compared too alternative measures;
- Testing could be externally mandated far easier than by attempting to change the complex events inside the classroom or by legislating changes in curriculum;
- Testing changes could be rapidly implemented within the term of office of elected officials;
- Results were visible and drew media attention; and,
- Poor results in the beginning were desirable for policymakers who wanted to show they had had an effect. Based on previous testing trends, policymakers could reasonably expect increases in scores in the first few years of a program with or without real improvement in the broader achievement constructs that the tests were intended to measure. (p. 22)

Rose and Elam (1997, 1998) in both the 29th and the 30th Kappa/Gallup polls of the public's attitudes toward the public schools, found widespread support for large-scale testing. In a review of public policy, Linn (1994) cited the impending intrusion of the federal government, the setting of standards and the certification of assessments as adding to the momentum behind the state mandates for accountability using standard setting and high-stakes testing.

The state of Georgia, with the passing of legislation known as the *A Plus Reform Act of 2000,* entered into the accountability era. The purpose of this study was to examine the perspectives of three high school department chairs related to instructional supervision of teachers. This study sought to examine the perspectives of those responsible for supervising teachers who work in a system that embraces "results" and uses testing extensively to determine student achievement. Given the press for results of the students who take math, social studies, and science courses, understanding the perspectives of the high school department chairs that supervise the teachers of these subjects, might prove to be beneficial.

Section Summary

According to Ashbaugh and Kasten (1992), the popularity of accountability is fueled by the need for schools to answer to the American public for student achievement. In fact, the American public has been searching for ways to measure student achievement for many years, as far back as 1849 (Haladyna, Haas, & Allison, 1998). Smith and Wohlstetter (2001) concluded that the current attention given to accountability is the result of school systems failing to produce students able to compete in global, economic markets.

Test scores are one area that most Americans believe they understand. Politicians see test scores as a "quick fix" for what is wrong in schools (Bond, 2002; Rose & Elam, 1997, 1998). Tanner (1993, 1998) provided a historical perspective for the renewed focus on accountability. One of the outcomes of this public focus on accountability is the move to high-stakes testing (Bond, 2002; Jaeger, 1989; Rose & Elam, 1997, 1998).

With the federal government's recent authorization of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* and the state of Georgia's authorization of the *A Plus Reform Act of 2001*, education in the state of Georgia is fully immersed in the accountability movement as well as in the practices of high-stakes testing and reporting of results in school report cards. These reports assist the public in creating perceptions of how well a school system or a local school is measuring up to similar systems and schools—both within and outside of the system.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the perspectives of three ($\underline{N}$=3) high school department chairs that supervise the teachers in their respective departments (math, science, and social studies) in a high-stakes setting, as a way to gain insights on instructional supervision. An extensive search of the literature did not yield a single study that focused specifically on instructional supervision and the high school department chair. The researcher sought, through a qualitative case study approach, the perspectives of three high school department chairs from one school in a northeast Georgia county.

Three interviews were conducted with three ($\underline{N}$=3) high school department chairs. The first interview was conducted to profile each of the study participants, and to have them elaborate on their overall perspectives about supervision: What is instructional supervision? What does supervision look like in practice? The second interview was conducted to construct a general view of the role of high school department chairs as they act in the capacity of instructional supervisor for the teachers within their departments. The third interview was designed to address specifically the department chairs' role in instructional supervision as well as any issues that might create difficulty for the department chair as they supervise the teachers in their department.

Chapter three includes descriptions of (1) the research questions, (2) the design, (3) the theoretical framework, (4) the data sources, (5) the data collection procedures, (6) the data analysis methods, (7) trustworthiness, including validity, reliability, generalizability, and neutrality, and (8) the limitations of the study.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What does instructional supervision mean to the department chairs?

2. What does instructional supervision look like in practice?

3. Are there organizational constraints that get in the way of department chairs supervising teachers?

Research Design and Rationale

Since the purpose of this study was to examine the perspectives of three high school department chairs, the providers of instructional supervision to the teachers within their departments, a qualitative approach was chosen as opposed to a quantitative approach. A qualitative approach facilitates an examination of participant perspectives, i.e., firsthand viewpoints of each of the participants. According to Patton (1986), the qualitative approach to data collection "seeks to capture what people have to say in their own words" (p. 22). Qualitative methods "are more adaptable to dealing with multiple (and less aggregatable) realities" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 40), and to identify the beliefs and practices of the three high school department chairs, an open-ended approach, including both structured and unstructured questions was used.

Qualitative research methods were used to allow the researcher to "gather first-hand information about processes in a 'naturally occurring' context" (Silverman, 1993, p. 11). Merriam (1998) believed that using the human-as-instrument construct allows for interviewing, observing, mining documents, and taking into account nonverbal cues. These processes supported Patton's belief that the depth and detail of qualitative data can only be gathered by "getting close, physically and psychologically, to the phenomenon under study" (1980, p. 43). Yin (1994) identified three reasons for choosing a qualitative research strategy.

1. The type of research proposed;
2. The extent of control an investigator has over actual behavioral events; and,
3. The degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to historical events. (p. 4)

Qualitative data are data that cannot be given numerical values (Yin, 1993). According to Merriam (1998, p. 68) quantitative data tells "how many, how much, and how it is distributed." This research, using a case study design, used qualitative data collection methods, to gain access to the participant's real world experiences with instructional supervision as a high school department chair, responsible for overseeing teachers whose subject areas are considered to be high-stakes—math, social studies, and science. The use of open-ended questions lead to a more "authentic understanding of people's experiences" (Silverman, 1993, p. 10), in this case study of three high school department chairs.

According to Bogdan and Biklen (1998), qualitative research can be employed to develop a full picture of the particpants' reality. By using the parts (or data), as they are uncovered in the interviews with the participants, the picture can be developed. The qualitative research in this study focused on the meanings, and thus understandings, of

the three (N=3) high school department chairs rather than attempting to quantify their responses in some predetermined areas.

Given the qualitative nature of this study, there was no manipulation of behaviors and settings, or control of the settings. McMillan (2000) identified two reasons for this emphasis on the collection of data without manipulating either behavior or setting. They are (1) the belief that behavior is best understood as it occurs without external constraints and control, and the belief that (2) the situational context is very important in understanding behavior. Merriam (1998) asserted that qualitative research does not seek to control or manipulate behaviors, but rather, to "describe the nature of a belief, attitude, event, or behavior" (p. 68).

Rationale for Qualitative Methods to Study High School Department Chairs

Although rigorous in design, qualitative methods offer more flexibility in the collection and analyses of data as was needed in this study. The flexibility in procedures allowed the researcher to take on a discovery-orientation to data collection and an inductive-orientation to analysis (Patton, 1990). The qualitative methods used in this research provided flexibility and allowed the researcher to pursue avenues of inquiry such as adding questions that arose during the research process, in particular during the three interviews with each of the three high school department chairs in this study.

The purpose of this research was to examine the perspectives of three high school department chairs that provided instructional supervision to their faculty who happened to work in an environment of high-stakes accountability. This research sought to discover the beliefs and practices of the department chairs through their own realities, through their responses to open-ended questions designed to shed light on their individual

experiences as they attempt to provide instructional supervision to their teachers.

According to Schramm (1971), the case study approach is useful to illuminate decision-making, including the how and why a decision is made and then implemented. The present research sought to understand the work of the high school department chair through exploring their roles as they seek to carry out the tasks asked of them related to instructional supervision. Merriam (1988) reported that case studies are "concerned with understanding and describing processes" (p. 31).

Case Study

According to Bromley (1986), the purpose of a case study is "not to find the 'correct' or 'true' interpretation of the facts, but rather, to eliminate erroneous conclusions so that one is left with the best possible, the most compelling, interpretation" (p. 38). Bromley (1986), in making an argument for the use of case studies, stated that this type of research method allows the researcher to:

> Get as close to the subject of interest as they possibly can, partly by means of direct observation in natural settings, partly by their access to subjective factors (thoughts, feelings, and desires), whereas experiments and surveys often use convenient derivative data, e.g., test results, official records. In addition, case studies tend to spread the net for evidence widely, whereas experiments and surveys usually have a narrow focus. (p. 23)

Miller and Kantrov (1998) stated, "cases are tools that are increasingly used in education to explore challenging issues and to reflect on diverse experiences" (p. 1).

The research questions of this study were designed to explore the *what, how,* and *why* of instructional supervision in a context of high-stakes accountability from the perspectives of the high school department chairs (Merriam, 1998). The case study method is the preferred method when *what, how,* and *why* questions are used (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 1994). Yin reported that 'such questions deal with operational links needing

to be traced over time, rather than mere frequencies or incidence" (p. 6). In addition, "the case study is preferred in examining contemporary events" in the setting in which they occur (Yin, 1994, p. 8).

Design Features of the Study

For this study, the researcher used:

1) In-depth interviewing over a structured period. Each participant was interviewed for a period of not less than one hour each on three separate occasions by the researcher. Appendix A details a sample question sequence.
2) Artifact collection. Each participant gathered written documents, such as departmental memos and staff development items, which were unique to his or her Department. The county Department Chairperson Job Description was examined as well as the county policies and procedures for supervising teachers.

The perspectives of the high school department chairs were gained through the interpretation of the interview transcripts, which were generated through face-to-face interviews. Interviews were conducted with three (N=3) high school department chairs who were responsible for instructionally supervising, at least in part, the teachers in their respective academic departments. The interviews allowed the researcher to access data that was not readily observable or obtainable through quantitative methods

Merriam (1988) and Patton (1986) indicated that the type of interview conducted varies with the degree of structure. The informal conversation or unstructured interview, which is exploratory by design, does not use predetermined questions. The researcher chose to use predetermined questions to ensure that the overall research questions would be answered. However, in this study, the researcher used both structured and unstructured questions, and Figure 3.1 illustrates sample interview questions related to the overall research questions. It is noted that due to the iterative nature of building new

questions from prior questions and participant responses, the questions in Figure 3.1.,

and Appendix A were subject to change as the researcher interviewed each participant.

Overall Research Questions	Introductory Interview	Interview 2 Questions	Interview 3 Questions
What does instructional supervision mean to the department chairs?	See Appendix B	1. Define instructional supervision. 2. What does instructional supervision mean to you? 3. What has shaped your instructional supervisory practices over the years? How have these practices been shaped? 4. Explain your supervisory practices. 5. Is there a "supervision" for all the teachers with whom you work? Differences? Elaborate and give examples.	1. In the first interview, you indicated "X" about supervision. Elaborate on "this." 2. What is your role in instructional supervision? 3. Does instructional supervision occur only in the classroom?
What does supervision look like in practice?		1. What does supervision look like for the teachers in your department? 2. Does the high-stakes environment effect supervision? Explain this to me. 3. Track supervisory practices in light of the high-stakes environment in which you work. 4. Elaborate on any supervisory procedures or practices that you have implemented in the past year. What caused you to implement these changes? 5. Other	Elaboration of ideas from the first interview. 1. What does supervision in light of high-stakes mean for your supervisory practices? Can you give an example of this? 2. Where do you see instructional supervision heading? 3. What will be your role in the direction instructional supervision moves?
Are there organizational constraints that get in the way of department chairs supervising teachers?		1. From your perspective, what gets in the way of instructional supervision? 2. Explain how you compensate for what gets in the way of supervision. 3. What has high-stakes meant for the learning environment? Your work as department chair?	From the first interview, you indicated the following items as getting in the way of your work supervising teachers. 1. Prioritize these items. Talk through each of the items identified in number 1 above.

Figure 3.1. Sample Interview Questions Related to the Overall Research Questions

According to Patton (1986), this type of interview may include outlining a set of issues that are to be explored with each participant. A more highly structured interview consists of predetermined questions asked in a particular order (Merriam, 1988). Although interview questions can be of a variety of approaches, it is imperative that the researcher maintains a common theme and outline for each participant. It is not imperative, however, that the researcher maintains a single style of questioning throughout the interview. The intent of the interview was to generate multiple insights on a single set of issues.

To track the development of new questions, the researcher reflected on each interview after the fact and while transcribing tape recordings of the interviews. Appendix C, the Interview Reflection Form, allowed the researcher to reflect on key points of the interview as a means to construct follow-up questions. Fieldnotes were also read as a means to formulate follow-up questions.

<center>Theoretical Framework</center>

In referring to the study of human groups and human contact, Blumer (1969) coined the term "symbolic interactionism." Blumer reported three major premises of symbolic interactionism:

> The first premise is that human beings act toward things based on the meanings that the things have for them. The second premise is that the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows. The third premise is that these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretation process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters. (p. 2)

According to Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996) symbolic interactionism is the study of how people engage in social relations and connections and how these connections are factors in the creation and preservation or maintenance of social structure and one's self-identity.

Symbolic interactionism guided the collection, analysis, and development of the present study.

Charon (2001) wrote that symbolic interactionism is "a perspective in social psychology" (p. 23). Charon indicated that instead of focusing on the individual and the individual's personality traits, symbolic interactionism:

> Focuses on the nature of social interaction, the dynamic social activities taking place among persons. By focusing on the interaction as a unit of study, the symbolic interactionist creates a more active image of the human being and rejects the image of the passive, determined organism. (p. 23)

According to Prus (1996), symbolic interactionism can be "envisioned as the study of the ways in which people make sense of their life-structure and the ways in which they go about doing their activities, in conjunction with others, on a day-to-day basis" (p. 10). Central to the viewpoint of the interactionist is the idea that human life is essentially community life and that individuals cannot be recognized except within the context of community life. Prus (1996) asserted, "Humans derive their (social) essences from the communities in which they are located, and human communities are contingent on the development of shared (or intersubjectively acknowledged) symbols or languages" (p. 10). Thus according to Prus (1996), there is no individual or self without the community or without other individuals.

Gestures, in addition to spoken language, are also considered a meaningful part of symbolic interactionism (Baldwin, 1986). Baldwin stated, "the meaning of any given gesture lies in the information it carries—in its ability to predict the behavior that is likely to occur next" (1986, p. 72). The perspectives of the high school department chairs were gained from the social interaction of the researcher and the participants during the interview process. The researcher was able to record fieldnotes to track gestures, facial

expressions, and other characteristic reactions during the interview that mere audio recording of responses would miss. For this reason, all interviews in this study were conducted in person and fieldnotes from the interviews included gestures, facial expressions, and other body language that occurred while the high school department chairs were conversing with the researcher. When information from the interviews is coded, the gestures notated will be taken into consideration for purpose and meaning in relationship to the perspectives of the department chairs.

Another concept of symbolic interactionism is that the perspective is on the present, not the past. Charon (2001) stated, "what we do in any given situation is primarily a result of what is going on in that situation, not of what we bring to the situation from our past" (p. 24). This researcher sought to determine the perspectives about supervision that the high school department chairs have based on their present realities.

This researcher applied the components of symbolic interactionism to the present study. Data were collected, evaluated, and analyzed from the interviews with the participants with respect to their surroundings—the school culture and environment as they participated in the interviews.

<center>Data Sources</center>

This study examined the perspectives of three ($\underline{N}$=3) high school department chairs who supervised the teachers in their respective departments in a single high school. To bring this knowledge to light effectively, the researcher employed appropriate sampling methods to identify participants who could, through interviews, give in-depth descriptions of their roles as instructional supervisors.

<center>50</center>

Sampling

Patton (1986) discussed purposeful sampling as a strategy to facilitate choosing

an appropriate group of participants, or sample. Patton wrote that purposeful sampling is

a strategy to be used "when one wants to learn something and come to understand

something about certain select cases without needing to generalize to all such cases" (p.

101). Thus, purposeful sampling is used to select a group of participants from whom the

most information can be learned. Patton (1986) also discussed the quality of knowledge

or descriptions that may be accessed through purposeful sampling, indicating:

> The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting *information-rich cases* for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research, thus the term *purposeful* sampling. (p. 169, emphasis in the original)

The importance of the sample lies in the quality of the knowledge of the participants in

the sample, not in the size of the sample.

For purposeful sampling to be effective, a pool of participants must be identified

based on qualifications or characteristics they possess related to the study. For this study,

participants included three ($\underline{N}$=3) high school department chairs who worked at the same

high school in a northeast Georgia school system. The researcher used Patton's (1990)

description of homogenous sampling to identify the three high school department chairs

along with purposeful sampling. At Lincoln North High School, there are 11

departments from which the researcher had a pool of 11 subjects (department chairs) to

choose from as a sample. Given the nature of high-stakes, seven departments were

eliminated from the pool, leaving four department chairs to choose from as a group.

From this number, one chair was dropped due to her inexperience as a department chair

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(this person had just been appointed as the Language Arts Department chair). The department chairs were a homogenous group within the same high school.

In determining the sample to be used for this study, the researcher relied on convenience sampling, as well. The researcher is employed at the same high school as the department chairs and, by virtue of this closeness, had easy access to the participants. In addition, having been a department chair in this building with the members of the sample group was seen as an advantage since this familiarity gave the researcher both increased integrity and trustworthiness with the department chairs. The researcher had rapport with the subjects—this was both a possible strength and a possible source of concern due to the over-familiarity with the school system and the potential for bias. The safeguards built into the study design are elaborated later in this chapter. The following characteristics were used to choose the sample for this study:

1. Three department chairs were from the same high school. Originally, the sample number was to be four ($\underline{N}$=4); however, one department chair was excluded due to inexperience as a department chair (this was her first year in the position of department chair).

2. The department chairs had three or more years of experience in the position. A recent change in the Language Arts Department chair precluded the inclusion of this person in the study.

3. Department chairs supervised high-stakes curriculum areas (math, science, and social studies).

A small sample was used to preserve the depth of the data collected. Wolcott (1990) believed, "increasing the number of cases serves only to reduce proportionately the

attention that can be given to any one of them" (p. 182). The local school principal as well as the System Review Board for Research Projects granted permission to conduct the study at Lincoln North High School, a school within Junction County, located in northeast Georgia. The three high school department chairs included:

1. Connie Williams, Chair: Science Department.

2. Nick Taylor, Chair: Math Department.

3. David Smith, Chair: Social Studies Department.

Participant Profiles

The participants in this study, three high school department chairs, were employed at Lincoln North High School in Junction County, Georgia. The participants, 2 white males and 1white female, had educational experience ranging from 15 to 24 years. Experience as high school department chairs ranged from four to ten years, all at Lincoln North High School. The number of certified professionals supervised by the department chairs in this study ranged between 15 and 17. Figure 3.2 gives an overview of the level of experience of the participants and the number of teachers supervised in their respective departments, as well as the highest degrees held by each of the study participants. The Science Department chair, Ms. Williams, has the most overall teaching experience with 24 years, while Nick Taylor has the fewest years of experience with 15. The Social Studies Department chair, David Smith, has the most years of teaching experience at Lincoln North High School of the three study participants with 10 years, while both Ms. Williams and Nick Taylor have been at LNHS for 7 years. David Smith had the most years as a department chair at Lincoln North High School. Smith had 10 years as the Social Studies Department chair, while Nick Taylor had chaired the Math Department for

7 years, and Connie Williams has been the Science Department chair at Lincoln North for

4 years.

	Connie Williams	David Smith	Nick Taylor
Years in Education	24	17	15
Years at LNHS	7	10	7
Years as Department Chair	4	10	7
Department Supervised	Science	Social Studies	Math
Number of Teachers Supervised	14	16	17
Highest Degree Completed	Masters	Specialist	PhD

Figure 3.2 Profiles of Participants

Connie Williams

Connie Williams has been a teacher for 24 years, 7 at Lincoln North High School.

Ms. Williams has served as the Science Department chair at LNHS for four years and has

no previous department chair experience. Ms. Williams supervises 14 teachers within the

Science Department. Ms. Williams earned a masters degree in education two years

before this study, and she is currently attending classes to fulfill her leadership

certification.

David Smith

David Smith is a 17-year veteran in education, the past 10 years spent at Lincoln

North High School. All of Mr. Smith's tenure at LNHS has been as the department chair

for the Social Studies Department. Mr. Smith supervises 16 teachers in the Social

Studies Department. Mr. Smith has previous leadership experience as a head master in

an American school in Mexico where he served as a classroom teacher and then as an

administrator for three years. Mr. Smith holds a Specialist in Education degree in education.

Nick Taylor

Nick Taylor has served as the department chair for the Math Department for all of the seven years he has been a member of the faculty at Lincoln North High School, and he has been a teacher for 15 years. As department chair at LNHS, Mr. Taylor supervises 17 math teachers. Mr. Taylor, who holds a doctorate in math education, has no previous department chair experience.

In total, the three high school department chairs in this study supervise 47 (34.3%) of the 137 teachers at LNHS. These high school department chairs have 56 years (average = 18.6 years) of collective experience as educators, and collectively they have 21 years (average = 7 years) experience as department chairs.

Figure 3.3 illustrates the composition of the teachers the participant department chairs supervise relative to the average overall years of teaching experience and average years of experience at Lincoln North High School for the teachers in their respective departments. The figure also illustrates the degrees held by the members in each of the participant's department. Figure 3.3 indicates that the average science teacher at Lincoln North High School has nearly 14.5 years of teaching experience, with 5.4 years of experience at LNHS. Well over half of the science faculty has an advanced degree. The members of the Social Studies Department at Lincoln North have an average of 13 years of overall teaching experience, with an average of 6.1 years of experience at Lincoln North High School. Just over one-half of the social studies faculty has advanced degrees. The Math Department faculty has an average overall teaching experience just less than 14

years, with an average of 8.6 years of experience at LNHS. Two-thirds of the Lincoln

North High School Math Department has advanced degrees.

Department	# Of Teachers	Average Years Teaching Experience of Teachers	Average Years at Lincoln North High School	Degrees Held
Science	15	14.5	5.4	Bachelors – 5 Masters – 8 Specialist – 1 Doctorate –1
Social Studies	17	13.0	6.1	Bachelors – 8 Masters – 7 Specialist – 2
Math	18	13.9	8.6	Bachelors – 6 Masters – 9 Specialist – 2 Doctorate - 1

Figure 3.3 Compositions of Teachers in Participants' Departments

Data Collection Procedures

With the qualifications for membership in the sample group identified, the three

department chairs selected were contacted to confirm their willingness to be involved in

the present study. A clear explanation detailing the purpose of the study, procedures, and

potential risks and benefits of participation were available before the time of consent to

participate in this study. Two copies of the informed consent form (See Appendix D)

were signed at the time of consent, the researcher kept one, and the participant kept the

other copy. The informed consent form described the conditions necessary for voluntary

participation, confidentiality, and contacts for questions about the research and

participants' rights. The consent form also outlined how interviews would be recorded,

i.e., audiotaped, transcribed, and kept in the researcher's possession under lock and key.

Interviews

The data for this study were collected primarily through interviews. Three private, face-to-face interviews were conducted with each department chair. The first of these interviews was conducted in 2002, November. The second interviews occurred in 2002, December, the third interviews occurred in 2003, January and February. The average length of each interview lasted approximately an hour and a half (90 minutes).

The interviews conducted were focused interviews. Yin (1994) reported, when describing this type of interview that it is one "in which a respondent is interviewed for a short period of time … remain open-ended and assume a conversational manner … following a set of questions derived from the case study protocol" (p. 85). To set the protocol for the interviews, three interview guides were developed, one for each set of interviews. The interview guides served to keep the researcher focused on the issues under investigation, and allowed the researcher to follow any unexpected threads of discussion that arose during the interviews. Appendix A provides a sample set of interview questions and Figure 3.1 illustrates the relationship of the research questions to the interview questions.

Clarity and validity of the interview questions must also be examined. A check for content validity insured that the questions chosen for the interview guides were likely to elicit the intended information. Critiquing of the initial elements of this study was done by "gatekeepers, knowledgeable informants, or experts" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 234). For the present study, two auditors were used. The first was a former doctoral student at the University of Georgia, now a college professor, and the second was an anonymous person with the expertise to serve in this capacity. Both auditors along with

two high school department chairs from another high school within the system gave

feedback on the interview questions. Modifications to the interview questions, where

appropriate, were made prior to the first interview.

Fieldnotes

Along with the interviews with the three high school department chairs, fieldnotes

were completed during each interview. Much like the interview guides, fieldnotes helped

to keep the researcher focused on the issues under investigation and assisted in tracking

any follow-up questions that needed to be asked of the participants. The fieldnotes were

transcribed after each interview to be analyzed with the interview transcripts. The

researcher also tracked his perspectives and insights using Appendix C, the Interview

Reflection Form.

Artifacts

The primary artifact used in the study was the JCPS High School Department

Chair job description (See Appendix F). Other artifacts included the local school faculty

handbook and the school system's rules and regulations concerning supervision. The

artifacts were examined and analyzed as part of the data set.

<div align="center">Data Analysis</div>

According to Merriam (1988), data analysis is an ongoing process that begins

with the initial interview. Marshall and Rossman (1989), reported about data analysis:

> Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure, and interpretation to the
> mass of collected data. It is a messy, ambiguous, time-consuming, creative, and
> fascinating process. It does not proceed in a linear fashion; it is not neat. (p. 150)

Yin (1994) stated, "Data analysis consists of examining, categorizing, tabulating, or

otherwise recombining the evidence to address the initial propositions of the study" (p.

102). Figure 3.4 illustrates the themes that were uncovered in the interview process

aligned with the three primary research questions.

Research Questions	Themes
1. What does instructional supervision mean to the department chairs?	Role of Department Chair Talk About Instructional Issues Support of Teachers The Work of the Department Chair Instructional Supervision as a Responsibility Relationship Of Trust
2. What does instructional supervision look like in practice?	Differentiated Instructional Supervision Practices of Instructional Supervision Trust Building
3. Are there organizational constraints that get in the way of department chairs supervising teachers?	Lack of Emphasis High-Stakes Environment Time

Figure 3.4 Research Questions and Accompanying Themes

The themes, uncovered in the course of analyzing each interview set, i.e., each case

analysis, were then compared during the cross case analysis. It was during the cross case

analysis that the themes were aligned with each of the three research questions.

The theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism under girded analysis of the

data collected in this study of the perspectives of three high school department chairs who

supervise the teachers in their respective departments. The specific unit of analysis used

was the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The data were

constantly compared, reviewed, and analyzed throughout and after the collection process.

Data analysis is an ongoing process for the researcher (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Strauss & Corbin, 1998), and Glaser (1978) wrote:

> The analyst, who feels that he cannot finish writing because he can never begin to tell what he knows, should just accept the fact and finish as sorted and planned. He can never outstrip his own growing, no matter how much he writes. His writing will always span growth and yield more to say. (p. 141)

Data analysis is never completed, but at some point, the researcher must commit what he has learned to paper. Data were analyzed by:

1. Reading transcripts, fieldnotes, and artifacts;

2. Developing a coding system that allowed the researcher to classify (initially) common findings that were then coded in broad clusters;

3. Memoing codes and examples of data that align with the codes; and,

4. Recycling this process to allow for the emergence of new data that either fits or does not fit (delimiting).

Constant Comparative Analysis

Data analysis in qualitative research includes constant comparison of the data, allowing the researcher to identify categories as they emerge from the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Simultaneously comparing all incidents observed and all data collected is referred to as constant comparative analysis (Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The constant comparative method involves looking at the incidents, making comparisons as needed, defining any categories that might emerge, and working toward theory (Glaser, 1978). Each stage of the method evolves into the next.

For example, first round interviews were structured in the same format. Codes were noted beginning with the first interview transcript, with categories identified only after all three participants had been interviewed for the first time (Bogdan & Biklen,

1998). As the initial analysis of the data was undertaken, codes were assigned, and the

process of categorizing the data followed. Using this format, the researcher formulated

specific questions for use in later interviews by constantly comparing and analyzing to

refine categories (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Figure 3.5

illustrates the analysis process in which initial codes were identified with emerging

categories. These categories were then grouped into emerging theories, or themes.

Initial Codes	Emerging Categories	Emerging Theories
Conversations Dialogue Talking	Forms of Talk	Talk
Conferences Meetings Assisting New Teachers	Work of Department Chair	Practices of Instructional Supervision
Time Support for the Department Chair Teacher Restraint Intimidation factor Lack of emphasis	Resource Obstacles to Instructional Supervision	Constraints to Instructional Supervision

Figure 3.5 Sample Analyses—From Codes to Themes

As data were categorized, theories began to emerge (Glaser, 1978). Emerging

theories were presented to the participants who were then asked to validate the findings to

minimize distortions on the part of the researcher (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). According

to Glaser (1978), the researcher must give meaning to the data based on his insight. The

researcher should then use his own insights to construct theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

According to Glaser (1998), "the data must control the emerging theory" (p. 18). The participants, in the present study, when asked to validate the researcher's findings were encouraged to provide suggestions to be considered carefully, and changes, where appropriate, were incorporated into the researcher's findings.

<div align="center">Trustworthiness</div>

Trustworthiness in a qualitative study, with open-ended data, is essential (Merriam, 1998). To establish trustworthiness, the researcher must "persuade his or her audience (including self) that their findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, and worth taking account of" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 290). Four methods, identified by Lincoln and Guba (1985), can be used to assist the researcher in building trustworthiness: validity, reliability, generalizability, and neutrality.

Validity

Merriam (1998) asserted, "All research is concerned with producing valid and reliable knowledge in an ethical manner" (p. 163). Janesick (1994) observed, "Validity in qualitative research has to do with description and explanation, and whether or not a given explanation fits a given description" (p. 217). According to Silverman (2000), "Validity is another word for truth" (p. 175). Silverman (1993) reported that validation included, "taking one's findings back to the subjects being studied. Where these people verify one's findings … one can be more confident of their validity" (p. 156). The process as described by Silverman is referred to as "member checks" by Merriam (1998, p. 204). For this study, respondent checks, or "member checks," were used to insure validity. For this study, the researcher, after transcription and analysis, gave the participants the opportunity to respond by having:

1. The participants read the transcripts, encouraging them to verify or elaborate on what was recorded; and,

2. The participants confirm initial analysis and interpretation of the data.

Reliability

Reliability is the expectation that one's research can be replicated (Merriam, 1998). Maruyama and Deno (1992) stated that reliability refers to the "accuracy of a measure in assessing whatever it measures" (p. 69). According to Merriam (1998), qualitative research does not attempt to isolate human behavior laws but seeks to "describe and explain the world as those in the world interpret it (p. 170).

To reduce the bias that may come from a single person doing research and to increase the reliability of the data, this researcher used triangulation (Merriam, 1998). According to Silverman (1993), "triangulation derives from navigation, where different bearings give the correct position of an object" (p. 156). The sources of data in this study included transcription of interviews, fieldnotes, and artifacts from both the district and the local school where this study was conducted.

The researcher addressed reliability in the present study by employing the following steps:

1. The researcher's position statements expressed prior to the commencement of this study (See Appendix E) described the relationship between the researcher and the participants to allow the researcher's biases to be exposed.

2. Triangulation of data from multiple sources, interview transcriptions, fieldnotes, and artifacts, were used to confirm emerging themes within the data.

3. Two auditors helped to "authenticate the findings" (Merriam, 1998).

Generalizability

Findings are generalizable if they "hold up beyond the specific research subjects and the setting involved" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 32). Merriam (1998) stated, "the issue of generalizability centers on whether or not it is possible to generalize from a single case, or from qualitative inquiry in general" (p. 208). Merriam offered two possibilities concerning this issue, 1) generalizability is a limitation of the method or 2) the use of many cases as an attempt to strengthen generalizability (1998, p. 208). The researcher believes that generalizability is a limitation in the present study.

Neutrality

Qualitative case studies do pose ethical questions due to the nature of data collection and the dissemination of the findings (Merriam, 1998). Subjects may be reluctant to participate due to the possible problems of maintaining anonymity. Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated, "respondents are much more likely to be both candid and forthcoming if they respect the inquirer and believe in his or her integrity" (p. 256). To reassure the participants that ethical questions have been anticipated, Lincoln and Guba (1985) provided three pieces of information that the researcher should make available to the participants before any interviews are undertaken:

1. Name, address, and telephone number.
2. A statement of the purpose of the study.
3. Specific information regarding consent and participation such as confidentiality, anonymity, measures to be taken to prevent data from being linked to a specific individual. (p. 254)

An Informed Consent Form containing this information was provided to each of the participants of this study. Refer to Appendix D for a copy of the Informed Consent Form.

An effective way to enhance validity at the outset of a study is for the researcher to clarify his or her biases and assumptions (Merriam, 1998). In an effort to ensure the credibility and validity of data, the researcher identified his own experiences and biases by reporting his own perspectives as found in Appendix E, the Researcher's Perspectives.

Limitations

Limitations did exist in this study. This study was limited to the perspectives of three high school department chairs in one high school; the perspectives of other teachers and administrators were not solicited. The richness of detail and accuracy of the information recorded concerning instructional supervision in a context of high-stakes accountability was limited to the department chairs willingness to be candid with the researcher.

Chapter Summary

A case study approach was used to examine the perspectives of three (N=3) high school department chairs that provide instructional supervision to the teachers in their respective departments in a context of high-stakes accountability. The department chairs were asked to provide a profile of their professional careers, to define instructional supervision, to discuss instructional supervision in light of high-stakes accountability, and to describe any constraints to providing instructional supervision to their teachers.

The researcher chose three (N=3) high school department chairs from one high school in Georgia to interview. These participants were chosen because of their accessibility to the researcher—they work in the same building as the researcher. This accessibility provided the researcher with a high degree of familiarity and trust with the participants.

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A qualitative approach was used for this study. Data were collected from the three department chairs through three sets of interviews. Predetermined questions for the interviews were established, but were revised after each set of interview data were analyzed. Fieldnotes were taken during the interviews. Interviews were audiotaped and transcripts were constructed after each set of interviews was completed. Data were obtained and analyzed after each set of interviews. The analyses took shape in the beginning as topics evolved into themes, which were then assigned codes.

The study began in June 2002 with the review of the literature. The first interviews occurred in November 2002, the second interviews were recorded in December 2002, and the third set of interviews occurred in January and February 2003. The researcher completed the analysis of the data concurrently with data collection.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to examine the perspectives of three (N=3) high

school department chairs whom, by virtue of their job description, were required to

provide instructional supervision to the teachers in their respective departments—math,

science, and social studies. This research was conducted to answer the following

research questions:

1. What does instructional supervision mean to the department chairs?

2. What does instructional supervision look like in practice?

3. Are there organizational constraints that get in the way of department chairs

   supervising teachers?

The study, conducted in 2002-2003, included three interviews with the three high school

department chairs beginning in November 2002, and ending in February 2003. Through

interviews and artifact analysis, data reflected the perspectives of the three high school

department chairs and their beliefs about instructional supervision.

This chapter reports the findings first as individual cases and then second as

aggregated across the cases. The findings were categorized and then themes were drawn

from the department chair's definition of instructional supervision, the description of the

supervisory process, and the constraints that the high school department chairs

experienced when supervising the members of their respective departments. The profiles

of each of the high school department chairs presented in Chapter 3 and the context of the

county, the high school, and the Math, Science, and Social Studies Departments, presented in Chapter 4, provided insight during the analysis of data from each case and then across each case. The context presented in this chapter is to prepare the reader for the presentation of findings and subsequent analysis.

Context of the Study

This study took place in Junction County, a mostly suburban county, located in northeast Georgia, approximately 20 miles east of a large city. Junction County serves over 123,000 students, is the largest school system in Georgia, and ranks as the 23rd largest school system in the U.S. (National Center for Educational Statistics [NCES]).

Junction County Public Schools is composed of 84 school sites—52 elementary schools, 16 middle schools, 13 comprehensive high schools, 1 alternative high school devoted to technical and vocational education, and 2 high schools serving non-traditional students. Junction County schools are arranged in clusters with a high school serving as the identifying feature of each school grouping. Each cluster is a geographical entity including several elementary schools that feed into one or two middle schools that then feed into the cluster high school. Junction County has been divided into five areas, each containing two or three clusters with a central office Executive Director charged with overseeing the school clusters in the area. The school principals are supervised directly by the Executive Director for the area in which their school is located.

Junction County Public Schools have experienced rapid growth for over a decade, mirroring the growth in the county. Junction County has been ranked as one of the fastest growing counties in the U.S. during this period. The school system has over 20 school sites in various stages of planning and construction with another high school

scheduled to open in each of the next two calendar years. Junction County Public

Schools (JCPS) has an average student growth rate of over 6,000 pupils per year.

The rapid growth of students in JCPS has included a marked increase in the

diversity that is represented throughout the county. Junction County Public Schools

started the 2002-2003 school year with 54.28% of its student population being white and

the remainder divided primarily between African Americans, Asians, and Hispanics (See

Figure 4.1). Other student groupings are also growing in number within the school

system, including both students with disabilities as well as language impaired (ESOL)

students (See Figures 4.2).

African American	American Indian	Asian	Hispanic	Multiracial	Unknown	White
19.55	0.15	9.54	13.86	2.52	0.09	54.28

Figure 4.1 JCPS Percent Ethnicity 2002-2003

Special Services	Percent
Special Education	9.31
English as a Second Language (ESOL)	8. 23

Figure 4.2 JCPS Percent Special Education and ESOL 2002-2003

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) accredit all of the sites

in the Junction County Public School system. Student performance on the Scholastic

Aptitude Test (SAT) and the American College Test (ACT) exceeds both state and

national levels. Junction County Public Schools send more students to the states' leading

post-secondary research institutions than any other school system in the state. The

system average per-pupil expenditure is nearly $7,000.

The Junction County Board of Education has made a strong commitment to technology. Each classroom in the system (including the several hundred trailer classrooms) is equipped with Internet access and is connected to a system-wide network for electronic mail. All schools have state-of-the-art computer labs, web pages, and fully automated, computer-equipped media centers. Junction County Public Schools has begun to operate Junction Online Campus providing access to many high school level courses to assist student progress toward graduation and to provide enrichment for students.

Students in Junction County Public Schools have a variety of extra curricular choices in which to participate. Athletic activities include the standards such as football, baseball, softball, basketball, and soccer, as well as track and field, swimming, tennis, golf, wrestling, and volleyball. Title Nine requirements are being met through the addition of athletic activities for female students. Other non-athletic related activities include student councils, academic competitions such as scholar's bowls and debate teams, service clubs such as Key Club, Interact, Junior Beta and Beta clubs, and special interest groups such as chess clubs and environmental clubs. These activities as well as many others, depending on their age-appropriateness, are offered at most JCPS sites.

Junction County Standards-based Curriculum

Junction County Public Schools completed a system-wide review of the curricula in 1996. This review was undertaken in an effort to provide students with a curriculum that was both fair and rigorous. This review resulted in the development of a comprehensive standards-based curriculum for all grade levels and subject areas. Junction County Public Schools system's curriculum was not only aligned with the

state's Quality Core Curriculum (QCC), but the curriculum was also made more rigorous with the addition of more stringent standards. The adoption of these standards by the Junction County Board of Education included input from all stakeholders—students and their parents, local school teachers and administrators, system level curriculum coordinators and other professionals, as well as community and business leaders, and national experts in curriculum development.

High-stakes Assessment in Junction County

An important part of the development of the "World Class Education" was an assessment program designed to measure student progress on the Junction County curriculum. Again, JCPS considered input from all stakeholders to develop assessment instruments that are used at all levels to measure student progress. At grades four and seven, the assessments are used in conjunction with other criteria to determine promotion to the next grade level. The tenth grade assessment, a performance assessment in the areas of science, social studies, and language arts, is considered a high-stakes instrument because it is a graduation requirement. Students who do not pass the assessments at grades four or seven are moved to special intervention classes and exposed to intensive remediation efforts to assist them in preparation for advancement to the next grade level. Students who fail any portion of the tenth grade assessment are given multiple opportunities for interventions. These students have seven scheduled opportunities to take or retake the assessment to attain passing scores in the science portion the social studies portion, or language arts portion of the high-stakes assessment.

If a student fails to achieve a passing score on any portion of the assessment before graduation, they are not awarded a diploma from JCPS. These students are given

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the opportunity to return at a later date to retake the assessment. If a student does successfully complete all portions of the assessment, a diploma will be awarded provided all other criteria for graduation have been met.

Junction County Public Schools high-stakes assessment stands as testimony to the emphasis on measuring progress on its standards-based curriculum. However, this assessment of students is not the only high-stakes test that JCPS students experience as they move toward fulfilling graduation requirements. Junction County, in anticipation of state requirements for "end-of-course" examinations, began to develop its own system-wide, end-of-course exams to ensure that students across the system were learning (and being presented with) the standards-based curriculum in all areas of instruction. These exams have been in place since the 2000-2001 academic calendar year, and these exams may be replaced in the spring of 2003 with state developed end-of-course exams designed to measure progress on the state of Georgia's Quality Core Curriculum (QCC).

Although no final decision has been made yet, there is discussion that these end-of-course exams may be "high-stakes" instruments, with a passing score being required before a student can be awarded credit for the course. Presently, the exams are mandated to count toward 20% of a student's grade in each course that is awarded credit in JCPS.

The state of Georgia mandates that all high schools administer the Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHSGT) to all 11th grade students. The GHSGT measures student achievement of the state curriculum—the Quality Core Curriculum (QCC). This high-stakes test is administered in five parts measuring student progress in math, writing, social studies, language arts, and science reasoning. Failure to achieve a passing score in all five parts of the GHSGT will result in a student being denied a high school diploma.

Junction County's students have traditionally scored above the state average on the state's graduation test, posting scores that are usually among the highest in the state (Figure 4.3).

	Math	Science	Social Studies	Language Arts	Writing
JCPS	96.6	83.8*	90.1	97.4	96.6
State	89.6	73.2*	81.3	94.9	92.3

Figure 4.3 Seven-Year Average of GHSGT Scores (only 6 years of data)*

Not surprisingly, the emphasis on measuring the county curriculum, the state's QCC, and increasing emphasis on improving test scores such as the SAT and the ACT, has resulted in a heightened focus on student test scores. With this focus, teachers at all grade levels are paying particular attention to specific grade level and subject area curricula as well as test-taking skills. At the county level, the scoring of the fourth and seventh grade assessment tests and the high school high-stakes assessment has taken on a dual meaning. Hundreds of teachers are trained each summer to score these tests. The result of this annual gathering of teachers is an increased awareness by the teachers themselves for the need to focus on teaching the standards-based county curriculum and test-taking skills.

This gathering of teachers has allowed for purposeful professional development being offered to teachers while they are training to score the tests. At the local schools, much attention is paid to standardized test data that are readily available at the click of the computer mouse in that teachers are able to see the results of how their students did on these exams, and they are able to make comparisons of their students with other grade-

like cohorts. Test-taking intervention sessions are proliferating throughout the school system as schools work to assist students to improve their scores, and in some cases, to attain passing scores on high-stakes measures to be eligible to move to the next grade or to graduate.

High Schools in Junction County Public Schools

Junction County Public School system has 13 comprehensive high schools accommodating grades 9 through 12. The number of students at each of these sites ranges between 1500 to 4000 students. Each high school offers the same standards-based curriculum, giving students the option of earning a Technical diploma, a College Preparatory diploma, or a combination of the two, a Dual Technical and College Preparatory diploma. Each high school, although able to make local decisions as to how teachers and classes are grouped, have at a minimum, nine divisions or departments (math, science, language arts, social studies, special education, foreign language, technical education, physical education and health, and fine arts).

The JCPS system allows each school to make locally based decisions on the emphasis that is placed on the divisions or delivery of instruction as long as the standards-based curriculum is not compromised. For example, 12 of the 13 comprehensive high schools in the Junction County Public School system offer instruction through the traditional six period days. However, several schools offer a "7th period" either before the regular school day begins or after hours. By offering to students the opportunity to enroll in a "7th period' class local schools provide additional opportunities to retake a failed course, or a chance to get a jump on a required course whether it is an elective or a prerequisite for another course. Due to the increasing

graduation course requirements of the Georgia Department of Education, many students

are finding that it is increasingly difficult to take all the courses they want or need to meet

the entrance requirements of many colleges and universities. Lincoln North High School

(LNHS) delivers instruction via the 4X4 block schedule.

Supervision and Evaluation of Teachers in Junction County Public Schools

In Junction County Public Schools, supervision of teachers is the responsibility of

the building principal and the designees of the principal. In JCPS high schools,

supervision is generally delegated by the principal to assistant principals as well as to the

subject area department chairs. The job description of high school department chairs in

Junction County indicates that the chief function of the department chair is to supervise

teachers within the department (See Appendix F).

A search of the Junction County Public Schools policies and procedures did not

uncover any specific policy or procedure outlining what is meant by supervision or the

steps to be followed in the process of teacher supervision. Again, in the job description

of department chairs in JCPS, listed under essential functions, is the directive that

department chairs are to "Supervise the day-to-day operation of department."

However, the Junction County Board of Education's policies and procedures

include a lengthy description of the evaluation of personnel. New teachers are to be

evaluated by trained evaluators using the amended Georgia Teacher Evaluation Program

(GTEP). Teachers with more than three years of experience in Junction County are

evaluated through an observation. Junction County Public Schools require each school

site to create, on an annual basis and as part of countywide school improvement, a Local

School Plan of Improvement. Teachers are required to create Individual Goals Plans that

support the local school's Plan of Improvement.

Lincoln North High School

Lincoln North High School, the site of the present study, is a comprehensive high

school serving nearly 2100 students in grades 9-12. Lincoln North High School (LNHS)

has been in existence for 19 years and has undergone three classroom additions since it

opened in 1984. The original rural setting has given way to typical middle class suburban

subdivisions and busy thoroughfares. The median price of homes has risen to nearly

$140,000.

Lincoln North has experienced a change in demographics over the past 5 years

moving from nearly 70% white, 25% African-American, and 5 % students from various

ethnic backgrounds, to its present ethnic representation that includes 59.4% white, 30.8%

African-American, 4.7% Hispanic, 3.4% Asian students, and other groups completing the

total school enrollment (Figure 4.4). During this same period, the ESOL population at

LNHS has risen to approximately 2.4%, students receiving Special Education services

has increased to 10.4%, and free and reduced lunches have moved from 4% to 15%.

	American Indian	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White	Multi-racial
Percent of Total	0.1	3.4	30.8	4.7	59.4	1.6

Figure 4.4 Ethnicity at Lincoln North High School in 2002-2003

Lincoln North High School scores were above the state average and just below

the national average on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). On the American College

Test (ACT), Lincoln North scored above both the state and national averages. LNHS is

generally in the top half of the high schools in Junction County when comparisons are

made on standardized tests such as the SAT and the ACT (Figures 4.5 & 4.6). These same results are generally true of both the Georgia High School Graduation Tests and the Junction County Curriculum Assessment Tests.

	LNHS	Junction County	Georgia	National
Verbal	494	506	489	504
Math	507	527	491	516
Total	1001	1033	980	1020

Figure 4.5 SAT Scores at LNHS for 2002

	LNHS	Junction County	Georgia	National
ACT Scores	21.5	21.5	19.8	20.8

Figure 4.6 ACT Scores at LNHS for 2002

The faculty at Lincoln North High School has been stable over the years in that of the 146 certified professionals, 58, nearly 40%, have been at LNHS for over 8 years. At LNHS, there are 5 teachers with doctorates, and 12 enrolled in advanced degree programs including 4 in doctoral studies. Over 70% of the professional staff at Lincoln North High School has either Specialist or Masters Degrees. Since the school year 2001-2002, Lincoln North High School has served as the site of four doctoral dissertations. The principal at LNHS, who holds a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership, has emphasized life-long learning to his staff and faculty and has promoted this emphasis with resources such as leave time and financial assistance for professional growth.

Culture of Lincoln North High School

Lincoln North High School has a culture peculiar to its location in Junction County. Lincoln opened its doors to students in the fall of 1984. The attendance zone for the new high school drew students from three existing high schools. Because of board policy, juniors and seniors from the pre-existing schools were able to choose to stay at their former schools, thus causing Lincoln North to begin with small 11th and 12th grade classes. When Lincoln North started welcoming students, there was the perception held by many in the community that the location of the new high school was rural and of lower socioeconomic status than the location of the three pre-existing schools. To this day, this perception has been reinforced by real estate prices that have not risen to the levels found in the three pre-existing school zones. Moreover, this perception is fueled by the fact that many real estate agents fail to "show" prospective higher income buyers properties within the LNHS attendance zone.

Partly because of this perception, LNHS began with a "red headed step-sister" self image, and the school has had difficulties shaking this view during the 19 years since the school opened. However, LNHS has used this perception to motivate its students and teachers as they strive to achieve in both academics and extra-curricular activities. Lincoln has pressed to achieve at the levels of its neighbor schools, with some success, but with a "we try harder" attitude. The current principal at Lincoln North is often heard referring to the school and community as the "we try harder school" as he compares LNHS progress and achievements with the other three high schools in Junction County.

Another characteristic that Lincoln North High School has become known for throughout Junction County Schools is its penchant for undertaking new initiatives. Lincoln has had a string of firsts in the system including:

- moving to the 4x4 block schedule,

    LNHS has been piloting this alternative schedule for JCPS for three years. Classes are 93 minutes each and students are able to earn 8 Carnegie units each year.

- instituting the first at-risk program for incoming ninth grade students,

    The STAR program, as it was called at LNHS, or Students and Teachers Against Risk, used a team of four teachers (math, science, social studies, and language arts) and a counselor, to work closely with two classes of 9th grade students who had been identified as academically at-risk by their 8th grade teachers.

- developing a parent-student alcohol and drug awareness class required for students to gain permission to park on campus,

    After suffering the tragic loss of a popular 16 year old female student in a single car alcohol related accident, LNHS required all students to complete a certified driver's education course and to attend, with at least one parent, an alcohol and drug awareness class developed by LNHS teachers.

- providing funding for tenth graders who participate in the PSAT,

    Although the state of Georgia is now providing funding for all 10th grade students to take the PSAT, LNHS had requested and received funds from JCPS to pilot a 10th grade administration of the PSAT prior to the state's provision.

- designing a model for teacher support and professional development that has earned a national reputation.

    The LNHS teacher support and professional development program has served as a model for schools all over the state of Georgia and the nation. The program has been presented at both state and national conferences.

Lincoln North High School has instituted rigorous attendance policies such as the Seven Day Absence Policy and the Tardy Lockout Policy for students as a means to support academic achievement. These last two policies have been adapted by many other Junction County Public Schools.

Delivery of Instruction

After two years of intensive preparation and professional development, LNHS petitioned both the Junction County Board of Education and the State Department of Education for permission to move to an alternative form of delivery of instruction—the 4 X 4 block schedule. With local board approval and a state waiver, LNHS has been on the block since fall 1999. Although the block schedule at LNHS has offered its share of challenges to the local school staff as well as to the central office (particularly in the areas of scheduling and grade reporting), the Junction County BOE has supported the block schedule in both word and action. This support has included the addition of three teacher points to Lincoln North's teacher allocation to accommodate the need for more certified personnel to teach on the block schedule.

Organizational Structure at Lincoln North High School

The structure of the administrative team at LNHS includes a principal, five assistant principals, and a community school director. Also included on the administrative team are the athletic and activities director (AD) as well as the head counselor. Although the AD and counselor positions do not require certification to serve as administrators, they are included on the administrative team because of the importance attached to their roles at Lincoln North High School. One of the assistant principals has

been designated by the principal as his associate principal and serves as the person-in-charge when the principal is out of the building.

In addition to the administrative team, the subject department chairs serve on the Lincoln North Leadership Team. These school leaders serve to function in many joint decisions affecting both the students and faculty at LNHS. Recent decisions that grew out of a shared-decision making process include the allocation of room assignments resulting from the addition of 23 new classrooms as well as the setting of standards guiding the composition of academic progress reports. The Leadership Team meets on a prearranged schedule, at least twice a month. The Leadership Team of LNHS also meets at least once a semester at an off-campus location for a prolonged retreat. This retreat allows the Leadership Team to discuss issues more in-depth. Some of the issues that have been discussed at retreats are leadership styles, shared-decision making, the student scheduling process, and attendance procedures.

The assistant principals at Lincoln North High School have many shared tasks as well as designated responsibilities. One of the assistant principals is assigned as the AP for Curriculum and Instruction. This AP is responsible for nearly all issues relating to the teaching and learning process at LN including the scheduling of students, delivery of instruction, and the pacing of the curriculum. Two of the LNHS assistant principals share the supervision of all issues that affect the 9th grade faculty and students. These APs are housed along with a 9th grade counselor in the 9th Grade Wing. One of the 9th grade assistant principals is designated as the Testing Coordinator for the school, and the other is responsible for organizing the 9th grade Leadership Team. The other two assistant principals share the supervision of students in grades 10-12. One of these administrators

builds the master schedule and serves as the front office coordinator (supervises school clerks) while the other administrator serves as the facility manager in charge of the repair and maintenance of the building as well as the custodial and lunchroom staffs.

All of the assistant principals have an instructional supervisory role in addition to their other responsibilities. Each of the subject areas is assigned to one of the assistant principals. The APs are expected to attend departmental meetings, serving as an additional conduit for communication with the faculty as well as assisting the department chairs with needs and issues when necessary.

Department Chairs at Lincoln North High School

Lincoln North High School has nine subject area department chairs (math, social studies, science, language arts, foreign languages, fine arts, technical education, physical education, and special education). All department chairs serve as members of the LNHS Leadership Team. There are two other entities that serve as departments though each has only two members—the media center and the Air Force Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC). Each department (other than the Media Center and ROTC) has between 8 and 19 certified teachers that are directly supervised by the chair of each department (Figure 4.7).

	Fine Arts	Foreign Language	L-Arts	Math	Media Center	Phys Ed	ROTC	Science	Social Studies	SPED	Tech Ed
Certified Teachers	9	9	19	18	2	11	2	15	17	18	8
8 Years or more at LNHS	2	6	7	9	2	0	1	5	6	3	0

Figure 4.7 Departments at Lincoln North High School

The department chairs at Lincoln North High School are selected through an interview process that is directed by a committee consisting of the assistant principal assigned to the department, the outgoing department chair (if available), a department chair selected by the principal, and at least one member of the department in question. During the last two academic years, four department chairs were replaced at LNHS. The reasons for replacing these department chairs include a transfer to a new Junction County high school and the opportunity to start a wrestling program, a promotion to an administrative position, a retirement, and the death of one. Although the department chair positions could potentially be filled by an applicant not currently on staff at LNHS (as in two cases seven years ago), these four positions were filled by teachers currently on staff and serving in the respective departments.

The department chairs at Lincoln North High School serve in leadership roles both within their respective departments and in the context of the Leadership Team, which has evolved as a shared-decision making body. Department chairs at Lincoln North High School, serving in a leadership capacity, are responsible for the direct supervision of the teachers within their respective departments. This supervision includes ensuring that teachers are adequately covering the JCPS curriculum, using appropriate instructional strategies and pacing, as well as using appropriate communication to inform parents and guardians of student academic achievement. The department chair is expected to build teacher schedules within the context of the master schedule. This includes insuring that teachers are certified in the areas in which they are scheduled to instruct students as well as making classroom assignments.

At LNHS, department chairs have the latitude to prepare departmental budgets and to request professional leave days for department members. Lincoln North High School department chairs are fully involved in the interview and hiring process of teachers for openings in their respective departments. The hiring process is completed in tandem with the appropriate assistant principal. Department chairs are expected to provide newly hired teachers with support that includes a mentor, if appropriate, a "buddy" teacher, as well as any instructional support required to enable successful teaching of the assigned courses.

Department chairs at Lincoln North High School are treated by the local school administration as quasi-administrators. When dealing with issues involving instruction or student behavior, department chairs are expected to act as the first level of intervention. Interventions may include assistance with classroom management, attending parent-student-teacher conferences, advising on alternative teaching strategies, and acting as a sounding board for teachers. Administrators at LNHS meet with department chairs to obtain departmental information and to serve as conduits of information to teachers in their departments.

Professional Staff Development at Lincoln North High School

The principal at Lincoln North High School has made a strong commitment to professional staff development. Along with the varied offerings made by Junction County Public Schools, LNHS has an extensive local school staff development program. During the school year 2001-2002, the principal spent approximately $20,000 on professional growth opportunities for the LNHS staff, far exceeding the staff development allotment provided by JCPS. The $6000 allotted by the central office was

supplemented by various fundraising including vending and concession sales. Teachers and administrators were encouraged to attend professional conferences. The principal paid registration, as well as lodging and travel expenses, when appropriate. The principal also paid for substitutes for teachers to attend professional conferences.

Among the options for professional development and support available locally at Lincoln North High School, are several programs that have received local and national attention. LNHS holds regular faculty meetings that are centered on professional study and conversation. Faculty led book study groups consume the majority of the time allotted for monthly faculty meetings. A local staff development committee determines activities to be offered to the staff based on surveys and interviews with teachers. Teachers within the school volunteer to share their expertise by instructing many of the classes requested by their peers. Teachers who choose to participate in at least 10 of these offerings are compensated with a local school stipend. In addition, a faculty study group, initiated by a department chair, meets once a month entertaining various topics including shared governance, grade inflation, and National Board Certification. These study sessions are voluntary and leadership of discussions rotates on a voluntary basis among interested staff.

Other local options for professional development and support exist at Lincoln North High School. A program that encourages leadership growth in classroom teachers is referred to by its acronym TALENT, or Teachers as Leaders: Encouraging New Thought. This program, developed by an assistant principal at LNHS, includes discussion groups led on a rotating basis by participating teachers, an individual project that includes a leadership component, and a locally funded stipend. Lincoln North offers

a mentoring program for teachers new to the profession (Brand New Crew) as well as those new to Lincoln North (New Crew). Brand New Crew teachers are assigned mentors who are hand picked and trained each summer in a five-hour training session. Mentors assist teachers with issues such as local school copying procedures, timelines for required paperwork, and instructional strategies and procedures. The members of New Crew and Brand New Crew attend planning period meetings designed to assist them in becoming acclimated to LNHS, JCPS, as well as other issues associated with teaching and learning. Mentors receive a locally funded stipend for their services as a mentor for New Crew or Brand New Crew members.

Lincoln North has developed a voluntary peer-coaching program that has been the subject of national presentations. The program serves as an instrument to encourage improvement in teaching among even the best of the instructional staff at LNHS. Accepted as a meaningful, professional, and non-evaluative program, 86 teachers at LNHS participate in this program. The participants are expected to attend a one-hour orientation about the peer-coaching program and subsequent training throughout the year. Mentors are able to choose partners, and they can select from a focused observation or an open-ended observation. The observation is to last a minimum of 45 minutes, and is to be preceded by a pre-observation conference and followed by a post-observation conference. A two-page summary of the experience is submitted to the AP responsible for professional staff development at Lincoln North High School. The observation included in the voluntary peer-coaching program serves a secondary function as well.

Teachers who choose to participate in this program forego the 20-minute Georgia Teacher Evaluation Program observation required of all teachers by the Junction County

Public School Board of Education. This observation is seen as evaluative and threatening, and not nearly as meaningful as the peer observation included in peer coaching.

<div align="center">Individual Participants</div>

Connie Williams

Connie Williams, a teacher for 24 years, 7 at Lincoln North High School, has served as the chair of the LNHS science department for 4 years. Ms. Williams supervises 15 teachers within the Science Department. Currently working on her leadership certificate, Ms. Williams holds a masters degree in education.

As the department chair for science at Lincoln North High School, Ms. Williams stated that she "… perceived instructional supervision as one of the [most] important parts of my job." Elaborating on the supportive role of the department chair with regard to new teachers, Ms. Williams reported, "… the new teachers have to become comfortable with their new surroundings [role as teachers] … I actually think that is probably the single most important role of the department chair."

The closest that Ms. Williams came to a definition of instructional supervision was her statement, "Instructional supervision is not evaluation. It is formative." Ms. Williams summarized her role in instructional supervision this way:

> My role as instructional supervisor is to support them [teachers] and to help them so that they can provide the best education possible for our students.

Ms. Williams used terms such as "non-judgmental," "non-threatening," and "non-evaluative" to describe how she believed instructional supervision should be experienced by teachers.

When discussing instructional supervision, Ms. Williams made a clear distinction between her role with beginning teachers and veteran teachers. Although Ms. Williams believes that "we can all improve in our teaching," she described being "proactive" in the case of beginning teachers. She stated that:

> Instructional supervision for new teachers would be a responsibility. I feel that I need to be visible, be available, and be on top of the situation [with new teachers]. If I see something, I just sit down and go for it.

However, Ms. Williams believes it is the responsibility of a veteran teacher to seek assistance stating:

> I wait for them to come to me if they have a concern or if they need assistance in some area. It would not be something I would track down.

Ms. Williams said in the case of the veteran teacher, she "lets them know up front" that she is "available" if they "have a concern or just wish to discuss some issue." She does this by "setting a tone of caring" and reported that veteran teachers do come to her with concerns.

David Smith

David Smith is a veteran of 17 years, the last 7 at Lincoln North High School. All of Mr. Smith's service at LNHS has been spent as the Social Studies Department Chair where he is currently supervising 17 teachers. Mr. Smith holds a Specialist in Education degree and has previously served as both a teacher and an administrator (head master) in an American school in Mexico.

Mr. Smith explained that he perceived the department chair role as one that required "keeping close contact" with the teachers in his department to maintain a "feel" or "sense" of what occurs in each teacher's classroom. He stated:

It is important to me to have a feel for everybody [in his department]. I want to know where they are at, what they are teaching, what they need, and how they feel about the job they are doing. I want to know how they feel about the progress they are making with their students.

Mr. Smith reported that to know about what a teacher is doing, or how they feel about student achievement requires spending time with his teachers. He stated that veteran teachers "… require less supervision and much more facilitating while beginning teachers require more time and attention." Mr. Smith reported:

When I have new teachers, I of course spend more time hovering around. I sometimes make excuses to go in, talk to them, and make sure they are doing OK. I also ask them if they are comfortable with the way their instruction is going, the teaching, and the learning process as well.

According to Mr. Smith, it is very important, as the department chair, to establish a good working relationship with the teachers he supervises.

Mr. Smith pointed out that in his perspective instructional supervision was quite separate from what he referred to as curriculum supervision. He stated, "Curriculum supervision involved monitoring a prepackaged curriculum," including "insuring that the teacher is both aware of the curriculum" and "actually executing it." Instructional supervision was, according to Mr. Smith, "… how they [teachers] are delivering the curriculum, and that gets into teaching methodology …" Mr. Smith stated that one role of the department chair is "… to try to make teachers aware of multiple methodologies … to make teachers aware that there are many different ways to deliver material to kids …"

Nick Taylor

Nick Taylor has been an educator for 15 years, the last 7 at Lincoln North High School where he has served concurrently as the math department chair. Mr. Taylor

supervises 17 teachers in the Math Department. During his tenure at LNHS, Mr. Taylor completed his doctorate in math education.

Mr. Taylor, as department chair for math at LNHS, was very clear on what he perceived to be the role of instructional supervision. Taylor reported that instructional supervision "is a leadership task" and "a responsibility of the department chair." Mr. Taylor explained:

> Instructional supervision is being available to assist and encourage teachers to implement good mathematics teaching pedagogy. It is the responsibility of the department chair to make sure teachers are teaching and learning about how to do their job to the best of their ability.

Mr. Taylor elaborated on this role of the department chair saying, "Instructional supervision is being aware and involved in teaching and learning in the Mathematics Department."

Mr. Taylor perceived differences in his work as an instructional supervisor with regard to the length of time a teacher had been in the classroom. He stated, "New teachers really benefit from talking with teachers who have been in the classroom for 10, 15 years." Taylor indicated that new teachers in his department were encouraged to work with the mentor program that has been established at LNHS. Mr. Taylor explained that when working with a new teacher, classroom observations were a priority:

> I think the most important thing I do is to be in the classroom with the teacher and then afterwards dialoguing with the teacher about what was going on in the classroom. Here is what I saw today, what were you thinking when this happened, what's another way that this could have been done to improve instruction.

Mr. Taylor stated that for him to be effective as an instructional supervisor it was "important to build trust between the teacher and myself." This trust, according to Mr. Taylor, was established through "caring, professional dialogue."

When referring to veteran teachers and his role in instructional supervision, Mr. Taylor discussed the time restraints on making classroom visits saying, "If I have a struggling teacher, or one having some issues, I spend more time in their classrooms." However, he said of the veteran teacher:

> The teachers who have been around for a while and know what they are doing, my responsibilities are more involved in reflection and dialogue time, communication time.

Mr. Taylor explained that the teachers in his department "… feel comfortable coming and talking to him about both professional and personal issues." He explained:

> I bank a lot. I have a lot of stock in relationships I have with teachers and the trust I have with the teachers in my department. I have a lot of stock in the belief and the goodwill and the faith that I am not out to get them, I am there to help them.

Mr. Taylor indicated that instructional supervision should be "non-threatening" and "non-evaluative" to be accepted by teachers.

Profile of Departments

One of the 13 comprehensive high schools in the Junction County Public School system, Lincoln North High School has a typical high school organizational structure, with the curriculum divided into subject area departments. Department chairs who have been selected by the principal or through a selection process guided by the principal or one of his assistants supervise the departments at LNHS. Lincoln North high School has 11 subject area divisions or departments including fine arts, foreign languages, language arts, math, media services, physical education and health, science, social studies, technical education, and aerospace studies (Air Force Junior Reserved Officer Training Corps). From these departments, three were selected because of the high-stakes nature of their curriculum—math, science, and social studies. The Language Arts Department

chair was originally selected to be included in this study; however, a recent change in the department chair due to retirement, precluded this chair from being included. Due to the inexperience of the new Language Arts Department chair, she was not included in this sample.

Figure 4.8 illustrates the high-stakes tests that the math, science, and social studies curricula must support in Junction County Public Schools, and in turn, at Lincoln North High School. The Georgia High School Graduation Test includes separate assessments in each of the three curricular areas. A passing score must be obtained in each of these areas to graduate with a high school diploma in the state of Georgia. Both the Georgia State Department of Education and Junction County Public Schools have produced end-of-course exams. Presently, the state is readying implementation of a series of exams, which must be passed to earn a high school diploma in Georgia. A third battery of tests that are considered high-stakes are the JCPS Performance Assessments. These assessments include measurements in science, language arts, and social studies. To obtain a high school diploma in JCPS, a student must obtain minimum scores in all three areas.

The SAT and the ACT have been included due to the increased attention the public as well as the State Department of Education is directing toward these scores. These tests have increased the attention that educators, parents, and students must give to these particular subject areas, as well as to test taking performance and results.

	Math	Science	Social Studies
Georgia High School Graduation Tests	X	X	X
State and County End of Course Exams	X	X	X

		X	X
County Performance Assessments		X	X
Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)	X		
American College Test (ACT)	X	X	X

Figure 4.8 High-stakes Tests and Subjects Areas in JCPS and Georgia

Teachers and local school administrators in JCPS are focusing time and effort to assist

students in both their test-taking skills as well as their knowledge of the standards based

curricula offered in Junction County's schools.

As in all other high schools in the Junction County Public School system, as well

as the state of Georgia, LNHS offers coursework designed to give students the option to

acquire a college prep diploma, a technical diploma, or a combined college prep-technical

diploma. A special education diploma is also an option for students with special needs.

Figure 4.9 illustrates the unit and course requirements for each of the three departments

included in this study. Although the coursework may differ in scope and sequence for the

two options—college prep and technical, both diploma choices prepare a student for the

workforce or post high school studies.

	College Prep	Technical

Math	4 Carnegie Units
	    Algebra I
	    Geometry
	    Algebra II
	    Trigonometry
		3 Carnegie Units
		    Tech Math I – Algebra I
		    Tech Math II – Algebra I
		    Tech Math III - Geometry

Science	3 Carnegie Units
	    Biology
	    Chemistry
	    Physics
		3 Carnegie Units
		    Technical Biology
		    Technical Chemistry
		    Principles of Technology

Social Studies	3 Carnegie Units	3 Carnegie Units
	U.S. History	Technical U.S. History
	World History	Technical World History
	Economics and Political	Technical Economics and
	Systems	Political Systems

Figure 4.9 Carnegie Units and Courses Required for Diploma Choices in Departments

Although a student may elect to take other course offerings if available, the courses listed

in Figure 4.9 are required for graduation. In some cases, an Advanced Placement course

may be substituted, but only if it covers all the standards as outlined in the JCPS listing.

Math Department

The Math Department at Lincoln North High School has a faculty consisting of

16 full-time and 2 half-time members, all of who are white. By gender, the Math

Department has 3 full-time male teachers, 13 full-time female teachers, 1 half-time male

teacher, and 1 half-time female teacher. The average length of educational service for

members of the Math Department is 13.9 years, with the average tenure at LNHS being

8.6 years.

The Math Department has experienced a low rate of turnover in its membership,

with only three teachers being replaced in the last two years. There have been only 2

department chairs in the Math Department in the 19 years that the school has been

operating, with the current chair in place for the past 7 years.

The math curriculum offered at Lincoln North High School is consistent with the

curriculum required by the state of Georgia for graduation. As indicated in Figure 4.9, a

student is required to complete four courses beginning with Algebra I and ending with

Trigonometry to obtain a College Prep diploma. As indicated in Figure 4.9, a student on

the Technical track must complete three courses, two covering Algebra I, and one

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Geometry course. Students may choose to augment their math education by taking other course offerings at LNHS. These courses include: Money Mathematical Management, Calculus, Advanced Placement Calculus A or B, Advanced Placement Statistics, and an SAT Prep course that includes a nine week section in math.

Math students in Lincoln North High School have scored near the national, state, and system averages on standardized tests. The latest scores for the Georgia High School Graduation Math Test (GHSGT), the SAT, and the ACT are shown in Figure 4.10, 4.11, and 4.12. LNHS students have consistently scored well on the GHSGT for math, scoring above the state average and near the JCPS system average for the past five years.

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
LNHS	98	96	96	96	96
JCPS System	96	96	97	97	98
Georgia	88	88	92	93	93

Figure 4.10 Five-Year Comparison of GHSGT Math Scores

The math scores for LNHS have remained consistent over this period, above the state averages, and very near the system averages.

The SAT scores for the same five-year period have not been as consistent for Lincoln North High School as the GHSGT scores. Figure 4.11 illustrates a rise in the SAT math scores from the 3-year period covering 1997-1998, 1998-1999, and 1999-2000, followed by a 16-point decrease over the past 2 years for which scores are available.

	1997-1998	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002
LNHS	510	499	523	519	507
JCPS System	516	520	522	522	527
Georgia	482	482	486	489	491
National	512	511	514	514	516

Figure 4.11 Five-Year Comparison of SAT Math Scores

If the LNHS SAT math scores are examined over the five year period, the decrease is 3 points overall.

Over this same period, the scores for Lincoln North High School students taking the American College Test (ACT) have followed a similar pattern of increase and decrease though not as dramatic as the SAT scores. Figure 4.12 indicates that LNHS scores, except for the scores recorded in 1999, have been consistently above the national averages, above the state averages for all 5 years, and very consistent with the system averages.

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
LNHS	21.9	20.5	22.2	21.7	21.5
JCPS System	21.6	21.6	21.4	21.5	21.6
Georgia	20.2	20.0	19.9	19.9	19.8
National	21.0	21.0	21.0	21.0	20.8

Figure 4.12 Five-Year Comparisons of ACT Scores

As illustrated by Figure 4.12, LNHS students have consistently performed well on the ACT in comparison with their counterparts across the system, state, and nation.

Lincoln North High School has been delivering instruction through the 4 x 4 Block schedule for the past three years. This method of delivery has increased the number of credits a student can earn over a 4-year span from 24 to 32 credits. Test scores have not changed significantly as a result; however, the number of students earning more credits in math courses has increased, though no data are available to support this assertion. At LNHS, students who have difficulty with a math course or who fail a math course, are encouraged to retake courses that they have failed. This ability to retake courses as well as select more than just the required number of courses allows students to stay on track for graduation and reduces the need for summer school.

In response to the attention given to standardized test scores, the Math Department at Lincoln North High School created a program of reproducible masters that contain short SAT type math problems. The math teachers at both the beginning and end of instruction use these masters as "sponge activities."

Science Department

The Science Department at Lincoln North High School has a faculty consisting of 14 full-time and 1 part-time members. Of these 15 faculty members, 5 full-time members are African American, while the remaining 10 members are white. By gender, the Science Department has six full-time male teachers, eight full-time female teachers, and one half-time female teacher. The average length of educational service for members of the Science Department is 14.5 years, with the average tenure at LNHS being 5.4 years. The Science Department has experienced a moderate rate of turnover in its membership, with five teachers being replaced in the past two years. Of these five teachers, three moved out of the school system due to the job relocation of their spouses, one retired, and

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one transferred to another school within the system. There have been 6 department chairs

in the Department in the 19 years that the school has been operating, with the current

chair in place for the past 5 years.

The science curriculum offered at Lincoln North High School is consistent with

the curriculum required by the state of Georgia for graduation. As indicated in Figure

4.9, a student is required to complete three courses beginning with Biology, followed by

a two courses, one in Chemistry and one in Physics, to obtain a College Prep diploma.

As indicated in Figure 4.9, a student on the Technical track must complete three courses

as well, one each in Biology, Chemistry, and Physics. Students may augment their

science education by taking other course offerings at LNHS. These courses include

Anatomy and Physiology, Advanced Placement Biology, Advanced Placement

Chemistry, and Advanced Placement Physics.

Science students at Lincoln North High School have scored near the state and

system averages on standardized tests. The latest scores for the Georgia High School

Graduation Test (GHSGT) and the JCPS Performance Assessment are shown in Figures

4.13, 4.14a and 4.14b. LNHS students have consistently scored well on the GHSGT for

science, scoring above the state average and near the JCPS system average for the past

five years.

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
LNHS	87	84	80	79	80
JCPS System	87	83	82	80	83
Georgia	74	72	73	71	75

Figure 4.13 Five-Year Comparison of GHSGT Science Scores

The science scores for LNHS have remained consistent over this period, above the state averages, and very near the system averages.

The JCPS Performance Assessment has been a "live" test for three years, since the spring of 2000. In that time, Lincoln North High School students have had mixed results on the science portion of the Assessment. The Assessment, a high-stakes test that measures achievement in the science curriculum, has four levels of achievement, which can be attained by test takers. These levels of achievement are failing, minimal, effective, and excellent. For two of the three years, LNHS students have passed the Assessment at a higher rate than the system average (Figure 4.14a). However, LNHS students have consistently achieved the two highest levels at a lower rate than the JCPS average (Figure 4.14b).

	2000	2001	2002
LNHS	1.4	11.5	6.7
JCPS	3.8	9.8	8.5

Figure 4.14a Failure Rate on Science Performance Assessment

	2000	2002	2002
LNHS	8.1	4.0	14.7
JCPS	8.0	6.9	26.1

Figure 4.14b Effective and Excellent Combined Rates on Science Performance Assessment

Figures 4.14a and 4.14b indicate that although LNHS students pass the Performance Assessment at a slightly higher rate than the average for JCPS, they are not achieving at the highest levels at the same rate as their counterparts in other Junction County Public Schools. In fact, in the year 2002, the LNHS rate of achieving the effective and excellent levels was nearly one-half that of the JCPS average.

In response to the attention given to standardized test scores, the Science Department at Lincoln North High School has begun a program in which all students develop writing portfolios, beginning in their first science course, biology, and continuing with subsequent core science classes. The writing portfolio contains samples of student writing on practice Performance Assessment tests that each teacher is required to administer, at least once per semester. The Performance Assessment, an in depth content and writing essay, has been the driving force behind increased attention to student writing skills in the science content area. The Science Department faculty has attended several required staff development opportunities designed to assist teachers in developing effective strategies to teach communicating science content through writing.

Social Studies Department

The Social Studies Department at Lincoln North High School has a faculty consisting of 16 full-time and 1 half-time members. Of the 17 teachers, only the part-time female is African American, while the remaining 16 teachers are white. By gender, the Social Studies Department has six men and nine women. The average length of educational service for members of the Social Studies Department is 13.0 years, with the average tenure at LNHS being 6.1 years. The Social Studies Department has experienced a low rate of turnover in its membership, with only three teachers being replaced over the past two years. Of these three teachers, one teacher left due to the birth of a child, while the remaining two teachers transferred to other schools within the system. There have only been 2 department chairs in the Social Studies Department in the 19 years the school has been operating, with the current chair in place for the past 10 years.

The Social Studies curriculum offered at Lincoln North High School is consistent with the curriculum required by the state of Georgia for graduation. As indicated in Figure 4.9, a student is required to complete three courses beginning with U.S. History, followed by a course in World History, and then a unit in Economics and Political Systems. As indicated in Figure 4.9, a student on the Technical track must complete Technical level versions of the same three courses. Students may choose to augment their social studies education by taking other course offerings at LNHS. These courses include Psychology, Sociology, Contemporary Issues, Geography, AP U.S. History, and AP World History.

Social Studies students in Lincoln North High School have at or near the state and system averages on standardized tests. The latest scores on the Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHSGT) and the JCPS Performance Assessment are shown in Figures 4.15, 4.16a, and 4.16b. . LNHS students have consistently scored well on the GHSGT for science, scoring above the state average and near the JCPS system average for the past five years.

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
LNHS	92	92	93	87	90
JCPS System	88	89	92	89	92
Georgia	78	80	85	82	85

Figure 4.15 Five-Year Comparisons of GHSGT Social Studies Scores

The social studies scores for LNHS have remained consistent over this period, above the state averages, and very near the system averages.

Lincoln North High School has administered the JCPS Performance Assessment for three years. LNHS students have passed the assessment at rates nearly equal to the system averages. Figure 4.16a depicts the rate at which students have failed the Performance Assessment. LNHS students' failure rate is slightly higher than the system for the past two years. Figure 4.16b shows the combined rate at which students have attained effective and excellent scores on the Performance Assessment over the past three years.

	2000	2001	2002
LNHS	1.0	9.4	15.3
JCPS	2.7	7.9	13.6

Figure 4.16a Failure Rate on Social Studies Performance Assessment

	2000	2001	2002
LNHS	13.5	12.8	15.9
JCPS	16.9	19.8	22.5

Figure 4.16b Effective and Excellent Combined Rates on Social Studies
Performance Assessment

As shown in Figure 4.16a, LNHS students' failure rate on the Social Studies Performance Assessment is higher than the system average for the past two years, although less than two points separate the scores in both years. Figure 4.16b indicates that LNHS students' are scoring at the effective and excellent levels on the Performance Assessment by six percentage points or more for all three years.

In response to the attention given to standardized test scores, the Social Studies Department at Lincoln North High School has begun a program in which all students are required to maintain writing portfolios that are maintained by their Social Studies

teachers and passed along to their current teachers. The writings that is stored in these portfolios document student progress and achievement in writing across the Social Studies curriculum. Teachers in all Social Studies classes are required to assign a minimum of one Performance Assessment type instrument per semester. The Social Studies Department also provides intervention assistance to all junior level students for the purpose of assisting students on the Georgia High School Graduation Test in Social Studies. These interventions are provided at various times, before and after school, on Saturdays, and even as sponge activities at the beginning and end of classes.

Case 1

Connie Williams – Science Department Chair

The first overall research question sought to uncover the meaning that each participant had of instructional supervision. For Connie Williams, instructional supervision was in the "things" that she did for the members of the Science Department. Instructional supervision took the form of "conversations," "conferencing," and "counseling" with her department members, and instructional supervision was "supporting" her teachers to help them to "grow" and to "develop" as professional teachers. Moreover, to Connie Williams, instructional supervision was a role embedded in her position of department chair. Ms. Williams, in defining instructional, stated:

> Instructional supervision is all of the things I do, whether I'm observing teachers, ordering materials, conferencing with them, counseling them if needed, all of the things that I do to support the teachers in my department. It is helping the teachers to grow, to improve professionally, helping them to do the best job for our students so that our students succeed. Instructional supervision encompasses all of the tools that are necessary, materials as well as techniques and strategies, the methodologies used in the classroom, all of the tools necessary to establish a culture of professionalism among teachers and to provide a world class education for our students.

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In her definition, Ms. Williams alludes to the need for building relationships with the members of her department. Connie indicated that conversations needed be built on a foundation of trusting relationships because conversations by their nature are personal and close.

Ms. Williams refers to the "non-threatening," and "non-judgmental" nature of instructional supervision often. Ms. Williams, who had recently completed a graduate course of study earning her leadership certificate, pointed out that' "instructional supervision is formative, not evaluative, or summative." In relating a story of her own experience with the Georgia Teacher Evaluation Program (GTEP), Ms. Williams stated that, "…no matter how I tried, as a teacher, I always felt threatened and on the spot when an administrator, or even my department chair, walked into my classroom for that 20 minute snapshot." Ms. Williams told of being observed by an administrator on one occasion that, "…never resulted in any feedback at all…" leaving her feeling "very insecure and upset." Ms. Williams talked of the "supportive nature" of instructional supervision as opposed to the "judgmental evaluation" that most observations culminated. Connie pointed out that, "I can't remember an observation that was unsatisfactory," but she also "didn't remember one that was enjoyable" until the time she first experienced an observation by a fellow classroom teacher whom she had requested as part of a peer coaching program at Lincoln North High School.

In defining instructional supervision, Ms. Williams refers often to the work of the department chair. Among the terms that she uses to discuss the "things" or activities that she categorizes as instructional supervision are "observations," "conferencing," "making suggestions," and "problem-solving." When she becomes aware of a situation in need of

attention, Ms. Williams states that she tries "…to be on top of the situation if I see

something, and I sit down with the teacher and just go for it, not in a threatening manner,

but we don't ignore the problem or situation either." Other words that Ms. Williams uses

when talking about the work she does as an instructional supervisor are "help," "advise,"

and "encourage." Often, according to Ms. Williams, her supervision is "a simple word or

two" with a colleague "who is upset that a lesson didn't go well." Ms. Williams talked of

a particular situation with a new teacher, a young man with just a few months of

experience in the classroom:

> Steven came into my office frustrated and angry. He told me that he had tried
> attempted a particular activity, one which even most veteran teachers don't
> attempt with a technical level class, and it had not gone well. The kids,
> according to Steven, just weren't responding to him. I listened to him and could
> hear the hurt in his voice and the disappointment. At that point, I felt like my job
> was to smooth his feathers and encourage him. I knew that I would talk with him
> again about his choice of activities, but for now, he just needed someone to listen
> and give him encouragement.

At times, Ms. Williams believes that instructional supervision requires her to act as a

"listener, giving words of encouragement to a teacher" when needed. She said, in this

case, "the words of advice" that she wanted to provide "could wait for a later time."

Problem solving, according to Ms. Williams, is another important part of her

work as an instructional leader in the science department. On one occasion during the

conversation, she said:

> I can name many times when I sort of come in and help a teacher work through
> problems and, of course, observe and have conferences with them, giving them
> feedback and help them with various issues. I want them to know that I am in
> their corner. I actually think that probably the single most important role of a
> department chair.

Ms. Williams believes that her role as the Science Department Chair includes the

role of instructional supervisor. While discussing the role Ms. Williams stated, "I believe

that I perceive instructional supervision as one of the most important parts of my job."

Expanding on her role as the instructional leader for the Science Department, Ms.

Williams stated:

> I think it involves being there for teachers when they need it, knowing when to back off when things are going well with teachers and knowing when to stay out of their face and not try to tell them what to do and not try to tell them to make changes when they don't need to be told that. You know, making sure that the climate of the department, and I think this is so important, that the climate of the department allows teachers to feel and be successful, that they feel professional, that they don't feel like someone is breathing down their neck.

Ms. Williams went on to indicate that she believed if the teachers "feel good" about their

jobs, and about their teaching profession, that:

> It's going to carry over in the classroom. If the teachers are feeling good about themselves and what they are doing, and that they have somebody pulling for them in their corner…they are going to be better teachers and the kids are going to benefit.

Ms. Williams was less than positive on how the teachers interpreted the role of the

department chair. Her perception of what the teachers thought was summarized about the

department chair's role as an instructional supervisor, in this way, "I think most of the

teachers think that the department chair role is not to supervise, not to tell them how to

teach, not to be in and out of their classroom, observing them." Ms. Williams believed

that most teachers saw the role of the Science Department Chair as a "conduit of

information," a "supplier of material resources," and as a "person to solve logistical

problems" (i.e., dealing with scheduling problems, handling movement of paperwork

between the teachers and the administration).

In seeking to understand the meaning of instructional supervision through Ms.

Williams, there seems to be three themes. First, Ms. Williams believes that instructional

supervision is anything that she does that supports the teachers in her department as the

teachers instruct their students. This is not limited to providing materials, although that is a major part of the work that she does. Ms. Williams believes that supporting her teachers through advice, encouragement, and monitoring and ensuring that the departmental climate is one of professionalism all comes under the heading of instructional supervision. The second theme is that Ms. Williams is quick to accept her role as a supervisor of instruction in the Science Department. She pointed out that she considers instructional supervision to be "very important." The third theme is that the work of instructional supervision can be as simple as listening to a teacher, counseling a teacher through a less than perfect day, or advising a teacher on instructional methods.

The second overall research question sought to uncover what instructional supervision looks like in practice to each of the participants. For Connie Williams, the practice of instructional supervision had much to do with whether the teacher was a beginning teacher, a veteran teacher, or a veteran teacher experiencing problems. Moreover, the practice of instructional supervision seems to be embedded in the role and the work of the department chair. Ms. Williams stated:

> My supervisory practices are to oversee the teachers in my department, to be encouraging, to be supportive, and to be an observer when I need to be. When I feel like I need to, to go into a classroom and observe a situation, observe a new teacher, even to observe a veteran teacher. I feel like that is my role as an instructional supervisor, to be supportive, to be encouraging, to be helpful when necessary to act as a supervisor, to help teachers grow professionally.

It is important to note that Ms. Williams' second use of the term "supervisor" in the last sentence of the above quote took on a different meaning than the first time it was used in the same sentence. The second use of the term "supervisor" meant more than a role; this second use of the term took on the meaning of 'superior' or 'boss.' According to Ms. Williams, she has had an occasion or two where she felt the need to rely on the authority

of the position of the department chair to solve a problem with both new and veteran teachers. One of these occasions occurred with a second year teacher who had several issues develop in his classroom, the source of which seemed to be his inappropriate expectations of at-risk students as well as his instructional strategies with this group of students. Although, as Ms. Williams explained, she did not doubt the young teacher's intentions, he was "unwilling to listen" to her or the administrator that had taken notice of the situation. Ms. Williams said, "I finally explained to him that with 40 something years of experience, the administrator and I surely knew better in this case and he had no choice but to comply. I hated doing that, but he left us no option."

In sharp contrast, in discussing her instructional supervisory practices, Ms. Williams again used terms such as "supportive," "positive," "non-threatening," and non-judgmental." Uses of terms that relate to some kind of communication were plentiful in her perspectives. Terms such as "conferencing," "counseling," "conversations," "listening," and "talking" were common when Connie described her supervisory practices. The point that came through clearly was the differentiation in practices depending on the length of service of the teacher in question. The attention and kind of supervision was related to whether the subject of supervision was a beginning teacher, a veteran teacher, or a teacher experiencing problems. Ms. Williams stated, "a beginning teacher always has my attention, from the very beginning I pay them more attention than a veteran teacher, especially a veteran teacher that I know to be a good teacher."

According to Ms. Williams, her practices with new and veteran teachers differ due to the amount of time she has, due to the level of expertise the veteran has, and due to the tendency of beginning teachers to be more receptive to assistance. Ms Williams, in

describing her supervisory practices with beginning teachers stated, "I feel very

responsible for them. They are just forming their teaching strategies." Directing her

comments toward beginning teachers, Connie explained, "My practice for them

[beginning teachers] is to be around, to be present." Ms. Williams used terms such as

"struggling," "inexperienced," and even "clueless" in describing the beginning teacher.

She justified her increased attention toward beginning teachers saying, "They don't even

know what their problems are in most cases." Practices that Ms. Williams uses with new

teachers, although similar in action, but different in frequency are "meetings,"

"conferences," "observations," and "joint planning sessions." Ms Williams talked about

beginning teachers, indicating:

> When I talk to new teachers today, I think back when I thought it was a weakness
> to ask for help. I couldn't handle admitting I needed help. I thought I shouldn't
> be in teaching if I didn't have all the answers. Of course, I have learned that isn't
> the case at all. To ask for help, to be willing to admit you need help is not a
> weakness at all. You want to give them the best start they can get because you
> want to keep them and you know it's just going to take time for them to be the
> best they can be. In teaching it takes time, just as in any other profession, you
> don't start out being the best, but you want to get there.

Ms. Williams continued describing her instructional supervision of new teachers using

phrases such as "to be there for them," "to be visible," and "to support them."

When referring to her instructional supervisory practices with the veteran teacher,

Ms. Williams was quick to indicate her belief that, "We can all improve." She went on

saying, "My goal for all my teachers is that they are the best that they can be for the sake

of our students." Ms. Williams pointed out that she, "is slow to intervene with veteran

teachers," and communicates to them that, "I am here if you need me." Differentiating

between the new and the veteran teacher, Ms. Williams explained that while instructional

supervision with new teachers is "an important responsibility," it is "of less importance

with the veteran, especially if they are a good teacher." Ms. Williams was quick to state that she will "assist and provide supervision" to any teacher, but "that she waits for the veteran to come to me."

Ms. Williams explained that if a veteran teacher is new to the school she works with them in much the same way she works with a beginning teacher. She stated:

> With veteran teachers who are new to the school, I just want them to know that I am always available to them. Of course, if I see something going on, I approach them, carefully and with respect. However, if they are new to the school, they need to know where things are, how we do things at Lincoln North. They need to feel comfortable and we need to make sure that they are doing things the way we do them here.

Ms. Williams talked about the need to inform the veteran teacher, new to the school, of procedures so that they become "comfortable in their new surroundings." Again, the idea of providing support to veteran teachers was important for veteran teachers but not "as critical" as "in the case with beginning teachers." Veteran teachers, according to Ms. Williams, tend to have fewer instructional needs and thus less need of her supervision. However, Ms. Williams described a veteran teacher who was experiencing problems, "lots of years of experience but lots of classroom management problems." Ms. Williams noted that with all of his experience the teacher was in need of "help." The result of her conference with this veteran teacher was, "with encouragement, he attended a workshop that emphasized classroom management. He still has some difficulty with the same issues, but at least we have a basis for discussion."

In summary, Ms. Williams's instructional supervisory practices can be described as differentiated and dependent on the length of service of the teacher. If the teacher is just beginning his or her career, Ms. Williams will make a special effort to be around for conversations, to answer questions, and to observe the teacher's instruction. Ms.

Williams feels a special responsibility to attend to beginning teachers, partly because of her experience when she was a new teacher, and partly because she wants them to have the opportunity to "grow professionally, to improve every year, so that they can help the students be the best they can be."

The veteran teacher, according to Connie, is not in need of the same attention as the beginning teacher. Connie believes that her role is to be a provider by being available, by supporting them in anyway that she can, but through allowing them the freedom to "come to her if they choose to do so." Ms. Williams described her instructional supervisory practices with veteran teachers, either who are new to Lincoln North High School, or who are experiencing some problems, as similar to those she offers to beginning teachers.

The third and final research question sought to discover if any organizational constraints existed that would keep high school department chairs from instructionally supervising the teachers in their departments. For Connie Williams, the constraints that affect her supervision of teachers were time, lack of official emphasis on instructional supervision, and teacher restraint. Another factor that seems to affect what department chairs do within their roles as instructional supervisors is the preponderance of high-stakes testing.

Connie Williams discussed the need for time, the opportunity to complete all the departmental administrative tasks so that she could devote more of her workday to instructional supervision. Ms. Williams, on being asked about constraints regarding instructional supervision stated:

> Other departmental duties keep me from giving more time to instructional
> supervision. The paperwork that I have to do as a department chair is enormous,

and some of the little things, collecting items from department members, things you have to do for the school administration by a certain deadline, and so you have to go to each member of your department for certain things. This all takes time. You know, its just some duties that the department chair could probably be relieved of so that there would be more time to really support the teachers. In science, you realize full well that equipment ordering is very time-consuming, and takes up a lot of energy. I feel like it is all a part of instructional supervision, just maybe not the most important part.

Obviously, time is at a premium, and even though Ms. Williams sees most of the duties as falling within the realm of instructional supervision, she has difficulty "getting things done." Ms. Williams points out that the constraint is time, and that time is "used up" doing "paperwork," "nit-picky things," and tasks that keep her from doing what she considers more important (i.e., "supporting the teachers").

Another area that Ms. Williams presents as a constraint on her role as the instructional leader in the Science Department is the reluctance of some teachers, usually veteran teachers, to allow her to assist them in growing professionally and improving their instruction. Ms. Williams indicated that many veteran teachers do not "feel the need" to have another teacher in their classroom, for whatever reason. Connie reflects, "Most veteran teachers remember the observation as a threat, as an evaluative piece, and they are not comfortable with the idea of someone telling them what to do or how to teach." Ms. Williams has worked "diligently" to gain the "trust" of her department members so that they will not feel "threatened" or "challenged" by her presence in their classrooms. Still, Ms. Williams is not as likely to be proactive with her older teachers saying, "I wait for them to come to me if they have a concern or if they need assistance in some area." Ms. Williams continued:

> When I am in a veteran teacher's classroom, observing them, and I notice that they do something a little different than I do, or handle a situation in a way that I might not handle the same situation, I wouldn't necessarily say anything. It's

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easier to talk to the beginning teachers, to the younger teachers who aren't so set in their ways.

Unless Ms. Williams is asked, or unless she sees something that she believes must change for the "sake of the kids," she will not approach a veteran teacher with "advice," "suggestions," or a request for a "conference."

Ms. Williams, when discussing if the school administration emphasizes instructional supervision, talked about a previous Science Department chair serving as a role model for her. She stated, "I don't think I was ever given a list of duties and responsibilities, certainly not one that included instructional supervision." She elaborates:

> I had a role model. I have a role model. A current administrator here at Lincoln North High School was, at one time, the Science Department chair. I considered him my mentor, and so when I moved into this position I just naturally modeled my activities and my behavior very similar to what he had done. I believe I perceived that instructional supervision was an important part of my job.

Although her former department chair had made instructional supervision a priority, Ms. Williams has indicates that instructional supervision has not been a topic of discussion at any Lincoln North leadership team meeting that she has attended. It does seem, however, that given the current level of school-wide teacher support activities that "instructional supervision is valued," if not discussed as "a responsibility for *all* department chairs."

The final area that serves as a constraint to instructional supervision is the existence of high-stakes testing at Lincoln North High School. According to Ms. Williams, the three tests that present a high-stakes issue to the Science Department are the Georgia High School Graduation Test, Junction County's Performance Assessment Exam, and the college entrance exams, both the SAT and the ACT. To a lesser extent, the state-mandated end-of-course exams also present a high-stakes component, but "since

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they are still on the horizon, teachers have not begun to worry about them." Ms. Williams indicated that the presence of high-stakes testing has "increased the stress levels of teachers." She stated, "There is more stress on teachers. I think the reason is due to the accountability associated with high-stakes testing." As the Science Department chair, and as the instructional leader for the department, Ms. Williams discussed her role in helping her teachers deal with stressful environment saying:

> I think if someone can sort of guide the teachers and encourage them rather then add to their stress and making them feel more anxious about test scores, then that would be helpful. I see that as part of my role, my work as the instructional supervisor. I think if you believe that you are doing the best that you can, being the very best they cam be, I see that as my job. I think the department chair's job has changed some due to the increased stress on teacher due to all of this accountability over high-stakes testing.

With the proliferation of high-stakes testing, Ms. Williams sees a change in the job of the department chair, and an increased responsibility for the "chair who wants to be an instructional supervisor." She talks of "initiating change" in response to the Performance Assessment Test. Ms. Williams stated, "As the department chair, I had to stay on top of the teachers, encouraging them to change, actually encouraging them to produce essay tests and writing portfolios" in response to the essay required on the Performance Assessment. Ms. Williams then directed her attention to the Georgia High School Graduation Test, and discussed her department's reaction to its format:

> Every year we get nervous when we look at the science test scores. We know we have to cover certain things. I don't think that we are covering it appropriately because it seems so nit-picky and since in Junction County we have this broad systemic approach. This causes us some concern. Therefore, we work much harder making sure we cover everything.

As the department chair, and as the instructional supervisor, Ms. Williams believes that it is her responsibility to "keep the teachers on track" and to "guide and encourage the

teachers" as they instruct their students in "this environment of high-stakes assessments" at Lincoln North High School.

In summary, constraints to instructional supervision do exist. Ms. Williams, the Science Department chair at Lincoln North High School, has indicated that the major obstacle to instructional supervision that she has experienced is the "lack of time," or put another way, "the number of other tasks that fall" under her responsibility. Other constraints to instructional supervision are the lack of local school emphasis on department chairs acting as instructional supervisors, the resistance to supervision by veteran teachers, and the challenges presented by "increased stress on teachers" due to the accountability of high-stakes testing.

<div align="center">Case 2</div>

Nick Taylor – Math Department Chair

The first overall research question sought to uncover the meaning that each participant had of instructional supervision. For Nick Taylor, instructional supervision was a part of his overall role as the Math Department chair at Lincoln North High School. Mr. Taylor saw his role as an instructional supervisor as a "responsibility" that for him meant he was "to be familiar with the teaching strategies" of his department colleagues largely through "building a trust relationships" with these teachers. Taylor explained that to build trust he felt it was necessary to "talk," to "dialogue" on a frequent basis with individual teachers in his department, with small groups of teachers, and with the math faculty during monthly meetings. Taylor also spoke of the need to visit classrooms to observe teachers so that he could dialogue "in an informed way with teachers about their instructional strategies."

When Mr. Taylor was first asked to describe what instructional supervision meant to him, he answered:

> Instructional supervision, it's a responsibility of the department chair to make sure the teachers are teaching and learning about how to do their job to the best of their ability. It's being available to assist and encourage teachers to implement good authentic pedagogy. It's being aware and involved in the teaching and learning in the mathematics department.

Taylor described instructional supervision using terms such as "leadership task," "responsibility," and "being involved with people. In the interview Taylor stated, "As a former teacher, instructional supervision means that there is a person interested in how I am teaching the content that I am supposed to be teaching, in all aspects, including timing and methodology." Taylor asserts, "Instructional supervision means being involved with people's teaching, providing input and feedback on what kinds of activities to do and how they cover the content."

Mr. Taylor asserted that "not all schools or department chairs emphasize instructional supervision," and he explained, "From my experiences, instructional supervision is often neglected and usually focused on in times of crisis." Mr. Taylor believes that supervision of instruction is usually provided by "non-leadership people." As evidence of this, Mr. Taylor stated:

> Teachers have leadership skills that they employ in their classrooms. There is instructional supervision that takes place in those relationships the teachers have with each other. This happens especially when you have experienced teachers interacting with new teachers and you have a willingness on the new teachers part to listen.

Taylor noted that teachers of all experience levels could provide instructional supervision as long as they have a "trusting relationship" and "are willing to listen." Taylor believed

that as the department chair, it is his responsibility to help "create an environment where teachers are able to share teaching ideas to help everyone improve."

One compelling message that Taylor repeated often was that instructional supervision involved communication. In fact, terms such as "dialogue," 'discussion," "having conversations," and "talking" dotted Taylor's interviews. The following quote from Taylor illustrated this message:

> In the Math Department, instructional supervision takes the form of discussions over questions generated by interactions, communication, and collaboration generated during meetings. It looks like conversations about teaching. Instructional supervision looks like visits to their classrooms, making observations to see what they are doing, and then having conversations about what I saw.

According to Nick Taylor, the goal of these conversations is to "ultimately improve the teaching" that occurs in the classrooms. Taylor stated, "Instructional supervision is making teaching improvement a reality."

Mr. Taylor explained that for him to serve as the instructional supervisor it is necessary for him to "know" his teachers by "observing them at work." To this end, he attempted to visit each teacher's classroom at least twice a year for an extended observation. Taylor reported, "I think the most important thing I can do is to be in the classroom with the teacher and then dialoguing with the teacher about what was going on in the classroom." Taylor believed that he must be "familiar with each teacher's teaching methodology" if he is expected to give "meaningful feedback" to the teacher. Taylor added that being familiar with his teachers and their teaching methodologies allowed him to "be aware of issues, problems, and concerns, both from the teacher's perspective and from the parent's view" should he need to communicate with a parent about an issue.

Taylor used the terms "trust" and "relationship" to describe how he is able to "successfully provide instructional supervision" to the teachers in the Math Department. He described his arrival as department chair at Lincoln North High School as "difficult" since he was succeeding a woman who had been department chair for ten years, and who had "a strong following in the department." Mr. Taylor, on assuming the chair position, began to build trust between himself and his colleagues. Taylor described the process of building trust this way:

> In my opinion, to build trust between myself and the members of the math department, I had to focus on relationships, individual relations. To do this I had to be available, I couldn't be too busy to talk to anyone. You have to be willing to listen, I think a lot more than share your expertise. You have to build trust through demonstrated actions. I tell my department members now that they can interrupt me at anytime, even when I am teaching, I am available to them. I also demonstrated my willingness to share the load by being a floating teacher. All these things allowed me to gain their respect, and more importantly, their trust.

As Mr. Taylor described it, the role of an instructional supervisor requires that there exist between the supervisor and the teachers a "relationship, one built on trust and modeled through action and dialogue" with the teachers.

Instructional supervision as revealed by Nick Taylor is an important responsibility, embedded in the role of the department chair. Taylor believed that a trusting relationship must be formed between the supervisor and the teachers for the teachers to communicate through conversations and group discussions. Furthermore, Taylor believed that the actions that "embody" instructional supervision "best" are dialogue and classroom visitation. The "dialogues" or "conversations" lead "to sharing about teaching" between the department chair and the teachers, and between teachers. The goal of instructional supervision is "improved learning about teaching."

The second overall research question sought to uncover what instructional supervision looks like in practice to each of the participants. For Nick Taylor, the practice of instructional supervision dealt primarily with classroom visitation and conversations about what went on in the classroom during the observation. Moreover, Nick Taylor believed that instructional supervision is different for beginning and veteran teachers, as well as for "experienced teachers having some difficulty."

Mr. Taylor was very animated when asked to describe what practices he used in his the role as the instructional supervisor. He described, "getting to go" into a fellow teacher's classroom and "observing a master teacher" at work. Taylor reported:

> The practice that I choose is observation. Going into a classroom while a master teacher is practicing their craft and watching what takes place. That practice is very valuable in the right environment, but it can be very threatening to some people. The difference is in the relationship. My teachers know me well enough, and know that I am there to watch what they are doing and that is why I'm there.

Taylor believed that having "built a trusting relationship with *his* teachers" allows him to enter classrooms "without arousing fear, or mistrust." Taylor asserted that this relationship, one that gives him access to a teacher's classroom, enabled him to see teachers, "practicing their craft." Taylor reported that after seven years as department chair, he now is "able to observe the teacher uninhibited" by his presence.

Continuing to discuss his instructional supervisory practices, Taylor talked about what occurs with the knowledge that he gained from classroom observations. Mr. Taylor insisted on post-observation discussion with the teachers he has observed. For Taylor, the real instructional supervision is in the discussion that occurs after the classroom visit. He explained:

> I think it is neat to go and see teachers doing their jobs very well and occasionally there are things that you see that should be improved. No matter what, I have a

conversation with the teacher I observed. Sometimes it's just to say, 'Wow! That was neat!' However, other times the observation creates a good discussion later. I saw this, how do you normally handle that, and have you ever thought about doing it another way that maybe would be better or at least as something to think about.

The Lincoln North Math Department chair noted that the discussion that follows an observation is "what leads to teachers improving their instructional practices."

Taylor reported that his instructional supervision practices differ when working with experienced, or veteran teachers, or when working with a new or inexperienced teacher. According to Taylor, he is not as likely to observe veteran teachers because "it's not a felt need." When explaining why he is not as likely to observe a veteran teacher, Taylor stated, "The teachers who have been around for awhile and know what they are doing, don't need me in their rooms as often. With them, my responsibilities are more involved in reflection and dialogue time, communication time." However, when talking about the beginning teacher, Taylor said:

> I've seen a fair share of new teachers who thought they knew what they were doing when they walked into that classroom on the first day, and weren't as willing to listen, but it usually only takes a couple of weeks before they quickly come to the realization that, gee, it doesn't work the way it did in college. And all of a sudden, you've got a neat opportunity to take the leadership role of providing instructional supervision for that person.

Describing new teachers "eagerness to get started" without the help of the veteran teachers around them, Taylor spoke of the new teacher becoming "aware rather quickly of the need to seek assistance." He viewed this "awareness" as a "neat opportunity" to work with the beginning teacher, "visiting their classrooms," "observing them in action," and "having dialogue" concerning the new teacher's instruction.

Mr. Taylor reported that it is the responsibility of the department chair to ensure that beginning teachers "have someone to talk to." He believed it is important that

inexperienced teachers be "given opportunities for conversations about teaching." He stated that the beginning teacher "would really benefit from talking with someone who has been around for 10 or 15 years." Another point Mr. Taylor offered was that the department chair "be readily available to new teachers."

In referring to veteran teachers, Mr. Taylor described the conversations he had with them as "much more informal" than with beginning teachers. Taylor's approach to providing instructional supervision is much more relaxed since the veteran teacher has the benefit of experience:

> Veteran teachers, because they have been around for a while and because I have seen them on a yearly basis as the years have gone by, its more informal conversations, discussions, and literally questions. I'll go see a master geometry teacher and say 'hey, I'm teaching this thing, what have you done with that? Any good things going on, any good games this year? You know, those types of discussions.

Mr. Taylor continued to report the "necessity for conversation" as one of the two primary practices he makes use of through instructional supervision. The other practice, for Mr. Taylor, is observing the teacher. However, Taylor indicated that since he "knew" the veterans well, and since he had observed them many times over the years, he was not as "compelled" to observe them as often as the less experienced teachers. He stated, "I have a sense, from my perspective as chair, those teachers [veterans] don't need me to be paying as much attention because they know what they are doing."

Mr. Taylor indicated that the beginning teacher and the veteran teacher with problems were very similar as far as their instructional supervisory needs. He said, "A beginning teacher and an experienced teacher who is struggling are similar in the sense that they need an increased amount of interaction with me." Mr. Taylor continued talking

about his response to a situation in which it he had determined that a new or experienced

teacher was in need of attention. Taylor stated:

> It's my responsibility. I need to make time where I am talking to them on a
> regular basis. Not necessarily daily, because that could stress them out too,
> knowing they are going to have a chat everyday. If its about something difficult –
> we just need to have a regular focus, 'Ok, how are you doing this week? What
> are we working on this week? I'm going to come by and see it Wednesday and
> see how things are going. Let me know if there's anything I can help with. I'd
> like to plan an observation at some point.' That's the type of interaction and
> dialogue I have had with teachers.

Again, in this exchange, it is clear that Nick Taylor relies on dialogue and observation as

his chief instructional supervisory practices.

The third and final research question sought to discover if any organizational

constraints existed that would keep high school department chairs from instructionally

supervising the teachers in their departments. For Nick Taylor, the constraints that

affected him can be placed in two categories with lack of time taking precedence over the

second constraint, the low priority placed on instructional supervision by department

chairs themselves, by veteran teachers, as well as by the school administration. A third

issue, that of high-stakes testing, may also be interpreted as a constraint to the practice of

instructional supervision for Nick Taylor, the Math Department chair at Lincoln North

High School.

Addressing the first constraint to instructional supervision, Mr. Taylor stated,

"Time is critical, absolutely." Taylor spoke of the many tasks that he was required to

complete, such as "ordering materials for the Math Department," "covering for absent

teachers," "deadlines for administrivia," "putting out fires," and various other non-

instructional issues. Taylor reminded the researcher that he had his "own classroom

duties" as well. All of the various tasks that he was expected to complete as the

department chair took time and did not allow him "time to emphasize instructional

supervision." Taylor reported:

> The time thing. Is there ever enough time to do everything you want to do? In my life experiences, it just doesn't happen. You know, we all die before we're ready to die. You have to prioritize things, so it boils down to thinking about instructional supervision, or getting tasks completed, meeting deadlines, and preparing for my own students. There is never enough time to get it all done.

Taylor complained that instructional supervision often came "last" in the list of things

that were required of him as a department chair. Nick explained that often, the time

issue, was a result of teaching a full load of classes, and not being given time, by the

school administration, to complete the tasks required of department chairs. Taylor

underscored:

> Certainly time is an issue. I've experienced both having two planning periods versus having one planning period, and frankly, if you have only one planning period, there is no opportunity, I mean, the number of things you can get done in one planning period, as a department chair, in considering all the different responsibilities and roles of a department chair, instructional supervision is not going to make it. In my experience you are not a very good department chair without an adequate amount of time.

According to Mr. Taylor, the lack of time is the primary constraint to the practice of

instructional supervision as well as any other department chair expectations. Not enough

time, as Taylor sees it, keeps a department chair from performing the role of department

chair in an adequate manner.

The second constraint to instructional supervision, according to Nick Taylor, is

the issue of priority. Taylor reported that the veteran teachers in his department do "not

have a felt need" for instructional supervision, thus not prompting him to make the

practice a priority. As Taylor said, "It is a priority issue and priorities by their very

nature are things we choose to focus on and chose to spend less time on. It's a choice."

Mr. Taylor, referring to the many veteran teachers in his department, asserted:

> It's not like I'm starting with eight brand new teachers, new to teaching that have a felt need for mentoring. They know what they are doing. They are well qualified, with a lot of experience, so it's not as felt a need.

> Returning to the priority issue, Mr. Taylor believed that instructional supervision

is "often a second or third choice behind other tasks" that are vying for the department

chair's attention. Taylor explained:

> The priority ought to be on supervision of the instruction and what's going on in the classroom. I don't think that happens, but I think the reason it doesn't happen is like so many other things, it's easier to do the things that are urgent and it's easier to do the things that are easy to get finished and I can check the box off and still feel at the end of the day, well, I worked this 10 hour day, and I accomplished this and this. Some days you realize you didn't accomplish a whole lot, even if you did check some boxes off.

In Taylor's experience, even though on one level he is able to value instructional

supervision, the need to accomplish tasks that are either urgent, on a deadline perhaps, or

are quickly completed, displaces the "felt" priority to attend to instructional issues. The

need to "check off boxes" gains priority over attention to instructional issues.

Taylor described his perception of the school administration's priority to

instructional supervision asking, "Does the principal support or promote instructional

supervision? Yes and no. Yes, in the financial sense. It is an open checkbook, but I can

generally purchase anything that I see as important to my teachers classroom instruction."

Mr. Taylor explained that as far as actually emphasizing instructional supervision, or

even having discussions about it in leadership meetings, there was no emphasis on

instructional supervision. He described the attention to support for instructional

supervision like this:

I think the key thing where I would say know 'no, it isn't a priority' is that it's been at my discretion to do those things. It's been in a sense, my job responsibility to run the department as I felt it should be run. But instructional supervision was not prioritized in the sense that we didn't have cabinet level meetings where we talked about it, 'alright department chairs, how are you influencing instruction in your classrooms?' That wasn't a priority. It was never a stated goal. Yes, we were trying to improve our school but I don't remember any times when we talked about the impact that instruction would have on those improvements.

Taylor elaborated that instructional supervision was "not an emphasis of the administration, and if it was attended to at all, it was by choice of the department chair." He reported that the principal supported his requests for resources, but that "instructional supervision and its impact on school improvement was never a topic at meetings, never discussed formally or otherwise. Thus, instructional supervision was not perceived to be a priority" by the principal or his administrative team.

Taylor talked further about the lack of discussion about instructional supervision indicating, "Meetings where we talk about how we are going to improve instruction haven't taken place." Nick compared what he perceived as the situation at Lincoln North High School to a school where instructional supervision was a stated priority. He explained, "I guess I'm thinking of a school where the principal would make it a priority from the get-go, that 'instruction is what we are about,' and I want to know department chairs, how are you going to impact instructional improvement in your departments this year?" Taylor went on to point out that if the principal did emphasize instructional supervision, it would be easier for department chairs to prioritize it above other tasks. Taylor said, "If you can imagine that taking place, I would see a much greater force on it. It would be a lot easier for me to come up with ways to impact instructional supervision in my department."

The third constraint to instructional supervision in the Math Department at Lincoln North High School is the attention focused on high-stakes testing. Mr. Taylor pointed out that the high-stakes environment and the associated stress it produces in teachers is not as prevalent in the Math Department as in some other departments. Taylor asserted, "Math is somewhat shielded from the brunt of high-stakes testing." According to Taylor, the one test that seems to affect the Math Department a great deal is the SAT [Scholastic Achievement Test], and to a lesser extent, the Georgia High School Graduation Math Test. Taylor indicated that since the Junction County Assessment Test does not have a math component in it, that math teachers do not consider it a source of stress or concern. He reported, "Everyone else, as far as language arts, social studies, and science, feels the brunt of the assessment, that is, if you don't pass it, you don't graduate. They have much more at stake than we do."

Mr. Taylor explained that his math teachers do spend time in their classrooms working with students to help improve their SAT scores. He reported that several years ago the department created a set of masters that could be used by the math teachers as daily SAT drills or sponge activities. Taylor admitted, "Only 50% to 75% of the teachers are still using the SAT prep questions." He stated, "We meet on Monday, and I will reemphasize the need to continue to focus on SAT scores. After all, our school report card is affected by these scores." Taylor reported that by "encouraging" his teachers to do the "important things" that is, in a sense, is "what instructional supervision is about."

Although Mr. Taylor never stated that the high-stakes nature of the SAT or the Georgia High School Graduation Test affected or acted as a constraint on his ability to supervise his teachers, he did admit that to some extent, he believed, "We are teaching

the test." His admission of this was followed by the defense that, "We want our kids to have the instructions memorized before they go in there, we want them to know what types of questions to expect, we want them to know guessing strategies…" In other words, the high-stakes nature of the SAT test is causing the Math Department chair to adjust the content of instruction within the department, and is, in a sense, driving his supervision of instruction. Taylor further elaborated:

> That's all part of the stuff we teach that's based on the high-stakes testing, both the SAT and the High School Graduation Math Test. It's high-stakes for the students and for the teachers, for the school, Lincoln North, because we are judged by the scores. That's a cold reality because every year the tests are given to different sets of kids, so I as a math person, know, that I will be judged on the results, even though I still haven't figured out what the scores are really telling us. I guess they can show a trend, to compare to what, last year's students?

Taylor was animated in his discussion about the attention high-stakes testing receives from the public. He pointed out that "time that could be used for general instruction of the curriculum" was being spent on the "teaching of test-taking strategies." Mr. Taylor indicated that he did not think that, "it was accurate or fair to compare one year's test results with the next year's results" since they were different sets of students.

Taylor reported that the previous year's SAT scores in math were down and that as the Math Department chair "the appropriate response was to reemphasize the use of the SAT prep masters" that his department had created. He reported:

> At our first department meeting, I asked 'Are you guys doing all the things we had been talking about?' Quite frankly, we had focused on SAT scores extensively for several years, but last year, we had not placed as much focus on the test.

Taylor shared that there has been "increased focus this year on general instruction of SAT test-taking skills," further indicating that "the high-stakes nature of the test" was affecting "the discussion of instruction" in the Math Department.

In summary, there are constraints to the practice of instructional supervision, as revealed in the interview with the Lincoln North Math Department chair, Nick Taylor. Time was listed as the most critical restraint. The lack of time and the need to fulfill many other tasks included in the work of the department chair caused instructional supervision to be deemphasized. The second constraint to instructional supervision was described as a "lack of priority" given to it by the administration, by the veteran teachers, and as a result, by the department chair himself. The final issue that acted as a constraint to instructional supervision was the presence of high-stakes testing. According to Mr. Taylor, focus was being placed on "teaching the test" as opposed to teaching the math curriculum.

<div align="center">Case 3</div>

David Smith – Social Studies Department Chair

The first overall research question sought to uncover the meaning that each participant had of instructional supervision. For David Smith, the meaning of instructional supervision was supporting the work of the Social Studies teachers in his department. Moreover, Mr. Smith saw instructional supervision as a "responsibility," as a "role embedded" in his position as the department chair for Social Studies. For example, Smith reported that he "did not believe that teachers should be directly told *how* to instruct students"; however, he continued:

> To me, instructional supervision is trying to encourage and guide people to be better at what they are doing, and doing that in such a way that they don't resent it or close their minds to those suggestions. I think it is helping teachers to be more effective in how they transmit skills and knowledge, not just straight factual content is a part of instructional supervision, including the way teachers relate to the kids.

David believed that the department chair's role in instructional supervision is assisting the teacher "to be more effective" in their instruction, and yet, present this assistance in a way "that they don't resent it."

Smith stated, "I think that instructional supervision is a proactive stance. You are laying the groundwork to prevent problems from cropping up." Within Mr. Smith's expectations of instructional supervision, he expects to help the teacher avoid "potential pitfalls" or "problems that could arise from the teacher's instruction." David indicated that instructional supervision consisted of "constructive input," "improving the quality of a teacher's instruction," and "seeing that the teachers are covering the curriculum." Smith pointed out, "The instructional part, the teaching part, and learning part, is the most important part of supervision for a department chair." According to David, "monitoring pacing and sequencing of instruction" is a part of supervision of instruction.

David Smith explained, "Instructional supervision includes talking to teachers, visiting classrooms, and observing teachers, learning about their teaching methods, and just getting a feel for what is going on inside the classroom." Smith used terms such as "frequent discussions," "advice," "suggestions," "listening to teachers," and "positive reinforcement" in talking about the "things I do as I supervise the teachers in my department." Smith described how "I do instructional supervision," saying:

> I am out and about, whenever I can on at least one of my planning periods, mixing with the teachers, talking with them. Each day I make my rounds, so to speak, past each social studies classroom. It's important to me to always walk past classrooms, and I prefer that the teacher doesn't know I'm there. I just look in, listen in, get a feel for how things are going. And for me that is a form of instructional supervision because I can sometimes detect problems very quickly without anyone having said anything. If I do detect something out of kilter, then I'll stop in to see that teacher, maybe after school, just to talk to find out what's happening.

Smith has developed a "daily routine" in which he "monitors" and "observes" the teachers in his department. As he pointed out, he attempts to "observe" all of his teachers as he "makes his rounds" as a part of his "daily routine."

Mr. Smith, in discussing his "role in instructional supervision" indicated that as a department chair "you are somewhat higher up in the food chain." Smith believed "this vertical structure of authority and supervision" necessitated "a building of trust" between the department chair and the teachers supervised. To build this trust, Smith felt that the department chair should "function as a facilitator rather than directly as a supervisor." David continued:

> When you function as a facilitator that's where you are basically indicating to the teachers that 'I am here for you. You are not to grovel at my feet and say yes sir, and do this and that. There will be times when I am going to ask you to do something and you understand that it will have to be done for various reasons, but for the most part, I am here to back you up.' I think that you have to communicate that and frequently, its not just telling people that, it has to be by actions and by deeds, and let folks know that we believe that they can do the job and we are here to support them.

Smith believed that department chairs, as the instructional supervisors, must soften the role of "supervisor" to build trust between them and their teachers. To do this, Smith prefers the role of "facilitator" and believes "that's the role a good supervisor takes."

On the role of the department chair as the instructional supervisor, David Smith explained, "The role of the department chair in instructional supervision has always been nebulous, has always been vague." Smith pointed out, "Some people see the department chair as a 'quasi-administrative' role with instructional supervision as a part of that role." He stated, "I'm a little reluctant sometimes, but I think it is my responsibility as department chair." On his role, Smith explained:

In terms of my role as department chair, I believe that I am not here to tell teachers how to teach. I believe that I am here to support them. I believe that when teachers come to me seeking advice, seeking clarification, seeking some sort of direction as to how to work through an instructional issue they are experiencing, then that's where I intervene. If they choose to agree with me and make a change, then great. If not, then because of the murky nature of the role, they will continue what they were doing, unless it becomes an administrative issue. There's a level of professional trust that exists.

Smith held that it is his "responsibility as department chair" to act as the instructional supervisor; however, he believes that given the "nebulous" and "murky nature of the [department chair] role" that teachers are able to "heed his advice or disregard it."

The second overall research question sought to uncover what instructional supervision looks like in practice to each of the participants. For David Smith, the practice of instructional supervision involved "visiting classrooms," "hovering about," "observing teachers," "having discussions," "listening," and "building trust." When describing his instructional supervisory practices, Smith reported:

I think it is important to establish a personal relationship and get to know the people that I supervise, which means I visit with them as much as I can, to talk to them, to find out what their concerns are, what's worrying them, and what would make their job better. I think facilitating their needs to the extent possible is important. If they need supplies, supplemental or instructional materials, I try to obtain them. If they want to go to a conference or workshop, I try to facilitate that for them. This is all part of instructional supervision. I think winning the trust of the people you supervise is extremely important. Instead of stressing that I am a supervisor, I stress that I am one of them, one of the group, that I go through the same things that they do everyday. I stress that I am a professional colleague, and they can depend on my judgment not as a department chair, but because they see me as a veteran or experienced teacher that has had some success.

Smith emphasized the need to build trust between the instructional supervisor and the teachers to be supervised. To do this, Smith emphasized that he too is a teacher, a "professional colleague" with "experiences similar to theirs."

Smith reported, "I tailor my approach to supervision to the individual with whom I am dealing." David said, "I don't believe in standardized prescriptions when you are dealing with human beings." He indicated on "hearing a report of something negative" that his approach to the individual or situation "would vary greatly based on a whole range of personality variables." Smith indicated that some individuals who are "insecure" needed "a less direct approach" while others "can handle dealing with issues more directly." Smith concluded, "I think in most everything I do, I try to take into consideration a whole range of variables about the individual."

Besides treating "individuals according to the situation and according to their unique histories," David Smith underscored, "much of what I do is dependent on the experience of the individual teacher with whom I'm working." Mr. Smith explained that beginning teachers generally "require more attention" and so he "finds reasons to hover about them" and "finds things to talk to them about," "listening for clues or hints of problems or issues." Mr. Smith stated, "veteran teachers require less supervision and much more facilitating." He asserted in a guarded manner, "I am a little reluctant to tell a veteran teacher that they should be doing something different, but again, I will if I think it is best for students."

Smith described how his actions with beginning and new teachers differed:

> With new teachers, the bottom line is this, you have to observe them more often and you have to be constantly interacting with them because they are going to make a lot more mistakes than an experienced teacher. The more knowledge and skills you can transmit to them, the more effective you are going to make them. And it is important that new teachers get off to as good a start as possible in front of their students and peers. There is a difference, a huge difference in how you supervise a new teacher and a veteran. You have to use a different strategy with them in transmitting that there's a better way they could do things and be more effective.

David Smith believed that the new teacher is much more dependent on him as the instructional supervisor than the veteran teacher. He also reported that the practices he uses with the beginning teacher are much different than those he uses with the experienced teacher.

Smith believed that veteran teachers "require less attention" than new teachers; however, he still has a "responsibility to see that they are doing the best teaching, the best job in instructing students as possible." He stated:

> I think even a lot of veteran teachers have kind of shut their eyes sometimes to dealing with certain students. If I think a problem exists, it could be a personality conflict, it could be a student with a learning disability, I try to work with the teacher and suggest there's something you can do different that might help this kid. Most teachers are receptive to that.

David believed that most veteran teachers with problems can be helped to make changes if they are "approached respectfully, and without challenge." He does believe, "Some experienced teachers are difficult to supervise or facilitate" and "unless the problem becomes an administrative issue" he will "not force the teacher to do things my way."

The third and final research question sought to discover if any organizational constraints existed that would keep high school department chairs from instructionally supervising the teachers in their departments. For David Smith, the constraints that affect instructional supervision are "time," and what he labeled "the intimidation factor." Smith also saw the "increase in high-stakes testing as a source of interference to instruction" as well as "teacher stress," adversely affecting instructional supervision.

Smith reported that the "biggest deterrent to my role as department chair, and thus instructional supervision is not having the time to be out and about, talking to teachers, observing them." Smith believed that the local school administration asks department

chairs to "complete many mundane tasks," "complete form after form," and "behave as clerks" to the point that "it interferes with what is important, assisting my teachers with instructional issues." He explained, "I don't know whether it is a problem with time or a problem with administrivia. There are too many tasks to be done as a department chair to really monitor what is going on in the teachers' classrooms." David stated, "By the time I teach my own classes and get administrative requests completed, I have very little time to attend to instructional issues and problems." Smith stated:

> When I have new teachers in the classroom, I want to spend lots of time with them. They need to see me as supporting them and being available. I want to be there for all the social studies teachers, but the beginning teacher really needs me. Instead, I feel like I have to meet deadlines and push paperwork around. It can be quite frustrating.

According to David, many of the administrative duties interfere with instructional supervision. He expressed that the administrative duties are "frustrating" because he was not as available to new teachers as he believed was necessary.

Another constraint to the practice of instructional supervision, according to Mr. Smith, is the "intimidation factor" present due to the "vertical structure inherent in school hierarchies." David stated that many veteran teachers believe, "The department chair is really an administrator more than a teacher." Because of this belief, Smith further explained, "I go out of my way to downplay the vertical position of the department chair in the school bureaucratic structure. I spend a lot of energy trying to build relationship, so that I can be trusted as a fellow teacher, and not mistrusted as an administrator." Smith added, "I don't believe that teachers have ever seen the job description of the department chair." He believed that with "knowledge" of all that the "department chair

really does," that teachers would not "suspect" the position or "give it so much authority."

David Smith, in discussing the "intimidation factor" inherent in the instructional supervisory role of the department chair, stated:

> Many teachers see the department chair as the next level up, rather than a horizontal colleague. They see it as something of an authority figure, someone with power over them. This leads to the intimidation factor. It is vague and thus somewhat intimidating when a teacher sees the department chair in their classroom. Many veteran teachers see the role as quasi-administrative. Many beginning teachers see the department chair as their boss, and that in itself is intimidating.

Smith believed that the "intimidation factor" acts as an "obstacle" to building the relationship necessary for "effective instructional leadership."

The final issue that the Social Studies Department chair believed acted as a constraint to his instructional supervisory practice is the "presence and proliferation" of high-stakes assessments. Smith expressed a very strong opinion on the affect of the high-stakes environment present in public education and the instructional practices of teachers. He stated:

> To me high-stakes testing almost automatically means testing and the analysis of testing results. I think that when you have a high-stakes testing environment teachers become focused on not only drill and kill to more of an extent than they might normally have done, but they become focused on getting through the material. It's a mad rush over all the material to get it done before the students are tested on it. The focus is not on teaching and learning, its on covering the content. I think the high-stakes environment has begun to kill off the more innovative teaching that even teachers who are such great innovators can do well. They are afraid to take the time or because it takes time to set up certain kinds of lessons, they don't do them. There isn't time in the environment anymore because you have to cover the material.

Smith complained that even "innovative teachers" are "focusing on covering the material" rather than "using best teaching practices" to instruct their students. Smith

believed that the classroom is becoming a place focused on "drill and kill" and unconcerned with "understanding the concepts."

Another factor involved in high-stakes assessment, according to Smith, is the "accountability that naturally follows." David explained, "I'm not saying that teachers shouldn't be accountable, I'm just saying that high-stakes environment sounds good politically, and may not be such a good idea instructionally." Smith pointed out that as accountability increases, "so too does stress." He stated, "High-stakes tests stress both kids and teachers. The good teachers will get through it, one way or another. But I don't think increasing the stress on kids is a good teaching tool."

As a department chair and instructional supervisor, Mr. Smith believed that his role, due to the high-stakes environment, and the associated increase in accountability and stress, has been affected. Smith reported:

> I'm trying to filter out this idea that seems to crop up with high-stakes testing in the minds of teachers. Teachers get the idea that somehow they have to significantly change the way that they teach, the way that they deliver instruction. And in a lot of ways the high-stakes environment is serving as a convenient excuse for teachers not to teach the way teaching should be done. It's like 'well, I can't do that anymore, I just have to present the material, blah, blah, blah. It's serving as an excuse for teachers not doing the extra things, making the extra effort. They can just blame high-stakes testing.

Smith believed that some teachers are using the high-stakes environment as an "excuse" for not "doing the extra things that help students learn." He indicated that some teachers are altering the way they present instruction in "to cover the material" rather than "to teach the students." Smith stated, "I deemphasize the high-stakes environment." He added, "I offer suggestions about how to deliver the material in different ways and still teach the kids."

The Social Studies Department chair at LNHS listed the Junction County Performance Assessment as well as the Georgia High School Graduation tests as the major contributors to the high-stakes environment. He added that the State and County end-of-course exams were quickly becoming issues in the high-stakes environment. Smith mentioned that both the SAT and ACT college entrance exams "were high profile tests that many people judge a schools success by." He complained, "There is just too much emphasis on testing in general, high-stakes in particular."

In summary, David Smith listed three constraints to the practice of instructional supervision. The first constraint was described as "too many tasks to complete," including "teaching my own classes." The second constraint that Smith discussed was the "intimidation factor." According to Smith, the intimidation factor grew out of teachers' perceptions that the department chair was "really an extension of the administration." The final constraint that David Smith discussed was the presence of multiple high-stakes tests. The result of the high-stakes environment was increased teacher focus on "covering the material" and lack of attention to "teaching the students."

Cross Case Analyses

The purpose of this study was to examine the perspectives of three (N=3) high school department chairs whom, by virtue of their job description, were required to provide instructional supervision to the teachers in their respective departments—math, science, and social studies. This research was conducted to answer the following research questions:

1. What does instructional supervision mean to the department chairs?

2. What does instructional supervision look like in practice?

3. Are there organizational constraints that get in the way of department chairs supervising teachers?

The data uncovered in the interviews with the department chairs will be reviewed across the three case studies, for each research question.

Research Question 1

The first overall research question sought to uncover the meaning that each participant had of instructional supervision. From the three case studies, six major themes evolved that illustrate the perspectives of the three department chairs who were involved in this study. Figure 4.17 lists the themes and indicates the case or cases in which the themes were found.

Themes	Case #1	Case #2	Case #3
RDC Role of the Department Chair	X	X	X
TAL Talk about Instructional Issues	X	X	X
SUP Support of Teachers	X	X	X
WDC Work of the Department Chair	X	X	X
RES Instructional Supervision as a Responsibility	X	X	X
TRU Relationship of Trust	X	X	X

Figure 4.17 Themes from Research Question 1

As illustrated by Figure 4.17, all six themes were present in each of the case studies. The themes, the role of the department chair (RDC), talk about instructional issues (TAL),

support of teachers (SUP), the work of the department chair (WDC), instructional

supervision as a responsibility (RES), and a relationship of trust (TRU) were discussed in

the previous individual case examinations.

All of the participants believed that instructional supervision was embedded in

their roles as department chairs. Referring to instructional supervision, Connie Williams

(Science) stated, "I actually think that probably the single most important role of a

department chair." Connie continued, "Instructional supervision is a part of my job as the

Science Department Chair, it's my role to support the principal who is the instructional

leader of the school. It's my role to support the teachers." Nick Taylor (Math) reported,

"Being an instructional supervisor is part of the role I play in my interaction with teachers

in my department as well as with the central office." Taylor offered, "It [instructional

supervision] isn't the only thing I do, but it's an important component of my job as the

Math Department chair." David Smith (Social Studies) also identified with the role of

instructional supervisor, explaining, "I believe that I do have a role in instructional

supervision. Its important to me as the Social Studies Department chair to have a sense

of what is going on in each of the classes of the teachers I supervise." Math Department

chair, Nick Taylor, on reflecting on the importance of his role as an instructional

supervisor said:

> My understanding of my role, my philosophy, is oriented towards instructional
> supervision. It is an important part of what I do as a department chair. It needs to
> be a priority; I need to be more protective of how I spend my time so that
> instructional supervision is what I do on a regular basis, so that I am actively
> engaging in the role of instructional supervisor on a daily basis.

The department chairs in this study accepted the role that instructional supervision presented to them. The participants believed that instructional supervision is an important role as department chair.

Connie Williams (Science) believed everything she did to support her teachers could be defined as part of her role in instructional supervisor. She stated, "In my experience, instructional supervision is all encompassing. It is everything I do to support my teachers, to promote a culture of professionalism." David Smith talked of his instructional supervision role, "I think that instructional supervision for me is basically acting in a non-threatening manner, lending a hand, giving advice and making suggestions where asked or needed. I think I need to be a role model for my teachers." Taylor, the Math Department chair, stated, "Instructional supervision is everything I do to ensure that my teachers are able to do their jobs in the classroom."

The practice of "talk" (TAL) was found as a theme in the interviews with all participants. Nick Taylor (Math) was very clear that a form of "talk," whether it be called "dialogue," "discussion," or "conversation" was his main practice of instructional supervision. Taylor explained, "It's discussion based. We'll talk about things. It's not necessarily planned activities. We share ideas, talk about lessons. But it's discussion." David Smith (Social Studies) believed that instructional supervision in his department includes talk as well. Smith reports, "Instructional supervision happens when teachers come to me for advice, for suggestions, for clarification." He continued, "Instructional supervision is encouraging and guiding people to be better teachers." While Connie Smith believed that "Instructional supervision is everything I do," she confirms, "My

style is to offer feedback on what I see. I can have meaningful conversations with teachers about instructional issues that have occurred in a teacher's classroom."

Illustrating the importance of "talk" in his meaning of instructional supervision, David Smith explained:

> Sometimes teachers ask about how to use a particular textbook. Sometimes they ask for advice on grading procedures. Sometimes they just want to talk about something that happened in their classroom or while they were presenting a particular lesson. And then I feel like I can make suggestions about how to do things. There are hundreds of things a department chair can do in a week. You can lend advice, make suggestions, make small talk, or participate in a discussion group.

Smith used terms such as "ask," "talk," "suggestions," "advice," "small talk," and "discussion groups" to give meaning to the importance of talk in his role as department chair and his work as instructional supervisor.

The third theme related to the department chairs' meaning of instructional supervision is support of teachers (SUP). Ms. Williams, the Science Department chair at LNHS, spoke often of giving support to the teachers as an important part of instructional supervision. Connie stated, "Instructional supervision is intended to help the teachers, to support the teachers, to make them the best that they can be." Nick Taylor's view of instructional supervision is much the same. Taylor explained, "Making sure the teachers have everything they need to be the best they can be, that's instructional supervision." Taylor continued, "You have to be available, you have to be willing to listen. You have to be willing to share your expertise." David Smith stated, "It's helping teachers to be more effective, it's supporting them when they need you."

The work of the department chair (WDC) is the fourth theme to be addressed in the discussion of the meaning of instructional supervision. All the participants of this

study included the work that they do in their roles as department chair as a part of instructional supervision. David Smith indicated that "hovering about," "observing teachers," and "having discussions" were all apart of what he does in his supervision of the Social Studies Department. He reported, "I think instructional supervision is visiting classrooms frequently, talking to teachers, observing teachers, and trying to get a feel for what is going on inside the classroom." Nick Taylor (Math) spoke about "visiting classrooms" and "dialogue with teachers" as being important work of instructional supervision. Taylor commented, "Instructional supervision looks like visits to the classrooms and discussions generated by those visits." Connie Williams (Science) talked about instructional supervision in broad terms. She included all the things she did as a department chair that she viewed as help and support for teachers saying:

> Instructional supervision involves all the components of my job. I see it as anything I do to support the teachers, supporting them to grow and develop professionally. It's being in the classroom, providing information, providing materials, being a problem-solver when necessary, its just all those things that I do to make me an instructional supervisor of science. My role as instructional supervisor is to support the teachers and to help them so that they can provide he best education possible for our students.

All three department chairs in this study placed a high value on their work as instructional supervisors.

The fifth theme uncovered in the search for the department chairs' meaning of instructional supervision was that of responsibility (RES). Although only one department chair mentioned a job description, all stated that they believed instructional supervision was a "responsibility" of the department chair. Nick Taylor (Math) stated, "Instructional supervision is a leadership task, and I believe that it is a responsibility, a part of my responsibility as a department chair." Taylor pointed out, "Although it is not discussed at

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leadership meetings, I believe it is a part of my job and should be a priority." Connie Williams (Science), referring to new teachers explained, "Instructional supervision for the new teachers would be a responsibility of the department chair, more so for new teachers, but for veteran teachers as well."

David Smith also related that instructional supervision was an "important responsibility" in his role as both the department chair and instructional supervisor for the Social Studies Department at LNHS. Smith stated, "I think it is the responsibility of the instructional supervisor and department chair of observing what is being taught, how its being taught, and ensuring that teachers are being effective."

The sixth and final theme uncovered in the process of seeking the department chairs' meaning of instructional supervision is trust (TRU). The three department chairs all reported that building an environment of trust with their teachers was essential for instructional supervision to be successful. The department chairs were in agreement that their instructional supervision required them to act in "non-threatening" and "non-judgmental" ways so that they could "build relationships" with their teachers. Connie Williams stated, "As a Science Department chair, I set the tone that I care and I just want to help. Instructional supervision is something the teachers should feel comfortable with, it shouldn't threaten the teacher." Williams continued, "I try to build relationships with my teachers, so they don't feel judged when I come into their rooms or speak with them."

Nick Taylor (Math) explained how he built trust in his role as department chair and instructional supervisor, "To be an effective instructional supervisor, and department chair for that matter, you need to have multiple contacts with the teacher. I spend a lot of

time talking with my teachers building relationships." David Smith (Social Studies) emphasized the need to build trusting relationships with his teachers, and he stated:

> The first thing I do in my role as the instructional supervisor is to establish a personal relationship and get to know the people that I am supervising, and let them get to know me. I think winning the trust on the part of the teachers is extremely important. You hope they respect you and trust you because they are more likely to listen to you.

Trust, as related by all the participants in this study, is an important component in the relationship between teacher and instructional supervisor.

In summary, the first research question sought to uncover the meaning of instructional supervision through the perspectives of the participant high school department chairs. Six themes were common to all the participants' perspectives. These themes are listed in Figure 4.17.

Research Question 2

The second overall research question sought to uncover what instructional supervision looks like in practice to each of the participants. Three themes were identified in the interviews with the department chairs. All of the themes were common across all participants. As listed in Figure 4.18, the themes that developed from the participants' perspectives were differentiated instructional supervision (DIS), practices (PRA), and trust building (TRB).

Themes	Case #1	Case #2	Case #3
DIS Differentiated Instructional supervision	X	X	X

PRA Practices	X	X	X
TRB Trust Building	X	X	X

Figure 4.18 Themes from Research Question 2

Of the three themes uncovered while all three participants discussed seeking to answer the second research question, the theme of differentiated supervision at length. The department chairs agreed that instructional supervision was different for three categories of teachers—beginning teachers, veteran, or experienced teachers, and experienced teachers with some type of issue or problem. Connie Williams (Science) spoke of the need to provide instructional supervision to beginning teachers, "When I have a new teacher in the department, I take time to be around their classroom, just getting a sense of what is going on." Connie also stated, "With new teachers I see instructional supervision as a must. I try to be very visible, available, and be on top of things if I see something, just being ready to sit with them and go for it." In much the same way, David Smith (Social Studies) reported, "With new teachers I spend more time in their vicinity. I hover around, making excuses sometimes to go in and talk to them and make sure everything is ok, seeing that they are comfortable with the way instruction is going." Smith also added, "With new teachers I don't assume anything. I just think new teachers need a level of supervision beyond veteran teachers."

When Nick Taylor (Math) spoke of this differentiated supervision for beginning teachers and experienced teachers he stated, "New teachers need more time, you want to ensure a good foundation for them." Taylor continued, "I go out of my way to make sure that a new teacher in the math department understands that I'm here to help."

On differentiated supervision, David Smith (Social Studies) was clear that all teachers are individuals and require varying amounts of attention and different types of support. Smith explained:

> Generally, the way I function in my role as instructional supervisor is to tailor my approach to supervision to the individual I am dealing with. I don't believe in standardized prescriptions when you are dealing with people. I just don't believe in it. Some teachers understand what you are getting at more quickly. Others take more time. Some teachers are more defensive than others, some are more insecure. I try to deal with the person and the situation at hand. I don't have a one-size fits all kind of supervision.

Smith indicated that he "considers the traits of his teachers," and "considers the specific situation" when he practices instructional supervision. Smith added, "Teachers with issues require more attention, much like beginning teachers. But their experience demands that I treat them with respect." Connie Williams, the Science Department chair, stated, "Veteran teachers that are having a difficult time presenting a concept or with classroom management get more of my attention." She pointed out, "With the veteran teacher I try to sit and listen more than I give advice. They usually just need to talk out the problem and they'll arrive at a solution on their own." Nick Taylor, the Math Department chair, spoke in similar terms about experienced teachers who required his attention. Taylor stated, "Usually I'll just sit down with a veteran teacher and dialogue, you know, just have a conversation, carefully making suggestions to help."

The second theme, practices (PRA), could, on a very general basis, include all the "things," as Connie Williams (Science) remarked, that department chairs do as they support their teachers instructionally. However, this would not do justice to the general categories within the practices of the three participants of this study. For example, the two categories that highlight this theme, as uncovered in the interviews with Nick Taylor,

were "dialogue," in some form, and "visiting the classrooms" of the teachers in the Math Department. Taylor described his practices saying, "I should be involved on a regular basis inside the classroom as the teacher is teaching, observing. And then having professional dialogue, talking with the teacher about what I saw while I visited the classroom." Taylor continued, "I should be able to say, 'this is what they like to do, these are the things that they do, and I know their goals for this year,' because we have talked many times." Taylor reported, "Through my dialogue and classroom visits, many times, I am able to lead a teacher, through suggestions, to better methodologies."

David Smith's (Social Studies) practices were similar to Taylor's practices. Smith reported that "having many informal conversations" and "observing my teachers" are required to supervise instructionally his teachers. Smith indicated, "I sometimes make excuses to hang around a teacher, just to talk." He reported, "Much of my conversation with teachers is just to get to know them, and through this knowledge I can learn to support them individually." Smith, indicated, "I also like to observe my teachers. These observations lead to more dialogue and discussion and opportunities for instruction."

Connie Williams (Science) had a much broader view of what her practices are in relation to instructional supervision. Although Williams spoke of "conversations," "giving advice," and "observing my teachers," she expressed a much broader view of what constituted instructional supervisory practices than both Taylor and Smith. Connie Williams stated, "I think instructional supervision includes all the things I do to support the Science Department teachers." Williams reported

> Instructional supervision is all that I do to support the teachers so that they will grow professionally and do the best job in the classroom. It's providing the lab

materials, scheduling the right classes, passing along information, observing them, and talking with them. Instructional supervision is all the things I do that help the teachers provide the best education possible for the students.

Williams believed that the many tasks that she completes to assist teachers are her instructional supervisory practices.

The third theme identified while seeking to uncover what instructional supervision looks like to the department chairs was trust building (TRB).This theme, though similar to a theme discussed from the first Research Question, relationship of trust (TRU), involves the actions that the three department chairs took when purposefully building trust that would lead to facilitating instructional supervision. David Smith (Social Studies) identified "building trust" with the members of his department as a priority saying, "First of all I think it is important to establish a personal relationship, to get to know the people I supervise." To build trust, Smith explained, "You have to take a cautious approach, get to know them, win their respect, be sure not to flaunt your authority over them, and get to the point where they trust you." David Smith, in describing his trust building practices, consistently talked about "winning their trust," "treating them as colleagues, as equals," and "trusting them."

Nick Taylor (Math) was very clear that "trust building is essential" in his practice of instructional supervision. Taylor stated, "My job was to come and build relationships. I have learned to listen, to think about my answer before I say something, to know that I don't always have to have the answer." Taylor continued describing his practice of instructional supervision, "I work on being open with my teachers, I appreciate them, I try to create a relaxed environment in the department." Taylor, describing how he builds trust in the Math Department, explained:

> I listen carefully when I talk with my department members, and I ask a lot of questions to demonstrate that I am interested. I value their opinions and let them know that I learn from them as well. I encourage them to give me suggestions; I treat them as professionals. I know each member in my department well and I know what motivates them.

Taylor's trust building practices include terms such as "listen," "value," and "encourage." All of these actions lead to Taylor, "treating them as professionals."

Connie Williams (Science) explained, "I build trust by setting a tone that I care and I just want to help." Williams continued, "When I go into a room to provide instructional supervision, the teacher already knows me as being supportive, caring, and encouraging. I am there to help." Connie's trust building practices include being "supportive," "caring," and "encouraging."

In summary, the second research question sought to uncover what instructional supervision looks like in practice to each of the participants. Three themes were found to be common to all the participants' perspectives. These themes are listed in Figure 4.18.

Research Question 3

The third overall research question sought to uncover what organizational constraints exist that get in the way of department chairs supervising teachers. From the three case studies, three themes were identified in the interviews with the department chairs. All of the themes were common across all participants. As listed in Figure 4.18, the themes that emerged from the participants' perspectives were time (TIM), lack of emphasis (LOE), and high-stakes environment (HSE).

Themes	Case 1	Case 2	Case 3
TIM Time	X	X	X
LOE Lack of Emphasis	X	X	X

| HSE High-stakes Environment | X | X | X |

Figure 4.19 Themes from Research Question 3

The theme of time (TIM) was discussed by the department chairs as a central constraint to instructional supervision that department chairs face on a daily basis. Nick Taylor (Math) believed that the lack of time is associated with priorities for which he is responsible. Taylor stated, "As far as my day-to-day responsibilities it doesn't take much time because there are other things I choose to do. I would have to conclude that I don't believe it's a high priority because it doesn't happen very often." Nick added, "One thing is certainly the amount of time we are given. There just isn't enough time to do all the things a department chair must do." Continuing to discuss the lack of time, Taylor (Math) stated:

> Frankly, if you only have one planning period, there is no opportunity to practice instructional supervision. The number of things you get done in one planning period, considering all the things a department chair has to do, instructional supervision just isn't going to make it. From my experience you just can't be a very effective department chair without enough time. Even with two planning periods it comes down to how you prioritize the use of time.

For Nick Taylor, the Math department chair, the amount of time is an issue, and how he chooses to use the time he has is a matter of prioritizing the tasks that he must complete as a department chair.

Connie Williams, the Science Department chair, reported, "Time, there just isn't enough of it." She continued, "With all the other duties I have as a department chair, I just never seem to attend to instructional supervision in the way that I would like to do so, I never seem to have time to give it 100%." Williams added, "All the other things I do as the department chair are important to the school, but I just don't end up with the time for

instructional supervision." According to Ms. Williams, time, and the many duties she has

that fill that time, act as a constraint to her practice of instructional supervision.

David Smith (Social Studies) reported, "The administrative team assigns so many

mundane tasks. There isn't time enough for instructional supervision." Smith believed

that department chairs "are kept busy" with tasks that "are not instructional in nature."

The second theme uncovered in the search to identify constraints to instructional

supervision, lack of emphasis (LOE), involved the failure of both departmental members,

as well as local school administrators, to place a value or priority on the practice of

instructional supervision. The Department chairs of both Science and Math spoke of this

lack of emphasis on their role as instructional supervisors as constraints to supporting

their teachers instructionally. Connie Williams (Science) reported, "I don't think most

teachers see the department chair's role as including instructional supervision. I think

they see my role as more of an administrative assistant, providing resources, scheduling

classes, that sort of thing." Williams explained, "Teachers aren't receptive to the idea

that another teacher can supervise them in the classroom." Connie also stated, "I

emphasize instructional supervision because that is what the department chair before me

did, not because I was told to do so when I became department chair." Williams'

statement illustrated a lack of emphasis on instructional supervision by the administrative

staff at Lincoln North High School.

Nick Taylor (Math) also believed that the lack of emphasis on instructional

supervision acts as an impediment to his practice. Taylor pointed out that, "It is not a felt

need, particularly of veteran teachers. Thus, as the department chair, I tend to place

priority in other areas." He stated, "If I don't emphasize it, visiting classrooms and

observing teachers, if it's clearly not a priority, instructional supervision doesn't happen."

Nick indicated that the administration of LNHS did not verbally support instructional

supervision as a responsibility of its department chairs. He explained:

> I have never had a discussion with my administration about my role as an
> instructional supervisor. If the principal doesn't see it as important, then there
> isn't much chance that it will be seen as important by the faculty. I remember
> during my interview for the department chair position, the AP made a reference to
> some things that were related to instructional supervision. I guess that is about
> the extent of any dialogue with my administration.

Nick Taylor indicated that both teacher as well as administrative indifference to

instructional supervision, serve as constraints to his practice of instructional supervision.

David Smith (Social Studies) spoke of the "intimidation factor" as a basis for

teacher "reluctance" to instructional supervision. Smith reported, "Teachers are naturally

fearful of anyone coming into their rooms. An observation has usually meant, at least in

the past, that an evaluation was taking place." Continuing, Smith explained, "I call it the

fear factor, or intimidation factor. Teachers are reluctant to see another adult in the back

of their room." David pointed out, "With this fear, I think most department chairs

deemphasize visiting classrooms as a practice."

The third theme, high-stakes environment (HSE), uncovered in the search to

identify constraints to instructional supervision was associated with the proliferation of

high-stakes assessments. David Smith discussed the affect of the assessments on his

teachers, "I think teachers are becoming obsessed with just delivering material." Smith

indicated that the high-stakes environment "affects instructional supervision in a negative

way." Smith stated:

> I think high-stakes environments are creations of people who do not understand
> the teaching and learning process. These assessments have caused some teachers
> who are very good in the classroom, people I respect, to give up good

instructional practices and strategies for drill and kill, just to get the material covered before the next big test. High-stakes environments only serve to stress kids and teachers.

The Social Studies Department chair, David Smith, described the high-stakes environment as detrimental to "good instructional practices and strategies" resulting in some teachers trying "just to get the material covered."

Nick Taylor (Math), on being asked about high-stakes assessments explained, "Mathematics is somewhat shielded from the brunt of high-stakes testing." He did say, "We do have discussions concerning the SAT and the Georgia High School Graduation Test, the math section." Taylor stated, "Math teachers do feel responsible for student scores on these tests and it's my job to be sure they cover the appropriate material." Nick Taylor continued, "We have created SAT masters to use as review on a daily basis, especially in our junior classes."

Connie Williams (Science) confirmed that the high-stakes environment affects instructional supervision saying, "Absolutely, in my opinion it does. Science teachers have been forced to direct their attention to writing and grading writing. They don't just emphasize their content anymore." Williams stated, "We used to have multiple choice tests with short essays, now science teachers are learning to include multiple forms of assessments." Connie Williams indicated that science teachers are leaning to use "portfolios as part of their instruction and assessment" and "the department chairs are having to ensure that teachers are emphasizing writing in their instruction." Because of the high-stakes environment, the teachers that Connie Williams supervises are learning new instructional methods and the department chair is "emphasizing" the use of these methods.

In summary, the third research question sought to uncover what constraints

existed to the practice of instructional supervision. Three common themes (Figure 4.19)

were uncovered in the responses of all three of the participants.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the perspectives of three high school department chairs that, by virtue of their job description, were required to supervise the teachers in their respective departments—mathematics, science, and social studies—all high-stakes subject areas. In-depth, face-to-face interviews were conducted with the participants in an effort to uncover the answers to the following research questions:

1. What does instructional supervision mean to department chairs?

2. What does instructional supervision look like in practice?

3. Are there organizational constraints that get in the way of department chairs supervising teachers?

This chapter presents an overview of the research design, a summary of the study, a comparison to previous studies, and the major findings. This chapter concludes by presenting the implications and recommendations for further research.

Research Design

A qualitative case study approach was used which included three in-depth interviews with each of three high school department chairs from one high school in a large school district in northeast Georgia. From the interview process, the researcher sought to uncover the perspectives of high school department chairs concerning their experiences with instructional supervision.

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Following the interviews, the researcher used the constant comparative method to identify emergent and common themes that were reported in the findings. Individual case analyses were completed initially, followed by analyses across the three case studies. From these analyses, emergent themes were identified leading to three propositions.

Using the qualitative case study approach, the researcher wanted to examine the perspectives of high school department chairs as they instructionally supervised the teachers in their respective departments—math, science, and social studies. The researcher desired to "gather first-hand information about processes in a 'naturally occurring' context" (Silverman, 1993, p. 11). According to Patton (1986), the qualitative approach to data collection "seeks to capture what people say in their own words" (p. 22), thus the qualitative approach, in all likelihood, would provide the "first-hand information" that was desired.

Symbolic interactionism was the guiding theoretical framework used to shape this research and to inform the researcher's interpretation of the findings. According to Prus (1996), symbolic interactionism can be "envisioned as the study of the ways people make sense of their life-structure and the ways they go about doing their activities, in conjunction with others, on a day-to-day basis" (p. 10). The researcher used this component of symbolic interactionism to analyze the perspectives of the participants as they supervised the members of their respective departments.

<div align="center">Discussion</div>

Two levels of findings, individual case findings and across case themes, were discussed in Chapter 4. The purpose of this section is to discuss the major findings in the context of the literature reported in Chapter 2. The reader is reminded that this was a

case study, and the findings are situated in the context of one high school and within the departments in which the participants worked. Thus, generalizablity is not appropriate, and the reader is cautioned not to make broad assumptions to be applied across populations other than those studied—the three high school department chairs in one high school in northeast Georgia. Each of the following sections includes a proposition, discussion, and the relationship of the proposition to the literature. The propositions drawn from the findings of this study include:

1. The high school department chairs experienced role conflict and ambiguity relative to providing instructional supervision;

2. The meaning of instructional supervision for the department chairs was intuitive and reflected differentiated approaches;

3. Constraints, namely time and lack of emphasis, created obstacles for the department chairs.

Proposition 1: *The high school department chairs experienced role conflict and ambiguity relative to providing instructional supervision.*

Although the Junction County Public School Board of Education published a job description for high school department chairs, listing supervision of teachers as a function of the position, none of the participants of this study referenced the job description or instructional supervision as being a priority of the position. The failure of the participants to reference a job description is not unique to this study. Mayers (2001) explained that the department chairs in his research were unaware that a job description existed as well.

The three participants in this study described their involvement with instructional supervision as a part of fulfilling their role as department chairs in their respective departments. Nick Taylor stated, "One of my primary responsibilities is to ensure that each of the teachers in the math department is doing the best teaching that they can do." David Smith, the Social Studies Department chair explained, "Although the position of department chair has never really been explained to me, I believe that it includes the responsibility to act as the instructional supervisor of my department." Similarly, the Science Department chair, Connie Williams, stated, "I don't think I ever saw a list of responsibilities and duties, but my role as department chair includes being the instructional supervisor for the Science Department."

Describing the role of instructional supervisor was dependent on what the department chair believed defined instructional supervision. Smith explained, "As Social Studies Department Chair, my job is to make sure the teachers know what to teach, know how to teach, and to make sure they teach it." Connie Williams believes that instructional supervision is, "anything I do to support the teachers." Williams continued, "My role as instructional supervisor is to support the teachers so that they provide the best education possible for the students." Nick Taylor reported, "Instructional supervision is a responsibility of the department chair, to make sure the teachers are teaching to the best of their ability."

The department chairs in this study were, by virtue of their job description, given specific responsibilities for instructional supervision. As illustrated, the department chairs were unaware of their job description, and certainly unaware of its direction to supervise the teachers in their departments. Yet, they believed that "supervisor" was a

part of their role as department chairs. The expectation to perform in the role of the instructional supervisor is present even though they have not been specifically asked to do so by the members of the administrative team. The origin of their expectations to fulfill the role of instructional supervisor seems to be through tradition and modeling of former department chairs, which the participants experienced, before them. For example, Connie Williams explained, "I had a very helpful department chair when I first began teaching. She offered me lots of help, advice, and most of all she made me feel comfortable as a teacher." Williams added, "Previous to my assuming the department chair position, I saw my chair do lots of things for teachers, so I just sort of copied what I saw him do." Taylor had a particular insight concerning his role in instructional supervision, "What has impacted me most is the relationship I had with my first department chair. She was available before and after school, she would talk to me anytime I needed a question answered."

Role theory describes an individual's behavior within a group or organization. The three high school department chairs who participated in this study assumed the role of department chairs when the principal appointed them. They were not, however, given much in the way of instruction to enact the role of instructional supervisor. As Koch (1930) reported, "the headship is in confusion" (pp. 348-349). The participants in this study were compelled to create their own roles. Huse (1980) stated, "Each individual within the organization has a unique set of characteristics and the role filled by the individual provides the building block, or link, between the individual and the organization" (pp. 52-53).

The Lincoln North High School department chairs who participated in this study, found their roles somewhere between the teachers and the administrators. The department chairs were able to create roles from the expectations they held for the department chair role and that which they felt was expected from the teachers and administrators. The expectations of the role were delivered through indirect communication. At no time did any of the department chairs report that they were told by either the teachers or the administrative staff what they were expected to do. In fact, the department chairs did not have a copy of the published job description or a "Things to Do" list. Instructional supervision was a role that the department chairs assumed "following" the modeling of instructional supervisory practices provided by their predecessors. Furthermore, although Lincoln North High School has an Assistant Principal for Curriculum and Instruction, the three department chairs failed to reference the position in their discussions of instructional supervision. In fact, there was no reference to the involvement of administrators at LNHS in instructional supervision. Nick Taylor, the Math Department chair at LNHS reported, "Instructional supervision happens more outside of leadership."

Katz and Kahn (1978) reported that all people fulfill roles, and it is through these roles that others know a person. Huse (1980) described behavior as the combination of an individual's expectations as well as the expectations of those associated with that person. The department chair role for the participants in this study was not unique in that their roles were the summation of their own expectations coupled with the expectations held by the administrative team and members within their respective departments. In this

study, the high school department chairs were aware of the expectations of the teachers they wanted to support, but not necessarily of the administrators for whom they worked.

The individual's ability to satisfy the expectations placed on them by the senders of expectations determines how much role conflict or role ambiguity the individual experiences. In the present study, the role-set that the three high school department chairs were to satisfy consisted of two groups, the teachers and the administrators, as well as their own expectations of the role of department chair, and more specifically, the role of instructional supervisor.

The participants in this study encountered both role conflict and role ambiguity. According to Huse (1980), role conflict occurs when a person is unable to comply with the expectations that are placed on the role. Role conflict and role ambiguity have been identified in the role of the department chair by many authors (Mayers & Zepeda, 2002; Weller & Weller, 2002). The department chairs voiced concern that "there wasn't enough time" to fulfill the tasks they were expected to complete. Nick Taylor explained, "The reality is that because of all the things I have to do as department chair, there just isn't much time for instructional supervision." Continuing, Taylor reported, "My biggest frustration is that I don't have enough time to get it all done." As the department chairs become aware of expectations, whether their own or from someone in their role-set, conflict resulted as the element of time became the critical resource. Of course, any constraint that impedes the department chair from completing the tasks they choose to do would be a source of role conflict.

The high school department chairs in this study experienced role ambiguity as well. Role ambiguity, according to Huse (1980), "occurs when the individual has insufficient knowledge of the expectations" (p. 53). To illustrate this, consider this statement from Connie Williams, "I was never given a list of responsibilities and tasks; I just perceived instructional supervision to be one of the more important parts of my job." As Ms. Williams described her role, she was left to decide that instructional supervision was a critical piece in her routine. Again, any task or responsibility that is not fully understood by the department chair can be a source of role ambiguity. As well, not knowing if a task is a responsibility and not knowing of the administrator's expectations, for example, will increase role ambiguity.

Proposition 2: *The meaning of instructional supervision for the department chairs was intuitive and reflected in differentiated approaches.*

When asked to share the meaning of instructional supervision, the participants shared a wide variety of meanings. Two of the department chairs, David Smith, Social Studies and Nick Taylor, Math, gave what could be described as intuitive meanings to the construct of instructional supervision. That is, the definitions of instructional supervision were not textbook. For example, Smith, the Social Studies Department chair, stated, "From my point-of-view, instructional supervision is trying to give the teacher the tools and the support to do a good job."

Smith used terms like "listening in," "hovering about," "observing," and "talking" to illustrate what instructional supervision looked like to him. Smith emphasized that a "good relationship" was essential for effective instructional supervision. Smith also used

relational terms such as "trust," "respect," and "encourage" to describe his form of instructional supervision.

Nick Taylor, the Math Department chair, shared what instructional supervision meant to him, "As a department chair, instructional supervision means being involved with people's teaching." Similar to Smith, Taylor's discussion of instructional supervision was sprinkled with terms that were relational in context. Taylor used terms such as "visiting classrooms," "dialoguing," "being available," and "taking time."

Unlike Smith and Taylor, Connie Williams, the Science Department chair, shared the meaning of instructional supervision using terms such as "professional development," "professional growth," "formative," and "not evaluative." Williams' shared meaning of instructional supervision indicated more than an intuitive notion of the academic meaning of supervision, and it was discovered that she had recently completed a graduate leadership course in which instructional supervision had been a topic. Williams stated, "Instructional supervision is not evaluative, it's not evaluation. Instructional supervision is formative, assisting teachers in their professional growth and development. It's helping them become better teachers."

According to Glatthorn (1990) and Glickman (1990), supervision is a formative process that leads to professional growth. Acheson and Gall (1997) reported that one purpose of supervision is "the improvement of instruction" (p. 48). The influence of the coursework was apparent in Williams shared meaning of instructional supervision. However, Smith and Taylor, shared meanings of instructional supervision that were developed from practitioners' experiences.

A complete list of the intents of supervision, as reported by Zepeda (2003), can be found in Chapter 2. For this discussion of Proposition 2 (The meaning of instructional supervision), an abbreviated list of the intents of supervision includes:

- Face-to-face interaction between teacher and supervisor;

- Improvement of student learning through improvement of teacher instruction;

- Trust in the process. (p. 20)

The participants in this study included these intents in their instructional supervision in one form or another. Meetings with individual teachers were reported to be a common practice among the department chairs. Nick Taylor stated, "Observing teachers in action creates good discussion later. I can ask things like 'Do you always do it that way? Have you ever thought of doing it differently?' and really good one-on-one dialogue takes place." This conversation between Taylor and a teacher is similar to David Smith's practice of instructional supervision. Smith explained, "You visit with the teachers as much as you can. You talk to them, you find out what their concerns are, what's worrying them." Smith indicated that he "made excuses" to have discussion with his teachers. Connie Williams valued "face-to-face" opportunities with her teachers as well. Williams stated, "I take time to sit down with my teachers, to speak with them. Some are more open to this than others, but it lets us share about what is going on in their instruction."

All the department chairs involved in this study reported that one goal of their instructional supervision was to "improve student learning." Williams (Science) explained, "Bottom line, we're all about students, and we're here for them. I want my

teachers to be the best they can be so that the students get the best education possible."

Taylor (Math) emphasized teacher improvement saying, "One goal is bringing a teacher from where they are at and improving them and making them better." In a similar manner, David Smith (Social Studies) stated, "To support the people I supervise so that we advance student knowledge and skills." The department chairs in this study were concerned with improving teacher instructional practices so that student learning would be improved.

The need to build trusting relationships between themselves and the teachers they supervised was a recurrent need expressed by all the study participants. David Smith, the Social Studies Department chair, clearly identified the need to build trust between teacher and supervisor stating, "My instructional supervisory practice begins with establishing a personal relationship with each of my teachers. I think winning the trust of the people you supervise is extremely important." The Math Department chair, Nick Taylor, in like manner reported, "I have a lot of stock in relationships I have with my teachers and the trust and the good will and the faith that I am not out to get them. I am here to help in anyway I can." Connie Williams, the Science Department chair, explained, "I set a tone that I care, and I just want to help. Instructional supervision must be non-threatening to be effective." All of the participants in this study included the above intents in one form or another. At least for Taylor and Smith, it can be said that the inclusion of these intents in their description of instructional supervision was intuitive, a trust-building process that was carried on between supervisor and teacher in which improved instruction would result in improved student achievement.

Supervision has many forms. Zepeda (2003) reported that supervision could be formal or informal; clinical or some modification of the clinical process; or it may be differentiated or developmental. Glickman (1981) reported that, "the goal of instructional supervision is to help teachers learn how to increase their own capacity to achieve professional learning goals for their students (p. 3)." The findings of this study demonstrate that, for the high school department a chair participating in this research, instructional supervision was both differentiated and oriented to improve student learning.

The department chairs were very careful to explain that instructional supervision was modified to fit the teacher being supervised. In fact, three categories of teachers emerged in the discussions with the participants—beginning teachers, veteran teachers, and teachers with issues. Smith explained, "It's important to me to have a feel for all of my teachers that I know what they need, even how they feel about their job." For David Smith, each teacher was "an individual an, unlike any other." Thus, knowing each one of his teachers, allowed Smith to structure his supervisory practices according to the needs of the teacher being supervised.

Nick Taylor, recognizing that teachers are not products of a cookie-cutter process stated:

> A beginning teacher and a teacher who is struggling are similar in the sense that they need increased attention. They are not going to respond in the same way though, so I use what I have learned about them to work effectively to bassist them or bring about change.

Connie Williams commenting on her practice of instructional supervision with veteran teachers reported, "Even a 20 year veteran still has things they can do to improve. The trick is finding a way to get them to listen." Two of the three participants did not have

the benefit of intense study on the subject of instructional supervision, and for all three, they did not have any encouragement from the local school administration; however, these department chairs intuitively knew that effective instructional supervision should be differentiated and should be tailored to fit the teacher. The department chairs in this study were aware that instructional supervision was not a one-size-fits-all process.

Proposition 3: *The constraints of instructional supervision include time and lack of emphasis.*

The three high school department chairs in this study were in agreement that the major constraints to their practice of instructional supervision were time and a lack of emphasis on the supervisory role. Time, as a constraint, could be defined in at least three ways, as described by the department chairs in this study. It could be argued that the department chair does not have enough time to carry out all the tasks of the position or it could be argued that the time allotted for the position is filled with too many tasks. Illustrating the lack of time, Math Department chair Nick Taylor reported, "The reality is that there just isn't much time for effective instructional supervision."

Science Department chair Connie Williams, complaining of all the tasks she was responsible in her position reported, "All of the other duties, paperwork, collecting things from the teachers, ordering materials, all of the nit-picky things keep you from giving the kind of time to instructional supervision that is really needed." A third way that time, as a constraint to the practice of instructional supervision, could be characterized, was through the failure to assign any time for the completion of instructional supervisory tasks. David Smith explained, "Without a planning period assigned just for department chair duties, there is no way I could get this job done."

Although the literature reviewed for the present study did not address time as a specific constraint in the role of the department chair, or as a resource required performing the tasks of the department chair, a case could be made that time is a resource, similar to textbooks, classroom supplies, and support from the administration. Wettersten (1993) reported, "support given to the chair by the building principal" was one of four factors that contributed to the fulfillment of the position of department chair as an instructional leader (pp. 187-189). Mayers (2001) found that time and resources were required for department chairs to accomplish their work.

The three department chairs in the present study agreed that the lack of time was a constraint to the practice of instructional supervision. The participants reported that they did not have time to conduct classroom observations for a sustained period as is reported in the literature. The instructional supervision that was conducted was "abbreviated" and involved "walking about," "talking with teachers," and "checking on" teachers, especially those teachers "with issues."

The second constraint to instructional supervision, identified by the participants in this study, was a lack of emphasis on the practices of instructional supervision. Connie Williams stated, "I'm not sure that anybody on the administrative team, or anyone at all, ever talked to me about instructional supervision, or that I should provide instructional supervision to my department." Echoing the same sentiment, Nick Taylor explained, "I have never heard instructional supervision being discussed in a leadership meeting. In that sense, it is not a priority of this administration." Taylor continued this line of reasoning saying, "Since it isn't discussed, instructional supervision must not be important to the principal, so if I have a choice of instructional supervision or completing

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some other task that seems important to the principal, I may not choose instructional supervision."

Wettersten's (1993) case study of four department chairs listed administrative support as a factor that facilitates the department chair's practices of instructional leadership, which could broadly include instructional supervision. Another factor, listed in Wettersten's study was, "The chair's understanding of the vision and goals of the principal and administrative team as well as those of department members…" (pp. 187-189). If the department chair believes that instructional supervision is not among the principal's "vision and goals," what motivation exists for the implementation of this kind of support for teachers?

At Lincoln North High School, the department chairs admitted that they had not had a conversation with the administrative team concerning instructional supervision. Furthermore, although Lincoln North High School has an Assistant Principal for Curriculum and Instruction, the three department chairs who participated in this study failed to reference the position in their discussions of instructional supervision. In fact, there was no reference to the involvement of administrators at LNHS in instructional supervision. Nick Taylor, the Math Department chair at LNHS reported, "Instructional supervision happens more outside of leadership." Since no support for this activity existed, it is a wonder that these high school department chairs chose to provide any instructional supervision at all even though the subject matter in which these department chairs oversaw represented content areas—math, science, and social studies—considered to be high-stakes.

With the advent of high-stakes testing and the need to demonstrate acceptable test scores, the department chairs in this study found it necessary to attend to various high-stakes tests within their subject areas. For example, Nick Taylor, the Math Department chair, indicated that the SAT is a test that math teachers in his department pay attention to and modify their teaching day with the intention of affecting school-wide test score averages. Taylor reported, "The SAT is something we have interest in and concern over because that is something by which our school and department will be judged."

Smith, the Social Studies Department chair, and Williams, the Science Department chair, pointed to the Junction County Public School's (JCPS) Performance Assessment and the Georgia High School Graduation Tests as creating concern and interest in their departments. Williams stated, "I think the department chair's job was and still is important in initiating and maintaining the changes that were required of science teachers for our students to succeed on the Performance Assessment." David Smith reported, "I try very hard to decrease the emphasis of my department members on the high-stakes tests. I encourage teachers to teach as they know how to do."

The participant in this study indicated that time is an obstacle to the practice of instructional supervision, that they have too many tasks, and not enough time. The appearance and increased attention given to high-stakes assessments, with the accompanying "high-stakes environment," has the high school department chairs who participated in this study using "time" while they focused on the tests, such as the SAT, the JCPS performance Assessment, and the Georgia High School Graduation Test. With time already a limited "resource," the addition of high-stakes testing into the school environment placed increased pressure on the department chair to "get it all done." Thus,

although high-stakes testing is not seen as direct obstacle to the practice of instructional supervision, it has served to increase the impact of time as a constraint to the practice of instructional supervision.

<p style="text-align:center">Implications</p>

The implications of the research on the perspectives of high school department chairs on their practice of instructional supervision include suggestions for further research. Furthermore, implications for local high schools and school systems, as well as for higher education will be discussed in relation to the findings of this study.

In this study, it became apparent that what the high school department chairs did not say was as important as what they did say. In the three face-to-face interviews held with the participants, no evidence of conversations between local school and central office administrators was recorded. Although the participants "sensed" the need for supporting their teachers, their definitions of instructional supervision were "intuitive" except for the Science Department chair who had recently completed a course that included instructional supervision as a topic. Even this chair, however, had no formal training from the local system in the practice of instructional supervision. Furthermore, the department chairs in this study failed to include any discussion of professional staff development designed to assist them as they completed "the work" of the department chair, including the work related to instructional supervision.

Implications for Further Research

By design, this study was limited to three high school department chairs in one high school. Given the lack of research on the perspectives of high school department chairs on their instructional supervisory practices, perhaps this study can provide baseline

data for further research from the perspectives of a larger number of high school

department chairs from other high schools. Based on the findings of this study, perhaps

further research into the manner in which high school department chairs "negotiate" their

roles relative to assigned duties that are supportive in nature rather evaluative would

serve to facilitate the practice of instructional supervision by high school department

chairs. Further study may shed light on the "intuitive" sense of instructional supervisory

practices uncovered in this study.

Implications for Higher Education

The present study did not, by design, set out to uncover any implications for

higher education. However, the findings in this study illustrate a lack of support for the

high school department chair position by both local school and system administrators,

including subject area coordinators as well as coordinators for professional development.

Perhaps the local school and system administrators are omitting support for the

department chairs purposefully. This seems unlikely given the strategic positioning of

the department chair in the high school organizational structure. Perhaps the lack of

focus on the department chair is due to the failure of the people who train and prepare

school administrators to pay attention to the position. After all, the department chair

position is not truly an administrative position.

The department chair position is, in fact, listed as a teacher position in most job

descriptions, one with some measure of supervisory responsibility in many cases.

However, given the role of department chairs in high schools today, it might be

advantageous if principals and central office administrators were sensitized to the role of

these teacher-leaders, the department chairs. This heightened awareness could be

accomplished through the training administrators receive in their graduate training programs and through continuing professional development.

Implications for School Leaders

From the perspectives of the participants of this study, high school department chairs do not receive training, instruction, or encouragement to practice instructional supervision. The findings of this study indicate that department chairs are left to their own devices, or intuition, to define their roles as department chairs and as instructional supervisors. The administrative teams in high schools would do well to assist their department chairs with defining their roles and the work that the role of the department chair includes, particularly where it applies to instructional supervisory practices. Since the participants in this study indicated that neither the Principal nor the Assistant Principal for Instruction and Curriculum directed them to include the work of instructional supervision in their role as departmental supervisors, it would seem beneficial for the support of instruction that the role of administrators as instructional leaders be viewed under the microscope of scholarly research.

Furthermore, the department chairs in this study failed to indicate the presence of support for the practice of instructional supervision from the central office, from either the superintendent, or his representatives, including subject area coordinators. Research on the role of central office personnel, about preparing and supporting instructional supervisors for the local school, might be valuable. The participants in this study were not aware of the system's job description for department chairs, and thus were not aware that supervision was listed as an over-riding function for the position. Although the job description is readily accessible on the Junction County Public Schools website, no one

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from the system to the local school, including the department chairs themselves, used it as a road map for the work of the department chair.

Implications for High School Department Chairs

The work of high school department chairs has served as the fodder for many studies (Koch, 1930; Mayers, 2001; Weller & Weller, 2002; Wettersten, 1993). As reported in Weller and Weller (2002), job descriptions for the position of high school department chair are not uniform. As uncovered in this study, the three department chairs were not mindful of the job description that included their responsibilities and functions, including that of supervising the teachers in their respective departments. The participants "intuitively" found their way to instructional supervision. Having found their way to the practice of instructional supervision, the department chairs were required to again, "intuitively" define what their practice of supervision would "look like." The implication is that a more formal and inclusive practice of supervision might be more effective in "supporting teachers," "improving instruction," and "increasing student achievement."

In summary, the implication of this research is that the practice of instructional supervision by high school department chairs might be positively impacted if a more formal approach was used to prepare central office and local school administrators to implement support and instruction of department chairs in the practices of instructional supervision. Furthermore, the role of high school department chairs may be optimized by providing the resources needed to fulfill the work. One critical resource needed by department chairs, particularly in the practice of instructional supervision, is time. Without the time to visit classrooms, the time to conduct face-to-face conversations about

what was seen during the classroom visitations, and the time to reflect on these conversations, instructional supervision will only be practiced "in crises" when a "teacher is having an issue."

Implications for High-stakes Testing

The implication for high-stakes testing, as supported by the findings of this study, are simply that high school department chairs are required to modify the instruction of their subject area curriculum to account for the call for increased student achievement as measured on high-stakes assessments. These modifications of the curriculum require the attention and, most importantly, the time of the high school department chair.

Since time was found, in this study, to be a major constraint in the practice of instructional supervision, the increased demand for time due to the high-stakes environment might "muddy" an already difficult field of "choices" for the subject area supervisors. Again, as illustrated by the literature and by the findings of this study, department chairs may experience increased role conflict and ambiguity because of the constraint of time.

Concluding Thoughts

The purpose of this study was to examine the perspectives of three high school department chairs that, by virtue of their job description, were required to supervise the teachers in their respective departments—mathematics, science, and social studies—all high-stakes subject areas. Moreover, the study investigated what the practice of instructional supervision looked like for the participants. Through a case study design, the researcher presented the perspectives of high school department chairs and described the practice of instructional supervision for the participants in the context of one high

school setting. From the high school department chairs' perspectives, data were collected and reported. Since high school department chairs perspective studies are limited, and even rarer in relation to instructional supervisory practices, it is hoped that this study will bridge a gap in knowledge essential to educational research and practice.

As related in Chapter 1 of this dissertation, this study was limited to one high school in northeast Georgia. However, the findings of this study indicate that high school department chairs are grossly ill prepared for the practice of instructional supervision. Although time was a major constraint for the department chairs in this study, the lack of formal training is also raised as an issue, although by omission rather than as a finding in this study.

The department chairs who participated in this study, with the exception of the science department chair, indicated no training or professional development opportunities were available that were designed to support their practices of instructional supervision. Furthermore, the study participants indicated that instructional supervision was not a "priority" of either system or local school administrators.

With the increased focus on high-stakes testing, with accountability now a part of legislation passed by both the federal and state governments, the high school department chair's role in supporting student achievement and in closing the achievement gaps for various groups of students is critical. If high schools are to meet the challenge of continuous improvement, the department chair role must be supported with training and with resources, not the least of which is time.

It would seem logical that in the high school context, department chairs would be in a solid position to support teaching and learning. Department chairs are expected to be content area experts as well as "master" teachers. With their "middle-man" status, who else in the high school is positioned better to support teachers as they work to meet the needs and demands placed on schools in the present environment of high-stakes and accountability?

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APPENDIX A

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview 1—See Appendix B

Interview 2

1. Share what instructional supervision means to you as a teacher? Department chair?
2. What do you believe teachers think your role in instructional supervision is all about as a department chair?
3. From your experiences, then instructional supervision is ….
4. What has shaped your instructional supervisory practices over the years? How have these practices been shaped?
5. Explain your supervisory practices.
6. Is there a "supervision" for all the teachers you work? Differences? Elaborate and give examples.
7. Is there a connection between supervision and high stakes practices?

Interview 3

1. What does supervision look like for the teachers in your department?
2. Tell me about your thoughts about instructional supervision and high stakes since the last time we talked.
3. What obstacles do you face providing instructional supervision for your teachers? What would help to eliminate these obstacles?
4. As department chair, what role do you play in instructional supervision?
5. Does the high stakes environment effect supervision? Explain this to me.
6. Track supervisory practices in light of the high stakes environment in which you work.
7. Elaborate on any supervisory procedures or practices that you have implemented in the past year. What caused you to implement these changes?

APPENDIX B

LINCOLN NORTH HIGH SCHOOL DEPARTMENT CHAIR PROFILE

Department Chair Name _____

Department _____

Total number of years in education (elementary, middle, and high school) _____

Work experiences before becoming a teacher? _____

Total number of years as department chair at Lincoln North High School _____

Total number of years experience as a teacher at Lincoln North High School <u>prior</u> to assuming the department chair position _____

Other leadership experiences at this or other schools_____

Number of years teaching at other schools (in or out of district) _____

Were you a department chair at another school before Lincoln North High School?_____

If yes, for how many years? _____   Highest degree completed _____

Number of full-time teachers in department _____

Number of part-time teachers in department _____

Explain what you believe instructional supervision to be?

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW REFLECTION FORM

Interview Date: _____ Participant _____

Today's Date _____

1.   <u>Ideas heard during the interview</u>

2.   <u>Information obtained related to questions</u>

3.   <u>New questions to pursue with other contacts</u>

4.   <u>Follow-up questions</u>

APPENDIX D

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN STUDY

I agree to participate in the research titled *Instructional Supervision and the Work of High School Department Chairs in a High-stakes Environment*, which is being conducted by William H. Kruskamp from the Department of Educational Leadership at the University of Georgia, and whose phone number is 800.399.9999, under the direction of Dr. Sally J. Zepeda, in the Department of Educational Leadership at the University of Georgia, whose phone number is 706.542.0408. I understand that this participation is entirely voluntary; I can withdraw my consent at any time without penalty and have the results of the participation, to the extent that it can be identified as mine, returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

The reason for the research is to answer the following questions: (a) What are the perspectives of high school department chairs as they are asked to take a more active role in the decision making processes of the high school? (b) As a result of this role expansion, are role conflict and/or ambiguity increased?

I understand that there are no direct benefits associated with my participation in this study.

I understand that my part in this study will include participation in four interviews lasting approximately one hour, as subject of a participant observation of a mutually agreeable length, time, and place, and/or provider of documents such as evaluations, memos, and/or agendas. Questions for the interview will relate to my experiences with the leadership decision-making process and the supervision of teachers within the high school department I supervise. I understand that the interview will be audio taped.

No discomforts or stresses are foreseen.   No risks are foreseen.

Any information the researcher obtains about me as a participant in this study, including my identity, will be held confidential. My identity will be coded with a pseudonym of my choosing, and all data will be kept in a secured, limited access location. My identity will not be revealed in any publication of the results of this research. The audiotapes of my interview will be kept indefinitely for the purpose of future research. The results of this participation will be confidential, and will not be released in any individually identifiable form without my prior consent unless otherwise required by law.

The research will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project, and can be reached by telephone at: 800.399.9999.

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Please sign both copies of this form. Keep one and return the other to the investigator (researcher).

_____   _____
Signature of Researcher   Date
_____
Participant's Name (please print)
_____   _____
Signature of Participant   Date

Research at the University of Georgia that involves human participants is overseen by the Institutional Review Board. Questions or problems about your rights should be directed to Chris A. Joseph, PhD, Human Subjects Office, University of Georgia, 606A Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone 706.542.6514; E-mail address IRB@uga.edu.

APPENDIX E

THE RESEARCHER'S PERSPECTIVES

This study evolved from my genuine interest in the high school department chair position. I spent several years in the position as the department chair for science in a large suburban high school. I enjoyed the job. I found I enjoyed working at the level between the teachers and the administration. I also hated the position. I felt constantly pulled away from the duties I enjoyed most, helping the teachers in my department, and pulled away from my own teaching duties. I couldn't seem to get all the clerical tasks completed for the administrative team. I felt under appreciated, used, and abused.

When I became an administrator in the same building in which I had served as a department chair, I was chided by my former fellow chairs to remember what it was like on "this side." My new colleagues on the administrative team informed me that I could never go back to the "other side." I didn't buy either position then, and I still don't today, five years later.

My experiences as a teacher, a department chair, and as an administrator have taught me many things. I have learned that all of these positions experience role conflict and ambiguity—the things that breed complacency and burnout. The more that a teacher does, it seems the more is asked of that teacher. The same is true of the administrator. But it is so much truer of the department chair. As the department chair, I was right where the "rubber meets the road" in the American high school. I was hovering over the classroom teacher, perhaps the single most important person in the classroom. Yet, I was

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not being given the time, and certainly not the training, to assist my teachers and to facilitate better teaching. I was buried in administrivia. I never seemed to get all the requests for paper work completed before the next round of requests descended upon me.

And so, I determined then that I wanted to do something about this issue. When I got my chance in graduate school, I completed a survey of the chairs in my school. The survey, though poorly designed, supported my observation that department chairs spent an inordinate amount of time on tasks that could be described as administrative and communicative, and very little time on instructional issues. From this crude piece of graduate class research, my dissertation was born. I became more convinced that the powers that be were missing the boat on the department chair. I knew then, and I know now, that the department chair has the vantage point to grease the wheels of student achievement, if only someone would allow them to do so.

I also believe that public education must be accountable to the students, parents, and community-at-large for the academic achievement of its students. I am personally not afraid of accountability. I was raised to believe that if a job was worth doing, it was worth doing right, the first time. I bring that to my job everyday.

Clearly, I was blessed with two science department chairs that believed that I could be a master teacher. They patiently mentored me until I believed that I could and should be better in the classroom each day. I began to believe in accountability as a classroom teacher when I realized I could do better for my students.

Educators exist in a fish bowl. Politicians have used the call for accountability to their advantage, calling for more measures of student achievement to prove their point that education in general, and teachers in particular, are not doing the jobs they are being

paid to do. And so, student test results have been linked to teacher and school accountability—*School Report Cards.* And once again, who is in the line of fire? The high school department chair, of course. As supervisors on the front line, who else can make a bigger difference? High school administrators have an opportunity to make a difference in their schools, in student academic achievement, with department chairs as true instructional leaders.

It is my hope that this research will shed some light on the department chair position in the high school. Student achievement is our responsibility. Perhaps with new insights of the functions of the department chair, particularly their role as instructional supervisors, we can more closely link improved teaching methods and support to student learning. I believe if we are able to do this, link student learning with improved instructional supervision, that the accountability issues will become less imposing, and take care of themselves. These are my thoughts, and I know I must be sensitive to not let them "cloud" data collection and analysis. This is why two auditors will be used to ensure that my own subjectivities do not "get in the way" as I examine the perspectives of the three high school department chairs that have agreed to be a part of this study.

JUNCTION COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Division:	**Educational Leadership**
Department:	**Local School**
Job Title:	**Department Chairperson**
Position Code:	
Adopted Date:	August 1991
Revised Date:	November 2001

Reports To:
Principal or Designee

|

Department Chairperson
|

Supervises:
Teachers within a Department

Employment Terms:

Non-contractual supplement to be assigned by the principal annually.

Qualifications:

Required Licenses:

Education:

A master's degree in the subject area supervised is preferred.

Desirable Skills:

Expertise in subject area, excellent human relations skills; demonstrated leadership/instructional supervision skills.

Experience:

Have completed at least three successful years of teaching in the field to be supervised.

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY: (Indicate if a line or support staff position)

The Chairperson of the department shall provide professional leadership within his/her department.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS:

I. Staff:

   A. Supervises day to day operation of department.
       1. Helps supervise substitute personnel for teachers who are absent.
       2. Helps to supervise student teachers assigned to teachers in their department.
       3. Encourages recommendations for all special programs.

   B. Assists in interview of prospective teachers.

   C. Assists in assessment of teachers.
       1. Conduct RBES evaluations with teachers assigned by the principal.
       2. Conduct GTEP evaluations with teachers as assigned by principal.
       3. Supervises, in conjunction with local school administrators, any plans for improvement developed for teachers.
       4. Conducts a post-conference with each teacher that he or she evaluates, at least once each year, at which time a completed assessment instrument will be completed.
       5. Supervises, in conjunction with local school administrators, plans for improvement should teachers receive ratings of N and/or U on any category of the Teacher Evaluation Instrument.

   D. Assists in and prepares suggested schedule for department teaching assignments by semesters.
       1. Works with counselors in scheduling new students.
       2. Coordinates individual student advisement within department.
       3. Coordinates student pre-registration and registration including dissemination of information to all students.

   E. Meets with staff on regular basis.
       1. Shares research and program development.
       2. Attends Department Chairperson meetings held by Central Office Program Coordinator.

II. Instruction/Curriculum Planning and Implementation:

   A. Implements and maintains programs in department.
       1. Assists teachers in instructional activities.
       2. Implements new programs and informs other professional and the community about these programs.
       3. Sets instructional goals based on input from teachers and students.

   B. Plans and conducts staff development where appropriate.
       1. Reports back to county curriculum coordinator on effectiveness and usefulness of county staff development sessions.

Sends attendance records of systemwide staff development activities to county curriculum coordinator.

C. Meets on a regular basis with local administrators.

D. Meets on a regular basis with county curriculum coordinator.

E. Plans for and participates in open meetings, PTSA meetings, freshman orientation meetings with middle school teachers, students, and parents.

F. Coordinates the development of end of semester exams.

G. Ensures that the appropriate AKS are taught.

III. Instructional Materials/Equipment:

A. Participates in local school budget planning and review.

B. Prepares list of core material needed for coming year.

C. Prepares orders for instructional material, receives orders, verifies, follows up on errors, non-delivery, etc.

D. Assists media staff in planning for book, audiovisual software, and hardware orders.

E. Assists in the recovery of lost and damaged textbooks each semester.

F. Prepares orders for equipment, secures service and provides for security.

G. Provides and maintains a resource center in the department for equipment and materials unique to a particular department where space is available.

H. Keeps an accurate inventory of instructional materials, books, and equipment.

I. Assumes responsibility for departmental correspondence.

J. Reports and coordinates maintenance on equipment.

IV. General Administrative Duties:

A. Assumes other duties as assigned by the principal.

B. Assists principals in public relations.

C. Meets with appropriate administrators.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS: