CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

VETERAN TEACHERS’ EXPERIENCES WITH PEER ASSISTANCE AND REVIEW

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

By

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my amazing husband, Cruz Gonzalez, my daughter Sofia Cruz Gonzalez, and my sons, Christopher Isaiah Gonzalez, and Noah Tristan Gonzalez. Cruz, you enthusiastically entered this journey with me and continually stood by my side the whole way providing me with so much encouragement, love, support, and gentle nudges along the way. Thank you for being my biggest supporter, my best friend, and my rock. I truly mean it when I say that I could have never got through this without you. To my children, thank you for your patience, undying love, and for being so understanding on all those days when I was stuck on my laptop and away from you guys. I hope I have made you as proud as you all have made me. It is because of you, my family that I achieved my lifelong dream. I love you all.
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ABSTRACT

VETERAN TEACHERS’ EXPERIENCES WITH PEER ASSISTANCE AND REVIEW

By

Felissa Luque

Doctor of Education Degree

Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

Recently, there has been a growing interest in the importance of having effective teachers in every classroom. While decades of past research debated factors that affect student achievement, it is now generally common knowledge that teacher quality is the strongest predictor of student success. It would seem, therefore, that further investigations are needed to understand more about strategies to retrain, support, and improve the quality of ineffective teachers. This is especially important for veteran teachers who may have been teaching ineffectively for several years.

This study examined how a Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program in a large urban district provides the conditions for teacher growth and self-efficacy among veteran teachers who have received a below-standard performance evaluation. This qualitative research utilized case study methodology and a purposeful sample of five veteran Participating Teachers (PTs) from elementary and secondary schools, the two Consulting Teachers (CTs) who worked with the PTs in this study, two PAR administrators who oversee the organization of the program, and two members of the PAR panel, which oversees PAR policy and implementation. Data were obtained through
in-depth interviews, a focus group, and a document review of the program’s pamphlets, flyers and website.

The conceptual framework for the study was Bandura’s four components of self-efficacy: mastery experiences (performance accomplishments), vicarious experiences (observed experiences), social persuasion (performance feedback), and physiological factors (attitude and motivation). The main findings were that PTs’ self-efficacy was influenced by the four sources of self-efficacy; however, some components were more prevalent and effective in increasing self-efficacy than others. Furthermore, there are constraints on opportunities for teacher self-efficacy that are built into the structure and operations of the PAR program, as well as district policy. For example, PAR’s observation cycle, which involves frequent PT observations followed by extensive feedback, provides the opportunity for PTs to have multiple opportunities for verbal persuasion by a mentor that they trust and respect. Additionally, these observation cycles help PTs to build mastery by having multiple opportunities to practice implementation of new teaching strategies while being coached by their CT. On the other hand, the program does not allow PTs to observe model teachers so they are lacking the opportunity for vicarious experiences. Other findings revealed that the parallel processes of PAR and the district’s teacher evaluation system may be counterproductive to growth in PT self-efficacy.

Insights from this study could be helpful for other PAR programs with similar demographics, as well as educational leaders who are interested in improving veteran teacher self-efficacy and teacher quality. This study also sheds light on Bandura’s framework as it shows how the sources of self-efficacy influenced veteran teachers with
prior unsuccessful teaching evaluations. Recommendations for policy and practice include ensuring that PTs have opportunities to observe either demonstration lessons by their consulting teacher or other effective teachers on a regular basis increasing the length of time that a PAR PT works with their CT to at least two years; and suspending the official evaluation process for the PT during the time that the CT is working with their PT.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Recently, there has been a growing interest in the importance of having effective teachers in every classroom. Concern has reached a national level as the President of the United States spoke about teacher quality: “From the moment students enter a school, the most important factor in their success is not the color of their skin or the income of their parents, it’s the person standing at the front of the classroom” (Obama, 2010, p.1). While decades of past research debated factors that affect student achievement, it is now generally common knowledge that teacher quality is the strongest predictor of student success (Harris & Sass, 2007). Researchers have found that while effective teachers can provide advantages to a child that last a lifetime, having a weak teacher can actually cause harm (Kristof, 2012).

Few studies however, have been able to document ways to improve teachers who are ineffective other than removing them from the classroom (Kristof, 2012). It would seem, therefore, that further investigations are needed to understand more about strategies to retrain, support, and improve the quality of ineffective teachers. This study used qualitative methods to investigate effective practices for improving the teaching practice of experienced teachers who have been evaluated as assessed as not meeting standards.

The research setting for this study was a Peer Assistance and Review Program in a large urban school district. This qualitative case study collected data from individual semi-structured interviews and a short survey on teacher efficacy with five participating teachers with more than 10 years of teaching experience who were referred to the PAR Program. Data were gathered from interviews with two Consulting Teachers who mentor teachers who have been referred to the Program, as well as two program administrators.
Additionally, a focus group was conducted with two members of the PAR panel. The study also included a document review.

Findings from the study will possibly shed light on strategies for improving the performance of ineffective veteran teachers. Furthermore, by exploring which components of the PAR program help to change teacher practice and improve teacher self-efficacy, this study could inform policy and practice for professional development that is more responsive to the needs of veteran teachers.

**Problem Statement**

**Teacher Quality**

While widespread research suggests that students benefit from high quality instruction, a sound strategy has yet to be clearly defined for determining what evidence best reflects teacher effectiveness and how to use that information to ensure that an effective teacher is in every classroom. Researchers have also found that weak teachers can have detrimental effects on student that can last a lifetime (Kristof, 2012). In fact, students who have had effective teachers several years in a row achieve cumulative academic success that has long-lasting, positive effects on their lives beyond academics (Kristof, 2012). Students who have high quality teachers are less to experience teen pregnancy, and are more likely to enter college and more earn higher salaries as adults. In other words, the value that good teachers add to students lasts a lifetime (Chetty, Friedman, & Rockoff, 2011).

Similarly, just as a high quality teacher can affect a child’s life, ineffective teachers have profound and continuing consequences. Having a very poor teacher has the same effect as a pupil missing 40 % of the school year (Kristof, 2012). One ineffective teacher
can negatively impact the learning of up to 200 high school or middle school students and 30 elementary students per year (Kristof, 2012). As they continue to teach ineffectively year after year, the number of students who lose out on a quality education is compounded annually (Chait, 2010).

Convincing evidence has been gathered by researchers over the years that revealed a relationship between teacher self-efficacy and teacher quality or teacher effectiveness. Teacher self-efficacy is defined as teachers’ beliefs about their ability or capacity to impact student achievement and motivation (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007). Teachers with a higher sense of self-efficacy tend to put more effort into their teaching, set more goals, and persevere when they experience challenges in the classroom (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007).

Teacher Evaluation

National accountability measures, such as No Child Left Behind and more recently the Obama Administration’s Race to the Top, have increased the demand for high quality teachers. Educational leaders are now pressured to find better accountability and better teacher evaluation systems (Chait, 2010). Until recently, most evaluation systems relied on one or two teaching observations and did not provide a system or method for improving teacher performance (Howard & McColskey, 2001). The Obama Administration provided an incentive system for districts to create sound teacher evaluation systems by implementing Race to the Top in 2010. This program provides monetary rewards to districts that successfully implement comprehensive assessment systems aimed at improving teaching and learning. In order to receive funding districts must utilize a system that takes into account student achievement and growth data for determining teacher effectiveness (U. S. Dept. of Education, 2010).
Using student test scores to measure teacher performance, however, can be a controversial topic. According to Kinsler (2012), teachers and scholars across California have criticized the use of student test scores as the main measure to evaluate the effectiveness of teachers. It has also been criticized because the state assessments were not intended to measure how much students grow academically from grade-to-grade, and since different content is tested from grade to grade, student gains do not have the same meaning across grades (Frey, 2013). A large number of California voters, on the other hand, had an opposing opinion on this topic. In a public opinion poll, over 80% of California voters expressed that student test scores should make up at least one of the components for teacher evaluation (Frey, 2013).

One example of an accountability measure is the Value-Added Model (VAM), which is used by several districts and relies on student test scores to measure teacher quality. VAM became a hot media topic when the Los Angeles Times made public the “value-added” ratings of about 500 elementary teachers and 470 elementary schools (Kinsler, 2012). The value-added rating was based on students’ expected growth compared to their actual growth. This formula was used to rate teachers or schools in terms of the numerical value that they added to their students’ achievement. The Los Angeles Times made these ratings public because they felt the public had the right to this information (Kinsler, 2012). The teacher ratings ranged from least effective to most effective, which was calculated using a complex mathematical formula that caused much controversy (Watanabe, 2011). Using VAM to assess teacher practice was very controversial because many teachers, who were rated as ineffective felt targeted and marginalized, which angered teacher unions. Moreover, teachers’ ratings, both positive and
negative appeared in the Los Angeles Times for all, including parents and fellow teachers, to read. Despite the controversies, leaders for the district that will be the site of this study have embraced a similar model that takes student performance into consideration (Watanabe, 2011).

In a recent court case, the district that is the site for this study was sued by a group of parents for not fulfilling the requirements stated in the Stull Act of 1971. California Ed Code § 44662, which was previously known as The Stull Act, AB 293 (1971), required districts to evaluate their educators annually on many criteria, including how well their students progressed while being in their classroom. According to the lawsuit, this district ignored student performance data as criteria for evaluation. In this case, the judge ruled that the district must include the progress of students in teacher evaluation. As a result of this case, student achievement measures, along with other data, are now part of a new teacher evaluation system, called Teacher Growth and Development Cycle (BCSD, 2014). This evaluation system is much more comprehensive and detailed compared to the previous system, which relied on one or two observations conducted by an administrator and a rating of meets expectations, needs improvement, or unsatisfactory performance (Aron, 2013).

Removing or Remediating Ineffective Teachers

The documentary film, *Waiting for Superman*, by David Guggenheim created an uproar and captured an overwhelming amount of public attention in 2010 when it appeared over several days on NBC, was featured on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, and was the topic of major stories in *Time Magazine*. This film sent a message that American public schools were a failing enterprise; that test scores are low because of bad teachers; and that there would be higher test scores if schools could fire more bad teachers (Ravitch, 2010). This
message was aligned with public opinion. In a public opinion poll, 43% answered that removing bad teachers from the classroom would have the most positive impact on public schools (Frey, 2013). However, the removal of underperforming teachers requires districts to participate in numerous due process lawsuits, which can be lengthy, arduous, and costly (Moe, 2001). Chait (2010) reported that the number of U.S. teachers who were dismissed is relatively low compared to the number who should be dismissed. In a recent survey that represents teachers across the nation, 59% of teachers reported that there were a few, and 18% stated that there were more than a few, teachers at their school sites who fail to do a good job and are simply going through the motions (Chait, 2012). Additionally, in a national survey by the U.S. Department of Education (2008), principals reported the following barriers to the dismissal of poor-performing teachers: (a) the length of time it takes to dismiss teachers, (b) the effort required for documentation, and (c) the teachers unions or associations collective bargaining agreements that make the process for dismissal demanding.

Recently, a lawsuit was filed on behalf of Beatriz Vergara, a Los Angeles high school student, and eight other students in the case, *Vergara v. California* (2014). The plaintiffs claimed that the current teacher tenure law and seniority rules protect poor-performing teachers who are often assigned to working with low-income, minority children. Several attempts by teachers’ unions were made to have this cased dismissed. In June, 2014 the court ruled in favor of Vergara, finding California’s tenure law unconstitutional in all five areas that were challenged by the plaintiffs. This case has the potential to affect the way teachers will earn and keep tenure and will have serious implications for struggling veteran teachers.
Under the current tenure laws, teachers are able to earn permanent status after two years of satisfactory teaching. But once teachers earn tenure or permanent status, it can be extremely costly to remove them from the classroom if they are no longer performing successfully. In a large urban school district, for example, in the last decade, officials spent $3.5 million trying to fire just seven teachers for poor classroom performance. In the end, only four of the seven teachers were fired, two were paid large settlements, and one was reinstated. The average cost of each battle was $500,000 (Barret, 2010). This implies that there is a need to seek more cost-effective alternatives for addressing underperforming teachers.

One alternative and more economical solution to firing teachers may be to improve the performance of teachers who do not meet performance standards. “The findings of several recent studies by psychologists, economists, and educators show that—despite many reformers’ claims to the contrary—it may be possible to make low-performing teachers better, instead of firing them” (Fishman, 2012, p. 1). In a national survey, principals reported that when teachers receive an unsatisfactory evaluation, they are placed on a remediation plan during which they are monitored closely and get extra support (U. S. Department of Education, 2010). In the same poll, while 29% of parents with school children stated that firing teachers would improve the overall quality of teaching, 48% expressed that we need to invest in training for teachers (US. Department of Education, 2010). If training is going to make a difference, however, it must be specific to the needs of teachers who are tenured and have experience.

Veteran Teachers

Currently, the teaching workforce is the oldest and most experienced it has been in half a century (Caroll & Foster, 2010). In California, nearly half of teachers are over 46
years old (California Department of Education, 2014). Veteran teachers have different needs than new teachers (Meister & Aherns, 2010). They come with a wealth of experience, and they have been through years of changing educational mandates. When experienced teachers feel that their work has become repetitive without a possibility for growth or promotion, they are likely to become skeptical about their career, which may lead to burn-out (Meister & Aherns, 2010). In a national survey, principals reported that they expected their non-tenured teachers to be more likely to improve than their tenured teachers (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2010).

While numerous programs exist that prepare new teachers for entering the teaching profession, there is no systematic process that ensures that experienced teachers continue to develop and improve throughout their teaching career (McRobbie, 2000). Similarly, most research about improving teacher performance is currently aimed at new teacher development, ensuring that teachers are successful in their earliest years of teaching. Furthermore, professional development and support is often cut way back once teacher has gone through induction. On the other hand, there is little research on how to improve, rejuvenate, and remediate veteran teachers, including those who are deemed ineffective. Since veteran teachers make up a large portion of the teaching population, it is critical to address ways to improve those who are ineffective.

Peer Assistance and Review

One example of a process aimed at providing support to teachers who have received unsatisfactory teacher evaluations is Peer Assistance and Review (PAR). This program began in 1986, in the Poway Unified School District and has expanded across the nation and exists in various districts thought the United States. While the specifics of the program differ from program to program, the major premise remains the same (Qazilbash,
Johnson, Fiarman, Munger, & Papay, 2009). It is a model with a consulting teacher or mentor providing support to underperforming teachers. The first of two components to PAR is peer assistance by consulting teachers observing and providing feedback, modeling demonstration lessons, sharing ideas and skills, and recommending materials for further study (Qazilbash et.al, 2009). The second component is peer review, where after a year of support, consulting teachers conduct formal evaluations and make recommendations for whether the struggling new or veteran teacher should continue their employment. The final decision, however, is made by the district administration and the board of education (Qazilbash et al., 2009).

Now that districts across the country are implementing new evaluation systems, many are beginning to take another look at the prospect of peer review. The Taskforce on Education Excellence by the California Department of Education (2012), recommended that successful teachers should be part of PAR in order to provide additional subject-specific expertise to struggling teachers who need assistance. In fact, this same task force also recommended the implementation of PAR for administrators who are struggling (California Department of Education, 2012).

Most PAR programs are governed by a panel that is made up of both union members and administrators. According to California’s law, a PAR panel must have one more teacher representative than administration representative (California State University Institute for Educational Reform, 2000). The role of the PAR panel is to oversee the program, select consulting teachers, and communicate the result of evaluations and reports from consulting teachers to the school board. The PAR panel is also responsible for
providing reports to the school board on program effectiveness. The PAR panel ensures that consulting teachers are accountable for quality work.

As an alternative to firing teachers due to underperformance, the district that is the site of this study also partnered with their local teachers union to establish a Peer Assistance and Review Program in 2001. With the increased attention on teacher evaluation and teacher dismissal in recent years, Big City School District (BCSD) experienced a growth in the number of teachers who received unsatisfactory teacher evaluations. The number has gone from 100 in 2010 to over 140 in 2012 (G. Robbins, personal communication, January 4, 2012).

BCSD hired a cohort of 20 full-time consulting teaches (CTs) and 10 part time CTs to provide intensive individualized support to below-standard teachers referred to the PAR program, beginning teachers, and teachers who volunteer to receive assistance. CTs regularly observe, co-plan, and provide feedback in an effort to assist the teacher to improve his or her teaching practice. The BCSD PAR program also offers a menu of professional development workshops based on the California Standards of the Teaching Profession and the latest research-based pedagogy, which participating teachers are required to attend (G. Robbins, personal communication, January 4, 2012).

As educational demands increase for teachers and the number of teachers receiving below-standard evaluations increases, this is a critical time for PAR programs. How does the PAR program affect the teaching quality of veteran teachers who have a below-standard rating in the BCSD? To what extent does this program model fit the unique needs of veteran teachers?
Purpose and Significance

The purpose of this study was to investigate the processes and systems of support of a Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) Program in a large urban district. As an alternative to immediate dismissal, teachers participate in this PAR program, working closely with a consulting teacher, with the objective of improving their teaching practice. Understanding how referred teachers respond to PAR’s support methods will inform educational leaders about the components of the program that are the most effective in meeting the unique needs of veteran teachers and improving veteran teacher quality. The goal of this study was to discover the support mechanisms that provide the conditions for teacher growth and improvement in self-efficacy. The four factors that affect self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977) make up the conceptual framework of this study and will be discussed further in Chapter 2.

With the current demand for ensuring that there is a quality teacher in every classroom, this study will provide insight into how to effectively support and improve teachers who need improvement, retain those who make improvement and dismiss those who after much support do not improve. It will also help to develop effective professional development aimed at veteran teachers that is responsive to their unique needs, builds on their strengths, and empowers them to continue to improve throughout their teaching career.

Research Questions

The main research question that guided this study was: How does a Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program provide the conditions for teacher growth and self-efficacy among veteran teachers who have received a below-standard performance evaluation?
Additional questions included: How do participating teachers feel that peer assistance and review has affected their teaching practice and self-efficacy? How do consulting teachers describe the changes in the participating teachers’ self-efficacy and teaching practice?

Definitions for key terms are as follows:

- **Veteran teacher**: teachers who have earned permanent status and have over 10 years of teaching experience.
- **Struggling teachers**: Teachers who were not successful in meeting the requirements of the district’s teaching evaluation
- **Consulting Teachers (CTs)**: Experienced teachers who are hired by PAR to provide intensive support to struggling teachers who are participating in the PAR program
- **Participating Teachers (PTs)**: Teachers who have been identified as struggling teachers who are receiving intensive support from CTs in PAR.
- **Teacher self-efficacy**: The belief that teachers can help students learn (Cantrell, 2003)

**Overview of Methodology**

This study is a qualitative case study that borrowed from the tradition of phenomenology. A case study was the most appropriate type of study because it is bounded by time and place and includes multiple sources of information (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). The research setting for this study was a Peer Assistance and Review Program in a large urban district.
Several data collection procedures were used for this study. First, nine semi-structured, in-depth interviews with five participating teachers, two consulting teachers, and two program administrators were conducted. A focus group with PAR Panel members was also conducted. Additionally, a 12-item self-efficacy survey was completed by PTs as part of the interview process to create a self-efficacy portrait to supplement the data gathered from the interviews. The survey was also used to prompt some of the interview questions in order to get a deeper understanding of why participants answered the survey the way that they did. Additionally, in order to better understand the processes of PAR, a document review was conducted of the materials used in the Teacher Growth and Development Cycle (TGDC), as well as PAR program pamphlets, flyers, and web pages.

Data were analyzed using thematic data analysis. This consisted of coding transcripts and field notes, clustering codes into families, and developing these into themes (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). The theoretical framework for this study, which was teacher self-efficacy, was used to create many of the codes and was used as a lens to organize the findings from the study. A data display was used which incorporated the conceptual framework for this study along with other themes that emerged from data analysis.

**Limitations and Delimitations**

This study was delimited to a small group of participating teachers, consulting teachers, program administrators, and PAR panel members in one district’s PAR program who met the criteria and volunteered to participate in this study. In order to examine the perceptions of experienced teachers, the study was delimited to struggling teachers with over ten years of teaching experience. Furthermore, in order to ensure that teachers who
are selected were not close to retirement age, it was also delimited to teachers with no more than 20 years of teaching experience.

There were several limitations to this study. The first limitation was that this study was confined to one semester of data collection so information was based on the participating teachers’ and consulting teachers’ perceptions that occurred at the time of the study. The ability to collect data at different points of participation in the program would add to the study and possibly provide different responses. Another limitation could possibly be attributed to the nature of self-reporting. For example, PTs and CTs may have been inclined to report that PTs made improvements to their practice so there may have been a social desirability bias. Due to the time constraints of the study, there was not sufficient time to build rapport and trust with PTs so that they would be more willing to give an honest response. Additionally, since this study required participants to volunteer, the viewpoints were limited to teachers who volunteered and were willing to share something about the program. Lastly, since only a small number of participants were interviewed for this study, it lacked generalizability.

**Organization of the Dissertation**

Chapter 1 of this dissertation introduces the problem, significance, research questions, and definition of terms for the study. Chapter 2 will present an overview of the literature that relates to this study, followed by a description of the theoretical framework. Chapter 3 will describe in detail the setting, data sources and methodology that were used in this study. Chapter 4 will present the analysis and interpretation of the study. Lastly, Chapter 5 will discuss the conclusions that were drawn and will provide recommendations for the program and the district that was the site for this study.
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This review of the literature is based on an electronic literature search, using terms such as peer assistance and review, peer review, professional development for veteran teachers, and teacher self-efficacy. The search engines used to search for the majority of the literature were EBSCO (ERIC) and ProQuest Research Library. The search was limited primarily to empirical articles in academic journals since 1993. The literature that informed this study was categorized under the following topics: teacher effectiveness, teacher self-efficacy, professional development and evaluation for veteran teachers, and Peer Assistance and Review programs. Following the discussion of the literature on these topics is an identification of the gaps in the literature and the need for this study, followed by the conceptual framework that will be used to guide this study.

This review of the literature is relevant to this study because it addresses effective practices for improving experienced teachers, who have been assessed as below standard, through professional development, support and evaluation. Professional development, support, and evaluation are the components that make up the PAR program that will be researched in this study. Therefore, the literature review will focus on research that provides insight into the specific needs of veteran teachers, especially veteran teachers who are struggling with their classroom teaching practice.

Review of the Literature

Teacher Quality and Student Achievement
Research findings have determined that teacher quality, which has several definitions, is a strong predictor of student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2012). Because teacher quality cannot be directly observed and involves so many variables, it is difficult to truly define. Furthermore, there is little consensus in educational research on a precise description of what makes up a good teacher (Darling-Hammond, 2012). Researchers have looked at some of the most common characteristics that contribute to teaching quality, including teaching experience; type of teacher preparation programs with regard to selectivity and prestige; teacher certification status; possession of a Master’s degree; teachers’ competency test scores; and type of teacher preparation coursework (Rice, 2003).

**Teacher experience.** Several studies have found a positive relationship between teaching experience and student achievement (Harris & Sass, 2007; Rice, 2003; Rice, 2010; Kane, Rockoff, & Staiger, 2007). For example, Harris and Sass (2007) found that on average, first year teachers were less effective in improving student achievement than teachers with some experience. A similar study on the effectiveness of teachers in New York City also found that teachers make the greatest amount of improvement in their first three years of teaching (Kane et al., 2007). Students in a classroom with a teacher who was in their third year of teaching scored 6% of a standard deviation higher in math and 3% percent higher in reading than first-year teachers (Kane et al., 2007).

Although teaching experience was found to have a positive correlation with teachers’ ability to improve student performance in the early years of teaching, several studies found that as time progresses, experience is not necessarily better (Harris & Sass, 2007; Kane et al., 2007; Rice, 2003,2010). For example, Rice (2010) used longitudinal
data to determine that after ten years of teaching experience, improvement was so minimal that it seemed to flat-line. Similarly, Kane and Stagier (2008) examined the student outcomes of teachers in the Los Angeles Unified School District and they found that teachers in their third year of teaching had gains equal to teachers with over ten years of experience. A study in North Carolina had similar findings; teachers were found to improve the most during the first years of teaching but improvement levels decreased or leveled off as time goes on. On average, teachers continued to make minimal improvements for up to 24 years; thereafter, their effectiveness tended to decrease, meaning that they had a negative effect on students’ test scores (Clotfelter, Ladd & Vigdor, 2007). Additionally, student achievement data revealed while teachers with more than 20 years of teaching experience were more effective than teachers with only one year of experience, they were not significantly more effective than teachers with five years of experience (Harris & Sass, 2008; Kane & Stagier, 2008).

**Teacher training and qualifications.** Several researchers have also examined the various routes that teachers have taken to earn their teaching credential as it relates to student achievement. Some options for credentialing routes include: traditional university credentialing programs, alternative certification such as internships or teaching fellows, Teach for America (TFA), and emergency credential (Kane et al., 2007). Findings vary with regards to which route is best. Darling-Hammond (2005) used longitudinal data from Houston, Texas on 271,015 students and 15,344 teachers, suggesting that teachers who received their credential from a traditional credentialing program consistently had higher gains in student achievement than uncertified and Teach for America teachers. Clotfelter et al.’s (2007) study of teacher qualifications and their effects on student test scores from a
state database in Massachusetts had findings consistent with Darling-Hammond (2005). They found that teachers who had emergency credentials or alternative credentials had negative effects on student achievement. On the other hand, Kane et al. (2007), in a five-year study of teachers in 4th through 8th grade in New York City, found that teachers’ certification status mattered minimally for student learning in reading and math. More specifically, there was no difference between teaching fellows and traditionally certified teachers in their impact on math achievement (Kane et al., 2007). Based on initial studies that found that the first three years of teaching were significant, Kane et al. (2008) also closely examined student achievement data to determine if there was a difference in student performance in teachers’ first, second, and third year of teaching. They found that uncertified teachers’ students scored slightly worse in their teachers’ first year of teaching than certified teachers, but those teachers’ student achievement in math caught up to all other certification routes by the teachers’ fifth year. In reading, uncertified teachers’ students underperformed all other certification routes in their first five years of teaching, but all other routes performed similarly (Kane et al., 2007).

Having a Master’s degree is another characteristic of teachers that has been studied by several researchers since it often makes a difference in attaining a teaching position and better pay. Surprisingly, researchers in this literature review found no correlation between a Master’s degree and student achievement. In the North Carolina study previously mentioned, teachers with graduate degrees such as Master’s or PhD had no significant effect on student achievement; in some cases data revealed a negative correlation but it was insignificant (Clotfelter et al., 2007). Winters (2012) had a similar finding when he conducted a regression analysis on student achievement comparing teachers having a
Master’s degree and teachers without a Master’s degree and found no effect on student outcomes.

With so many variables and inconsistent findings, it is very difficult to measure teacher quality (Clotfelter et al., 2007). Without the ability to define predictors of teacher effectiveness for teacher evaluation, some districts have turned to using the results of student test scores to measure the quality of teachers. The results of evaluation would be used for the purpose of providing rewards, providing support, granting tenure, or dismissing ineffective teachers (Winters, 2012). Winters (2012) studied the practices of using student gains on test scores as a gauge for teacher effectiveness and found it to be a useful measure to evaluate teacher quality.

Due to the federal Race to the Top program, numerous states and districts are measuring teaching quality by a currently popular approach called the Value Added Model (Darling-Hammond, 2012). VAM is an analysis which measures teachers’ contribution to student achievement, controlling for other factors that may affect student achievement, such as ability, environment, past schooling, and peer influences (Rothstein, 2010). It measures how much students have learned in a year with one teacher by comparing how a student’s achievement scores have changed over a period of time. This measure of teacher quality has been widely criticized by educators and researchers. One limitation that has been identified is that the same teachers’ ratings can differ substantially from class to class and year to year. This would mean that a teacher could be evaluated as one with high teaching quality one year and the next as one with low teaching quality (Darling-Hammond, 2012). In a quantitative study in North Carolina, Rothstein (2010) tested the usefulness of the Value Added Model and rejected it based on several false assumptions
about teaching and the assignments of students in classrooms. These assumptions were incorporated in the VAM formula but are substantially incorrect; for example, classroom assignments were not randomly assigned and students in classrooms were not heterogeneous. Rothstein (2010) states that educational policies should not use VAM to reward or punish teachers because there are too many incorrect assumptions and it may result in having teachers request the classes that are going to show the largest gains.

The literature on teacher quality raises questions for this study. For example, if teachers make the most improvement during their first years of teaching and make less improvement as the years progress, does this imply that veteran teachers in PAR programs will not be able to improve their effectiveness?

Another predictor that has been closely associated with teacher quality comes from the foundational theory of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977, 1986). There are numerous studies on how a person’s level of self-efficacy is related to their motivation and performance.

**Teacher Self-Efficacy and Commitment to Teaching**

Research has found that another possible factor of teacher quality is teachers’ self-efficacy. This is defined as the “extent to which the teacher believes he or she has the capacity to affect student performance” (Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). Because of its close relationship with teacher performance, the literature review will examine how teacher self-efficacy affects student achievement, how teacher self-efficacy varies with experience, and factors that improve or hinder teacher self-efficacy.
Teacher self-efficacy is a teacher’s belief in their ability to create lessons, organize instruction, and engage students in curriculum that will help them meet their educational goals (Skaalvik, & Skaalvik, 2010; Henson, 2012; Tschannen-Moran, & Johnson, 2011). Teachers with a high sense of efficacy tend to put more effort into their work. Teachers with high self-efficacy remain persistent on teaching students who are struggling because they believe that their students can succeed (Tschannen-Moran, & Johnson, 2011). Self-efficacy is generally influenced by four major factors, according to Bandura (1977): mastery experiences or performance accomplishments, vicarious experiences, social persuasion and physiological factors (Bandura, 1977; Jamil & Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness, 2012; Putman, 2012). These factors are further explained in the Conceptual Framework at the end of this chapter.

Self-efficacy and teacher quality. Teacher self-efficacy has been shown to have a positive effect on both teacher quality and student performance. Teacher self-efficacy is related to variables such as student achievement, student motivation, teacher adoption of innovations, and classroom management (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993). The more teachers believe that they can have a positive effect on student outcomes, student engagement, student learning, and classroom management; the more successful they will be at achieving those outcomes. Teachers with a strong sense of self-efficacy devote more of their classroom time to student learning, provide students who have difficulties the extra time that they need, and praise students for their accomplishments (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001; Tschannen-Moran & Johnson, 2011; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). Typically, in these studies, self-efficacy has been assessed by teachers self-reporting using Likert-scale items. The Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) is a measurement
commonly used to measure teachers’ self-efficacy. It consists of 24 questions which are organized by the following categories: Efficacy for Instructional Strategies, Efficacy for Classroom Management, and Efficacy for Student Engagement (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). This 12 question version of the survey will be used in this study.

On the other hand, researchers have found that teachers with lower levels self-efficacy have negative effects on students (Bandura & Cervone, 1983; Tshannen-Moran & Johnson, 2011). For example, it was found that teachers with a low sense of self-efficacy put in less effort and are less enthusiastic about teaching (Tshannen-Moran & Johnson, 2011). Teachers who begin their careers with weak self-efficacy often become self-defeating and as stress load increases, their motivation and confidence in their ability to improve student achievement decreases. When people achieve substandard performance on a task, they begin to doubt their ability to achieve a given task and tend to give up early on (Tschannen-Moran & Johnson, 2011; Bandura & Cervone, 1983). Thus, improving teacher self-efficacy can increase teacher effort and motivation, which will lead to improved teacher quality.

Teacher self-efficacy was also found to have a strong, significant correlation with a commitment to teaching (Coladarci, 1992). Using regression analysis, Coladarci (1992) conducted a study about 170 teachers in Maine to determine how their self-efficacy related to their commitment to teaching. Two-thirds of teachers, with high levels of self-efficacy, indicated that if they had to do it all over again they would certainly or probably choose teaching. Teachers with higher sense of self-efficacy were more determined to ensure that students learn and were less likely to give up when students were unsuccessful. Highly efficacious teachers were also more willing to adopt innovative techniques and more
willing to participate in professional development aimed at improving student achievement than teachers with less self-efficacy. These findings suggest that educational leaders should spend efforts on finding ways to increase teacher efficacy.

**Teacher self-efficacy and student outcomes.** Teacher self-efficacy is a critical variable in teacher effectiveness in that it is positively related to not only to the level of teaching practice but to student outcomes as well. In one of the first teacher efficacy studies, it was found that there is a significant positive relationship between teachers’ sense of self-efficacy and student performance in reading (Armor, Conroy-Osquera, Cox, King, McDonnel, Pascal, & Zellman, 1976). Likewise, in a more recent study, teachers with higher levels of teacher self-efficacy had students with higher test scores (Alvarez-Nunez, 2012; Henson, 2012; Wheatley, 2005). For example, when Alvarez-Nunez surveyed teachers from 51 randomly selected primary elementary schools, in both rural and urban areas, findings revealed a statistically significant difference in student achievement on a standardized test for students who had teachers with varying levels of self-efficacy. Students with the highest achievement on standardized test were those with teachers with the highest level of self-efficacy (Alvarez-Nunez, 2012).

Self-efficacy was also found to vary with the number of years of teaching experience (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2006; Walker & Slear, 2011). The Teacher’ Self Efficacy Scale (TSES), was administered to 484 undergraduate and graduate students who were enrolled in a teacher education program (Putman, 2012). The study found that those who had no previous teaching experience had significantly lower self-efficacy than those who had teaching experience. This study reinforced the theory of Mastery Experiences from
Bandura (1977), which states that when teachers have the opportunity to practice something, self-efficacy is increased.

Principal practice and behavior was also found to have an effect on teacher’s self-efficacy. For example, Walker and Slear (2011) studied the effects of principal behaviors on efficacy levels of teachers with different years of teaching experience. This study examined six school districts representing urban, rural and suburban populations. Results of the study suggested that for teachers who were very experienced, their self-efficacy was positively affected by principals who emphasized that quality instruction is important and should take place in every classroom. Principals who communicated effectively with teachers and students also had a positive effect on teacher self-efficacy. Interestingly, the study revealed an inverse relationship between extrinsic rewards and teacher self-efficacy. Principals who provided rewards to recognize outstanding work inside and outside of the classroom were associated with lower levels of teacher self-efficacy. Furthermore, teachers with higher-levels of self-efficacy reported rewards for good work as less important than other factors (Walker & Slear, 2011). Experienced teachers continued to benefit from the principal modeling instructional expectations and communication; however, there was an additional factor of “principal consideration.” When the principal expressed a general concern for teacher’s well-being, it had a positive effect on teacher self-efficacy. Thus, having a positive relationship with a principal can have a positive effect on self-efficacy.

Teacher self-efficacy was also found to have a strong correlation with teacher collaboration and mentoring, especially for veteran teachers. Teachers with 15 years of experience with principals who created an environment where all teachers were part of a team and worked together toward shared goals showed increased self-efficacy (LoCasale-
Crouch, Davis, Weins, & Piantra, 2012; Walker & Slear, 2011). When teachers have opportunities to discuss practice with mentors who they respect and hold in high-regard, they experience higher levels of self-efficacy with teaching (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007).

Compelling evidence suggests that in order for teachers to be effective, they need to believe in their ability to improve student achievement. Teachers are more willing to try new teaching techniques and push their students towards success when they believe in their ability to make a difference (Bandura, 1997, Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). Self-efficacy also has been known to have a positive influence on student achievement, therefore it is an important component of teacher effectiveness that should be examined carefully (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993). This literature review suggests that in order to improve or affect teacher quality, teacher self-efficacy should be studied closer. More research is needed to understand the type of experiences that contribute to self-efficacy for veteran teachers who have been deemed ineffective and need to improve their teaching practice. Therefore, this study will seek to discover whether and how the components of the Peer Assistance and Review program contribute to veteran teachers’ self-efficacy. Does the collaborative relationship with the peer-mentor increase self-efficacy? How does the verbal feedback provided by the consulting teachers contribute to the participating teacher’s self-efficacy? Are there any program components that diminish the participating teacher’s self-efficacy?

**Professional Development and Evaluation for Veteran Teachers**

Since professional development has also been linked to teacher quality, it is necessary to examine what research has found that is effective for veteran teachers. Public schools spend about $20 billion per year on professional development (NCES, 2008).
Professional development is aimed at improving teacher quality, however not all professional development actually transfers to teacher improvement and improving student performance (Guskey & Yoon, 2009). While administrators claim that there is lack of time for professional development, research shows that more time spent on professional development does not transfer to student achievement if the training is not purposeful and relevant (Guskey & Yoon, 2009). When professional development is coherent or consistent with teachers’ goals, it does change teachers’ practice (Guskey & Yoon, 2009).

Studies have found that what teachers learn in professional development, does not necessarily transfer to what they actually do in their classroom. For example, in a longitudinal study, approximately 300 teachers who participated in the Eisenhower Professional Development Program nationwide were surveyed (Porter, Garet, Desimone, Yoon & Birman, 2010). Using data gathered over three years from mathematics teachers, it was found that the type of professional development that most teachers participated was not considered high-quality professional development and as a result, very few teachers actually changed practice over time. Teachers reported that the professional development that they participated in at their schools was not consistent and it varied from one year to another. Porter et al. (2010) found that in order for professional development to be effective, it needs to be sustained over time and intensive. They also found that it needs to be focused on academic subject matter and provide opportunities for teachers to have practical applications or active learning. Lastly, Porter et al. (2010) also found that effective professional development must have collective participation among teachers to support change in practice.
Professional development for veteran teachers. What are effective practices that are relevant to the specific professional development needs of experienced teachers? For the purposes of this study, experienced teachers are defined as teachers with more than ten years of teaching experience (Rodriguez & McKay, 2010). Experienced teachers are also referred to as veteran teachers or expert teachers throughout the literature that was reviewed. Veteran teachers differ from novice teachers in several ways that may affect the way that they respond to professional development. They have years of experience and a large knowledge base that they have acquired over several years of teaching the same subject matter. Often, they have more experience than the people who are providing them with professional development, support, or supervision (Brundage, 1996).

Professional development should occur during the different stages of a teaching career; however, as the needs of teachers change, so should professional development. Researchers have found that veteran teachers require professional opportunities that allow them to be self-directed, collaborative, and reflective about their teaching practice (Rodriguez & McKay, 2010; Meiser & Ahern, 2010; Walker & Slear, 2011). Veteran teachers need professional development that affirms their knowledge, experience, and ability to make intuitive judgments based on their experience (Rodriguez & McKay, 2010). Teachers with greater experience report that they seek opportunities that make their work meaningful and seek opportunities that promote collaboration (Walker & Slear, 2011). Most schools with large numbers of teachers do not have the necessary funding or infrastructure to provide sustained professional development that is differentiated to fulfill the unique needs of the different teachers at their school (Porter et al., 2010).
As previously stated, teachers make the biggest gains in effectiveness during the first three to five years of teaching and the level of improvement diminishes as time goes on, eventually reaching a point of decline (Harris & Sass, 2007; Rice, 2010; Kane, Rockoff, & Staiger, 2007). The diminished level of improvement for teachers with several years of teaching experience may have important implications for the population in this study. When teachers reach a level of consistency, routine, and lack of improvement, they reach a plateau. This term describes the feeling of frustration, disillusionment, and resistance to change in teachers (Meister & Aherns, 2010). It is very common for teachers with several years of teaching experience to reach this point where their work is viewed as repetitive, the possibility of promotion seems unlikely, and they are no longer motivated to teach (Meister & Aherns, 2010).

Veteran teachers need to be supported as they face new challenges and new information so they can learn things differently. Meister and Ahern, (2010) conducted a study of four veteran teachers in a suburban school district in Pennsylvania in order to examine what kept them interested in learning new ways of teaching and improving their practice rather than plateauing. Although the teachers all described having highs and lows throughout their careers, they expressed a strong sense of self-efficacy in their ability to make a difference in students’ lives. They also reported that they felt like they were an integral part of their school’s organization (Meister & Ahern, 2010). Participants also reported that they found that their best support came from networking with their colleagues; however the district rarely made collaboration a priority. Some participants reported that they sought mentors to help them overcome problems that they were having. For example, one participant stated that his best career opportunity was when he was
allowed to team-teach; this allowed him to feel less isolated, and to receive valuable feedback that he was able to use to improve his teaching practice. Thus, professional development activities need to be designed to make veteran teachers feel like they are making a difference in their students’ lives by encouraging inquiry and experimentation in their classroom to rekindle their enthusiasm and love for teaching (Rodriguez & McKay, 2010). How do programs such as PAR that work with veteran teachers seek ways to help them overcome plateauing?

Peer coaching. Researchers have found peer coaching to be an effective model for improving growth in teacher practice, teacher reflection, and collaboration (Dixon, Willis, Benedict, & Gossman, 2001; Nolan & Hillkirk, 1991; Harwell-Kee, 1999; Zwart, Wubbles, Bolhuis, & Bergen, 2007). Harwell-Kee (1999) defines peer coaching as, “teachers talking and acting in a purposeful way, with the goal of continuously improving their practice” (p.1). It is a type of professional development approach that allows for collaboration between colleagues, self-direction, and reflection. For example, in a study of four veteran teachers who were interested in learning about specific techniques for working with gifted students, teachers reported that peer coaching, working in study groups, and mentoring resulted in the development of a community of teachers who wanted to learn and were willing to take risks (Dixon et al., 2001). They reported that they learned new strategies and techniques that they would have not ordinarily tried on their own to enhance their students’ learning. Teachers also shared that the coaching process helped them to feel rejuvenated, more willing to vary from their rigid lesson plans, and more focused on their students. Overall, teachers reported that the coaching process made them better teachers. in a year-long study of 25 veteran classroom teachers and several coaches who worked in a
semi-rural area, a similar peer coaching mode was implemented. This model included a preconference, classroom observation, and post-conference (Nolan & Hillkirk, 1991). Out of 25 teachers, 23 reported changes in teaching behavior in the following categories: questioning behavior, classroom management, use of different teaching strategies, use of techniques to increase student understanding, and elements of lesson design (Nolan & Hillkirk, 1991). Twenty-three of 25 teachers also reported that they became more reflective of their teaching method and they made instructional decisions based on how their students responded to the lessons rather than continuing to teach lessons even if students were not achieving the objectives. Likewise, researchers in a one-year study of eight experienced high school teachers found that the act of observation by a peer coach prompted teachers to try new strategies and thoughtfully apply strategies that they felt would improve student learning (Zwart, Wubbles, Bolhuis, & Bergen, 2007).

Findings from these studies suggest that peer coaching is congruent with the professional development needs of veteran and experienced teachers since it provides opportunities for teachers to learn from one another, dialogue about teaching and learning, reflect on their practice, and be in charge of their own learning (Dixon et al., 2001; Nolan & Hillkirk, 1991; Zwart et al., 2007). Since the PAR program involves peer coaching between a consulting teacher and a participating teacher, this study will address to what extent the PAR program in Big City School District shares the characteristics of peer coaching and how this affects student growth and change in teacher practice.

Supervision and evaluation of veteran teachers. Just as veteran teachers have specific professional development needs; researchers have found that veteran teachers have specific needs in regard to supervision, evaluation, and support from administrators
While detailed observations can lead to teacher growth, the traditional evaluation method used by the majority of districts has been ineffective for experienced teachers (Basillio, 2002; Darling-Hammond, 2012; Howard & McCoskey, 2001). The traditional supervisory model practiced by most districts involves a judgment by an administrator about a teacher’s classroom teaching based on observing one or two lessons (Darling-Hammond, 2012). This is followed by a post-observation conference with the teacher and a written evaluation report that determines if they have met the district’s instructional standards, need improvement, or have not met standards. For example, in a qualitative study of 38 veteran teachers in an urban school district, teachers saw no purpose in the traditional supervision model since they have proven over the years that they were capable of teaching according to standards (Brundage, 1996). Veteran teachers in a separate study also indicated that they did not receive helpful feedback during the post-observation conference (Basillio, 2002). Several high school teachers reported that the evaluation process felt like they were, “going through the motions, jumping through hoops, or putting on a show.” They reported that the feedback provided by their principal was irrelevant since they were only observed once or twice and the observed lesson was not a typical lesson (Basillio, 2002). Veteran teachers suggested alternative approaches to evaluation that would be more effective, such as having post-conference conferences with someone they trusted (Basillio, 2002).

The literature reviewed in this section raises several concerns about supervision and evaluation for veteran teachers. Researchers have found many teachers reported that they did not benefit from the current evaluation system, which usually involved one or two
observations with minimal feedback. Teachers reported that their evaluation was irrelevant and ineffective in improving their practice. The most common criticism stated by teachers was that it felt like it had no purpose other than for compliance. What type of evaluation would most benefit these teachers? This study will examine the PAR model for evaluation and supervision of veteran teachers in order to see if it is effective in improving teaching practice.

**Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) Programs**

School districts across the country have implemented Peer Assistance and Review Programs (PAR) as an alternative evaluation process and as an intervention program for teachers who are struggling with their teaching practice. Through the PAR program, struggling teachers who have been referred to the program receive support from experienced teachers with the goal of improving their practice. Multiple studies of PAR have found that some teachers improve; however, most do not make substantial improvements and end up resigning or being dismissed, (Johnson et al., 2011). While program details differ, studies outline some commonalities across programs in terms of program design (Fiarman, Johnson, Murnane, & Teitel, 2009). This section will begin with a description of the typical program design and the role of the Consulting Teacher (CT). Then it will discuss some of the benefits of PAR along with some of the barriers to teaching improvement that were found in the literature.

**Program design.** The major purpose of Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) is for teachers to provide both assistance and performance review to fellow teachers who have been rated as below standard. While peer assistance and peer review are two major functions, they work together to support teachers and improve teaching practice (Anderson
Qazilbash, Johnson, Fiarman, Munger, & Papay (2009), who studied seven programs across several states, found that while some PAR programs serve new teachers, most programs serve underperforming veteran teachers who were assessed by their principal as not meeting the district’s instructional standards (Qazilbash et al., 2009; Papay & Johnson, 2011).

PAR seeks to improve new and veteran teachers’ knowledge and teaching skill by matching them with consulting teachers who provide ongoing support through modeling lessons, observing and providing feedback, sharing ideas and skills, and making recommendations for further study (Anderson & Pellicer, 2011). Veteran teachers receive support from consulting teachers similarly to the way new teachers are supported through induction programs. CTs also report to and make recommendations to the panel that oversees PAR (see Chapter 1). In Fiarman et al. (2009)’s study, consulting teachers across all six districts stated that they felt that the formal presentations that they made to the PAR panel about the teachers they coached kept them accountable. The PAR panel would often follow up each presentation with questions to seek new information about the CT’s recommendation about participating teachers (Fiarman et al., 2009).

**Consulting teachers.** The most crucial component of the PAR program is the consulting teacher. Generally, a PT’s success depends heavily on the skills and abilities of the CT (Darling-Hammond, 2013; Fiarman et al., 2009). Consequently, PAR programs make a conscious effort to insure that consulting teachers are high caliber educators, coaches, and leaders by requiring a rigorous selection process, including multiple applications and interviews, continuous and intense professional development and a system of accountability (CSU Institute for Education Reform, 2010; Darling-Hammond, 2013;
Fiorman et al., 2009; Humphrey, Koppich, & Bosetti, 2011). In an examination of two PAR program sites in California, researchers reported that consulting teachers were experienced, demonstrated knowledge of teaching and data analysis, were determined to improve teaching in their districts, and did a far superior job of evaluating teacher performance compared to principals as a result of the highly selective hiring process (Humphrey et al., 2011).

The application process to become a consulting teacher was found to be highly competitive (Fiorman et al., 2009; Humphrey et al., 2011). For example, in a multi-case study of 61 CTs in five states, several CTs reported that they felt that the application process was thorough, using words like intensive, grueling, and extensive (Fiorman et al., 2009, p. 45). They also stated that they felt it was necessary to be this thorough when hiring a CT because CTs must be credible when providing feedback to PTs. CTs reported that they were required to demonstrate not only teaching experience, but also the ability to build rapport with their colleagues and supervisors (Humphrey et al., 2011). The typical number of interviewers was anywhere from five to nine people, including members of the PAR panel, high-ranking members of management, and leaders of the teachers’ union. Most CTs described the questions that were asked as challenging, which almost caused one CT to leave the interview. Some applicants CTs were observed teaching by lead CTs prior to being hired (Fiorman et al., 2009). Humphrey et al. (2011) and Fiorman et al. (2009) reported that CTs benefited from intensive training and ongoing professional development. Since much of the success of the PT depends on the quality of the CT, it will be necessary to examine the hiring process, professional development, and evaluation process for the CTs in the current study.
**Benefits of PAR.** Researchers have found that although PAR can be a costly program costing from $4,000-$7,000 per participating teacher, there are several benefits that outweigh the costs. Some of the benefits found in the research include: an increase in the intensity and frequency of teacher evaluation, improved teacher performance for some teachers, support for struggling teachers, the creation of a professional culture committed to instructional improvement, and increased collaboration between unions and districts (Johnson et al., 2010; Fiarman et al, 2009, Humphreys et al., 2011, Darling-Hammond, 2012).

Researchers have found that one of the benefits of the PAR program is that it provides for a more thorough evaluation process that occurs on a more regular basis than traditional evaluation. As stated previously, the most common types of evaluation involve one or two classroom observations from an administrator throughout a school year with minimal conversation taking place between the administrator and teacher (Fiarman et al., 2009). PAR involves a more extensive interaction, including weekly visits, which use a mixture of summative and formative evaluation process (Kumrow & Dahlen, 2002). Formative assessment is defined as assessment that is used to measure the level of progress and to make decisions about what actions to take to improve teaching practice or student learning. This differs from summative assessment, which is used to make judgments about a teacher’s or student’s performance. Formative assessments are intended to answer the following questions, “What are my strengths? What do I need to improve? What are my areas of weakness? Where did I not perform as desired? How can I make it better?” (Chappuis & Chappuis, 2008, p. 55).
Participants in Papay and Johnson’s (2011) study across several states indicated that the evaluation procedures that were conducted by the CTs were superior to the evaluations provided by principals. This is because evaluating and supporting teachers are the major components of the CTs job, unlike principals who have the additional tasks that are required to run a school. Whereas traditional teacher evaluation is summative in nature and is generally used as a means for determining if a teacher is qualified to teach, the PAR evaluation processes are aimed at improving teacher practice. PAR allows CTs to give targeted feedback in order for teachers to assess their areas of needed growth with the goal of improving their teaching practice. Thus, PAR adds a formative assessment system to the traditional summative evaluation process (Goldstein, 2007).

Another benefit of PAR, according to Johnson (2011), is that it makes the evaluation system transparent by ensuring that observations of participating teachers are frequent and all conclusions are based on observable data and standards. The problem with the traditional evaluation method is that principals make decisions in isolation based on only one to two observations per year, which provides very little data (Papay & Johnson, 2011). CTs, principals, and PAR panel members were more confident in the quality and accuracy of evaluations conducted by PAR CTs than principals since principals in the traditional evaluation system often sidestepped when it came to giving negative evaluations to avoid conflict (Papay & Johnson, 2011). Humphrey (2011) found that unlike teacher evaluations by principals, which were often rushed and occur at the last minute, much of the CTs’ activity was spent carefully documenting a participating teacher’s progress or lack of it. Detailed evidence collected in the classroom though observations and meetings were aligned with the districts’ adopted teaching standards. For example, the
Montgomery County, Maryland, school district adopted six standards from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards; San Juan uses the California Standards of the Teaching Profession (CSTPs); and Poway school district in Southern California uses the Poway Continuum of Teachings Standards (Humphrey, 2011). The level of documentation that is required for the PAR panel is very time consuming; CTs report that much of their day is spent writing reports that they will need to present to the PAR panel (Humphrey, 2011).

Another benefit of PAR is that it lowers the cost of arbitration and dismissal when teachers are unable to improve. Due to the collaborative effort between administrators and teachers unions, dismissal process runs more smoothly. By contrast to the PAR process, under the union contract and teacher tenure laws, the typical process for firing a teacher with tenure is tedious. It requires several steps of documentation and effort on the part of the principal (Munger et al., 2012). California Ed Code § 44932 states that in order for a tenured teacher to be dismissed, they must be provided notice and have an opportunity to be heard. Additionally, most collective bargaining agreements usually add another layer of procedures. Most teacher dismissal cases in California cost over $100,000 because of legal and arbitration fees (Bireda, 2010). Since the union is already involved in the PAR process, the usual costly dismissal process can be avoided.

**Improved teacher performance.** Although PAR is intended to improve teacher quality, studies have found that that most of the time, teachers are unable to make substantial improvements. For example, only one-third of teachers in the seven districts that were studied by Johnson et al. (2011) who were assigned to PAR’s intervention program due to unsatisfactory evaluations showed improvement and were able to continue
employment. The other two-thirds who did not show signs of improvement after receiving intense support from a consulting teacher were dismissed formally or decided to retire. Internal national PAR data revealed that one-third to one-half of teachers in the programs do not improve and are dismissed or leave teaching by their own choice (Darling-Hammond, 2013). Similarly, in a qualitative study on PAR based on principal perception across multiple districts, it was found that only approximately 50% of the teachers who were referred to the PAR program for intervention showed improvement while the other half were either dismissed or chose to leave though retirement or resignation (Munger et al., 2012).

While not all teachers show improvement, PAR was found to improve teacher quality in some cases. PAR was found to help some teachers to improve by providing them with expert advice on teaching strategies; if that effort failed, there was a clear path to dismissal (Johnson & Fiarman, 2012). Across all seven districts that were studied by Papay and Johnson (2011), both administrators and union leaders agreed that PAR was an important investment because it improved teaching quality for some of the teachers. According to one Participating Teachers in Basillo’s (2002) qualitative study, “PAR has given me feedback on where I need to improve; it has kind of put me back on track” (Basillio, 2002, p. 77). Many veteran teachers reported that they learned more about teaching in the one year they participated in PAR than they did in their first 20 years in the classroom (Papay & Johnson, 2011).

As we have seen, veteran teachers benefit from professional development where they can collaboratively work with a peer and discuss strategies for improvement in a self-directed way (Meiser & Ahern, 2010; Rodriguez & McKay, 2010; Walker & Slear 2011).
CTs offer targeted feedback to veteran PTs. This allows PTs to be reflective about their practice and to make decisions on where they can improve. The relationship between a PT and CT aims to create a positive professional culture that is centered on improving teaching practice and labor management relations (Papay & Johnson, 2011).

**Barriers to teacher improvement.** If the ultimate goal of Peer Assistance and Review is to improve teacher practice and less than 50% of teachers actually improve their practice, what are some of the barriers to improving teacher practice? One possible reason that some teachers who participated in PAR were not able to improve their practice was participating teachers’ attitude. According to Fiarman (2009). CTs reported that several PTs had a negative attitude toward the PAR process and were unwilling to work cooperatively; this was a hindrance to the mentoring process. CTs reported that some of these teachers were reluctant to participate in the program because they were mandated to do so due to a negative evaluation (Fiarman, 2009). PTs may also be resistant because they are in denial about their problems (Humphrey et al., 2011). For example, CTs in San Juan mentioned that a few participating teachers would “run when they saw their CT coming” (Fiarman et al., 2009, p. 30). In Schneider’s (2006) qualitative study focused on the implementation of PAR in Southern California, CTs were asked to identify factors that hindered the mentoring process. Out of the 40 areas identified, 56% of CTs reported that the number one hindrance was the referred teachers’ refusal to accept the need for change. Ten percent of CTs reported that lack of motivation was the reason PTs were unable to improve. CTs in Fiarman et al.’s (2009) study reported that they felt ineffective when PTs would not listen or made no effort to improve their practice and were often resistant to the process of peer coaching (Fiarman et al., 2009; Fiarman et al., 2011).
CTs were unable to pinpoint reasons other than their resistance for why some PTs do not improve (Fiarman, et al., 2009; Schneider, 2006). In Schneider’s (2006) qualitative study of CTs’ experiences, 11% of CTs reported that participating teachers were just not able to improve in technical areas such as classroom management, lesson planning, and use of instructional strategies, but CTs were unable to state the reasons why they were unable to do so. CTs in Fiarman et al. (2009) reported feeling frustrated when PTs made an effort to improve but were still unable to make progress. For example, a CT shared that the most difficult part of her job was reporting that a 28-year veteran teacher was unable to make progress despite her hard work. Submitting her final report on a teacher’s lack of progress was "awful" because "there wasn't any way that I could help him turn things around" (Fiarman, et al., 2009, p. 31).

As we have seen, PAR shifts the responsibility of teacher evaluation and support from administrators to peers who have been well-trained in coaching and evaluation. PAR provides a structure for all stakeholders including district administrators, union members, and fellow teachers to share a purpose and be accountable for his or her role in improving the quality of teaching, yet most teachers are still not able to improve (Papay & Johnson, 2011; Goldstein, 2007; Kumrow & Dahlen, 2002; Krueger, 2004; Qazilbash et al., 2009). Could a possible underlying goal of PAR be to improve teaching, not only by improving teacher practice, but by removing teachers who are unable to improve? As we have seen, some PAR programs are successful in achieving the intended goal for some teachers. In most cases, however, teachers have not been successful, resulting in loss of jobs and a waste of invested time and money. While some researchers have studied PAR programs and have identified the impact of PAR both negatively and positively, more research needs
to be done to discover the factors that result in teachers improving or not improving in the program. Could their level of success be related to the effectiveness of the consulting teachers, the relationship with their consultant teacher, participating teacher attitudes and resistance, or some programmatic flaw?

**Gaps in the Literature and the Need for This Study**

The literature reviewed in this chapter addressed topics related to the PAR model including teacher quality, professional development, teacher supervision, teacher self-efficacy and teacher supervision, suggesting various methods for improving teacher effectiveness. PAR programs address many of the components that were found in the literature to promote teacher growth, such as peer coaching, peer review, and detailed observations. Thus, it is surprising that less than half of the teachers referred to PAR are able to show substantial growth through participating in the program (Johnson, 2011). What are the real intentions of the PAR program? Why do districts continue to fund PAR programs if most teachers are not improving?

This raises questions regarding which components of the program are the most effective for improving teacher quality and self-efficacy for veteran teachers. What can be done to improve the self-efficacy and teaching practice of teachers who have been teaching for over 15 years? Can teachers change after teaching a certain way for so long, or are they so stuck in their ways that that it is better for them to do something else? Is the current program model contributing to the improvement of teachers’ self-efficacy or is it a process for weeding out teachers who are not able to improve? This study will examine the experiences of veteran teachers who have had successful and unsuccessful experiences in the program in order to learn more what contributes to teacher self-efficacy.
Conceptual Framework

As we have seen in the literature, teacher’s self-efficacy has been consistently linked to teacher quality and teacher effectiveness (Bandura, 1977; Jamil & Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness, 2012; Putman, 2012). Furthermore, the PAR program components closely relate to major factors that contribute to expectations of self-efficacy, according to Bandura (1977), including mastery experiences or performance accomplishments, vicarious experiences or observed experiences, social persuasion or performance feedback, and physiological factors or attitude and motivation. These four factors relate to several aspects of the PAR programs. For example, when PTs in the PAR program learn new strategies, they are expected to apply these strategies to their teaching practice and are provided feedback by a CT. This directly relates to mastery experiences and social persuasion. When PTs are provided opportunities to observe others, this relates to vicarious experiences. Therefore, Bandura’s theory provides an appropriate conceptual framework for this study. This framework provides a lens to study change in teaching self-efficacy and teaching practice through key components that we would expect to see in a PAR program.

The first factor that contributes to self-efficacy, according to Bandura (1977), is identified as mastery experiences or performance accomplishments. This refers to multiple opportunities for individuals to successfully complete a task (Bandura, 1977). Moreover, the more success one has had in successfully completing a task, the more self-efficacy is increased. Likewise, the less successful a person is in completing a certain task, self-efficacy is decreased. Occasional failures, however, can be overcome if one is able to successfully perform after sustained effort (Putman, 2012). If an individual has completed
a task successfully in the past, it sets an expectation that they can perform that task again successfully (Bandura, 1977; Putman, 2012; Jamil & Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness, 2012). For example, if a struggling teacher is having difficulty with a specific aspect of teaching such as classroom management or student engagement, the more successful experiences they have applying a particular strategy, the more efficacious they will feel with that aspect of teaching. Additionally, if a PT has multiple opportunities to practice a particular strategy for a prolonged period time and is guided by the CT who corrects actions as he or she works toward perfection, self-efficacy is increased. Thus, in this study of a PAR program, I will examine the how PTs are provided opportunities to apply new strategies or skills until they are able to do them successfully. I will also examine from a qualitative perspective, how veteran teachers have struggled with mastery experiences as they have been identified as an ineffective teacher.

The second factor that contributes to self-efficacy is identified as vicarious experiences. Vicarious experiences involve observation of others as they successfully complete a task with the purpose of leaning a new task or skill (Bandura, 1977). When teachers are provided opportunities to observe a similar teacher apply a particular strategy or skill successfully, they are convinced that they, too, can achieve that task. For example, a vicarious experience may occur when a CT demonstrates a lesson or provides an opportunity to observe another successful teacher so that the PT is able to observe a new strategy in action. The power of the vicarious experiences depends on the similarity between the model and the observer; therefore, it is more beneficial for a teacher to observe in a similar teaching context (Bandura, 1977; Jamil & Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness, 2012; Putman, 2012). Similar contexts may include similar
subjects or student populations, such as a secondary science Participating Teachers in a classroom with mostly English Learners observing a consulting teacher who has experience working in a similar context. Vicarious experiences also are more effective when the observer observes a qualified person overcome challenge by putting forth a great deal of effort. The experience needs to seem realistic and relevant in a real world setting (Bandura, 1977; Jamil, 2012; Putman, 2012). This study will focus on how PTs in the PAR program were provided opportunities to have vicarious experiences, as well as how PTs feel that their CT has been able to overcome similar challenges.

Social persuasion, also referred to as verbal persuasion, refers to direct or indirect feedback, praise, or encouragement given to an individual about their performance or a change in their behavior (Bandura, 1977). For example, when a struggling teacher attempts a new strategy, a CT provides specific feedback about how the strategy affected student learning. Social persuasion also can take the form of interpersonal support from administrators, parents, and the community; however this factor was found to have more influence on the self-efficacy of novice teachers than on experienced teachers (Tshannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). Furthermore, when individuals who are giving feedback are highly respected with a high level of trust, there is greater influence on self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977; Putman, 2012; Jamil & Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness, 2012). This study will examine how CTs provide feedback such as praise or encouragement to PTs about their performance. It will also examine the level of trust and respect that the PT feels for the CT affect their ability to improve their self-efficacy and teaching practice. Is all feedback equally helpful when it comes to enhancing self-efficacy?
Finally, physiological and emotional cues, such as feelings of excitement or anxiety as one completes a task, can contribute to a feeling of mastery or ineptness (Bandura, 1993; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). When a teacher attempts a new strategy and they have increased heart rate or sweat, self-efficacy may be diminished. However, when the new task is performed with a sense of ease, self-efficacy related to that performance is increased (Putman, 2012; Jamil, F. & Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness, 2012). Thus, when a teacher feels a sense of stress or anxiety when they are teaching a lesson or attempting a new strategy, self-efficacy is negatively affected. This study will also examine the attitude, motivation and physiological cues that PTs feel during their participation in the program.

This conceptual framework will be applied to the collection and analysis of data in order to understand the components of PAR that positively and negatively shape teachers’ self-efficacy, which is directly related to teacher quality. If this theory is applicable, we may be able to see the importance of trust between CT and PT, and how the processes of demonstration, observation, peer coaching, and feedback affect teacher self-efficacy. They also found that observing colleagues contributed to vicarious experiences and increase teacher’s confidence because their colleagues were able to successfully implement a lesson that the team had designed. Verbal persuasion was also reported to be affected during this process because verbal feedback gave participants more confidence to try new strategies (Chong & Kong, 2012).

Of the four components of self-efficacy described by Bandura (1977), I expect that mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, and verbal persuasion through modeling and peer coaching will be the most prominent factors to surface in this study. PAR’s primary
function involves PTs planning lessons with CTs, demonstrating lessons, and receiving verbal feedback from CTs. In this study, I expect to find similar findings to those of Chong and Kong (2012), therefore this study will build on their findings and add the perspective of veteran teachers who are struggling in the classroom.

**Summary**

This chapter reviewed literature relating to various goals and components of the PAR program. It began with a description of the variables in teacher quality and methods for measuring teacher quality and teacher effectiveness. Researchers found a clear correlation between student achievement and teacher quality, however findings for factors that contribute to teacher quality were inconsistent among several studies. Additionally, research findings indicate that there is positive relationship between teacher quality and teacher self-efficacy, therefore suggesting that as teacher self-efficacy increases, so will teacher quality. Furthermore, the literature indicated that effective professional development for veteran teachers included peer coaching and peer review because those models allow for teachers with experience to create their own learning goals, collaborate with colleagues, and be more self-directed. Findings from the several studies on PAR programs revealed that while some teachers do improve during their participation in the program, many or most are unable to make enough improvement to return to keep their jobs. Instead, they make a decision to resign or are dismissed by the district. Finally, the four factors of self-efficacy, which is the conceptual framework that will frame this study, are described. These four components include mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and physiological factors (Bandura, 1977). These four factors closely relate to several aspects of PAR programs.
The next chapter describes the methodology for addressing the goals of this study, which is to learn about specific professional development needs for struggling veteran teachers who have received below standard teaching evaluations.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the processes and systems of support of a Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) Program in a large urban district. It was aimed ultimately at helping PAR programs to improve the quality of experienced teachers who have received a below standard teaching evaluation. As an alternative to immediate dismissal, teachers participate in this PAR program, work closely with a consulting teacher, with the objective of improving their teaching practice. The goal of this study was to discover the support mechanisms that have the greatest impact on improving experienced teacher quality and to identify components of the program that are ineffective or may be a hindrance to teachers. This study also examined how the support mechanisms provided by the program contributed to teacher self-efficacy.

The main research question that guided this study was: How does a Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program provide the conditions for teacher growth and self-efficacy among veteran teachers who have received a below standard performance evaluation? Sub-questions include: How do participating teachers (PTs) feel that peer assistance and review has affected their teaching practice and self-efficacy? How do consulting teachers describe the changes in the participating teachers’ self-efficacy and teaching practice?

The first section of this chapter will describe the case study research design and tradition of phenomenology, which guided the research procedures for examining the lived experiences and perceptions of PTs in the PAR program. The second section will describe the research setting and context, which is a PAR program in the “Big City School District (BCSD),” located in the western United States. Following this is information on the research sample of five participating teachers, two consulting teachers, and two
administrators from PAR, as well as two members of the PAR Panel. Next there is a
description of the process for data collection and plans for data analysis. Finally, the
chapter concludes with a reflection on how my researcher roles, biases and assumptions
related to this study.

**Research Design and Tradition**

This study was a qualitative case study. Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) define a case
study as a descriptive analysis of a program or institution, the setting and its participants,
along with an analysis of themes, patterns, and issues. A case study is bounded by time
and place and includes multiple sources of information, including observations, interviews,
documents, and reports about a particular case or program (Creswell, 1996). This
particular case study involved qualitative analysis of five participants who were all
Participating Teachers in the same PAR Program. The case study focused on one Peer
Assistance and Review program in an urban school district and sought to gather
participants’ perceptions of how the elements of the program affected their teaching self-
efficacy and teaching practice. The study contained a detailed description of data that was
revealed from five participating teacher interviews, two consulting teachers’ interviews,
two program administrator interviews, and one focus group with PAR panel members, as
well as document review. A short survey was also included that added a more descriptive
picture of the sense of self-efficacy for the PTs in this study.

This study borrowed from the tradition of phenomenology within qualitative
research; however, due to the limited time frame; it did not contain the depth of a typical
phenomenological study. The research tradition of phenomenology seeks to understand the
“lived experience of a small group of people from the standpoint of a phenomenon”
Phenomenological case studies describe what all participants have in common with regards to a particular phenomenon in order to interpret the meaning of their experience (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). According to Creswell (1996), phenomenological studies search for the most essential constant structure in order to identify a central or underlying meaning of the experiences. This was an appropriate approach for this study since it aimed to understand the experiences that veteran teachers face as they participate in a Peer Assistance and Review program in order to identify which program elements were most helpful in improving their teaching practice and teacher self-efficacy. While the focus of the study was on the experience of the participating teachers, for the purpose of triangulation and to gather multiple perspectives, this study also gathered information about how participating teachers responded to the program from the perspective of consulting teachers and the program administrator.

**Research Setting/Context**

This study examined a Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program located in the Big City School District, which is in the southwestern United States. The school district is diverse; however, Latino students make up the largest population, which is 72%. The next highest population is African American, which is 10%. The district has 9% White students, 4% Asian students, and 4% other races/ethnicities. This district has long experienced low student achievement; however, in recent years, BCSD saw growth of at least 10% on the state Academic Performance Index (API), as well as improvement in the graduation rate, California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) passage rate, and other academic indicators.
The PAR program in this district was created in 1998 in response to a California State Assembly Bill. To date, the BCSD PAR Program has provided assistance to over 10,000 classroom teachers by providing consulting teachers as well as professional development workshops (Big City School District, 2013). It was a collaborative effort between the school district and the local teacher’s union. According to the BCSD PAR Program website, the purpose of PAR is to “support and renew quality teaching in classrooms throughout the district.” PAR provides instructional support to below standard teachers, beginning teachers, and teachers who volunteer for assistance. Teachers who have received below-standard teaching evaluations are mandated to participate in this program. The BCSD PAR program primarily serves underperforming veteran teachers who have been assessed by principals as not meeting standard (Big City School Talent Management Division, 2013). Participating teachers (PTs) receive ongoing support from Consulting Teachers (CTs), who are selected through a rigorous interview process and receive ongoing professional development (Big City School Talent Management Division, 2013).

Support for PTs consists of up to two years of weekly meetings between CTs and PTs, the development of a professional growth plan, facilitated reflection, PAR-sponsored professional development workshops, co-planning with a consulting teacher, and analysis of data from observations on the PT’s practice. The school administrator is also involved in the process. School site administrators meet with CTs to establish the instructional focus that needs improvement. The PAR panel or governing board of the program, consisting of five union-appointed representatives and four district-appointed representatives, makes a
recommendation to the School Board on whether the PT should continue employment or be dismissed.

This study employed criterion-based sampling in selecting a site. This strategy was used because there is a predetermined criterion for this study and the PAR program that will be examined serves primarily veteran teachers who have received an unsatisfactory evaluation. Access to this site’s PAR program was gained through program’s administrative coordinator and program specialist. My current work location is at the District’s central office near where the PAR program is housed. Furthermore, I am a professional development provider for the program so a relationship has been established. My role was addressed in the Role of the Researcher section of this chapter, below. I met with the program administrators to inform them of the goals of this study and seek their cooperation.

**Sample and Data Sources**

In studying the experience of veteran teachers who have received below-standard evaluations, this research used three sources of data. The main data source was interview transcripts from participating teachers, two consulting teachers and two program administrators. Interviews were selected as a primary data source because they allowed for multiple perspectives of how the program’s support mechanisms have impacted teacher self-efficacy and teaching practice by gaining the perspectives of PTs and CTs in the program.

Data was also collected from a focus group with two members of the PAR panel. Data included additional descriptive information gathered from a short survey of PT’s
about self-efficacy. Lastly, document review data sources included the frameworks that are used by CTs to evaluate PTs, as well as pamphlets and flyers that the program provides.

**Sampling Strategy**

I used a combination of purposeful sampling methods to collect a sample of individuals appropriate for this study: criteria sampling and snowball sampling (Miles & Huberman, 1994). First, I employed a snowball sampling method in selecting participants for this study, which means I depended on few participants to refer other participants who fit the specific criteria (Creswell, 2012; Miles and Huberman, 1994). This sampling method is most appropriate because snowball sampling is generally used to find and recruit populations groups not easily accessible to researchers through other sampling strategies (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Since the primary participants of this study (PTs) were not easily accessible, I relied on referrals from CTs who met the predetermined criteria. The main participants in the study were veteran teachers with over 10 years of teaching experience who were referred to the PAR program. These criteria for the selection of PTs were based on the goals of this study, which was to explore the experiences of veteran teachers. Teachers with more than 10 years of teaching experience are not only permanent but they are considered to have a wealth of experience. The criteria for selection of two consulting teachers were that they must have worked with the program for over two years and were matched with the participating teachers selected for the study. The criteria for the selection of the administrators were that they must have worked with the program for more than five years. Lastly, the criteria for the selection of the PAR panel members were that they must have served on the PAR panel for at least two years and there should be an even number of teacher participants to administration participants.
The process for sample selection began with a meeting with the program administrator to describe the purpose of my study and my research plan. Then the program coordinator provided me with a list of consulting teachers who currently work with the program, indicating the number of years they have served as consulting teachers. I contacted CTs who had worked with the program for over two years to invite them to participate in the study. Then, from the pool who contacted me, I selected two full time CTs who seemed the most knowledgeable about the PAR program.

Once CTs agreed to participate in the study, I asked them to contact their recent PTs to inquire if they were willing to be part of the study. If CTs were willing to refer me, and their most recent PTs agree to participate, PTs contacted me via email. Since participating teachers who are mandated to participate in PAR are protected by confidentiality, they needed to self-identify in order for them to participate in the study. In order to ensure that the goals of my study were clear to possible participants, I created flyers that described the study and list a clear description of the selection criteria. These flyers were emailed or delivered to PTs by CTs.

This sampling strategy was appropriate because the database that identified this particular population is confidential and cannot be shared with anyone other than the consulting teachers and program staff. Therefore, in order for me to recruit participants, they needed to contact me. Furthermore, since being identified as a teacher who has received a below standard evaluation is a sensitive topic that most PTs are not willing to discuss, I depended on gatekeepers who have already gained PTs’ trust to invite participants on my behalf. This strategy was effective because it allowed for the
recruitment of PTs who were serviced by the CTs who were part of the study; however, five PTs were recruited instead of the six that were originally intended.

In order to recruit members of the PAR panel, I also relied on snowball sampling. I depended on members of the PAR panel who I was familiar with to identify other members to participate in the focus group.

**Ethical Issues**

Qualitative researchers gain trustworthiness by always practicing conformity with “acceptable and competent practices” and “ethical conduct” (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Researchers have a moral obligation to conduct studies in a manner that minimizes the potential of causing harm to all individual who are participating in the study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2003). In order for a qualitative study to be trustworthy, it must be ethically conducted, and have credibility, dependability, and transferability (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008; Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

The PTs and CTs in this study were provided with an Informed Consent Form, which met federal standards for research with human subjects. This form ensured that all thoughts, reflections, and experiences shared during the study remained confidential and that all identifying features of participants and their schools were protected with pseudonyms. It also ensured that the rights of all participants were protected and all possible risks were disclosed. I changed all identifying characteristics of participating teachers, consulting teachers, program administrators, and PAR Panel members, including their names and precise number of years teaching. Participants were informed that they had the option to elect not to answer any of the questions if they do not feel comfortable.
Furthermore, participants were also given the option to not be recorded during the interview. Lastly, participants were allowed to review their transcripts and edit their comments.

This study involved minimal risks for all participants. Although the topic may have caused some discomfort due to its sensitivity, I made every effort to make all participants feel at ease by reminding them that I was there to learn from them. I also assured them that anything that they shared would not affect their employment or record in any way.

Data from interviews and documents that were collected during this study remained secure and confidential. Data including interview transcripts, field notes, and audio recordings were stored in a cloud-based data storage system, which is password protected. Data will be deleted after ten years.

**Instruments and Procedures**

In order to establish credibility in this study several instruments were used to collect data. According to Hendricks (2009), credibility can be enhanced through triangulation, a process of using multiple forms of data when answering research questions. The data collection instruments that were used in this study included separate interview protocols for participating teachers, consulting teachers, program administrators, and PAR panel members. Using interviews as the main method for collecting data enables researchers to grasp a deeper understanding of the participants’ perspectives and to probe to gather further information (Hendricks, 2009). Additionally, the short version of the
Teacher’s Sense of Efficacy Scale was used to get a precise descriptive picture of each PT’s current level of self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk How, 2001).

**Interview Guides**

Interviews are defined as conversations with a purpose (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). The interview approach that I used for this study is semi-structured, using an interview guide. The interview guide is a pre-planned list of questions and probes that need to be addressed (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). In order to gather data from an interview with depth and detail, the interview must be organized to include main questions, follow-up questions, and probes. The main questions were created to answer the research questions and the follow-up questions asked for explanations of themes and concepts that the interviewee had introduced (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Although the interview is guided by the questions, the interviewer is able to move in the direction that the interviewee leads (Bernard, 1994).

I created three interview guides. One interview guide was specifically created for the participating teachers (see Appendix A). This interview guide included 24 questions, which were linked to the research questions and sub-questions. It also included questions that were derived from various aspects of the theoretical framework based on Bandura’s (1977) self-efficacy theory in relation to the different components of PAR. The format of the interview protocol borrowed from the phenomenological interviewing technique where participants shared stories about their lived experiences (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). The protocol began with background questions in order to understand more about the participants in the study as well as their past experiences relating to the topic. Then it elicited specific details about their experience in the program, including support and services that they have received, and their perception of how these support services have
affected their practice. Finally, I concluded with a debrief, where I asked if I missed anything and if they had anything to add (Creswell, 2012).

The second interview guide was specifically created for CTs in order to gather information about the PTs that they supported, specifically how their PTs in the PAR program respond to the services provided (see Appendix B). This guide also elicited responses about how consulting teachers described changes that participating teachers made to their practice and how these changes related to self-efficacy. This interview guide also contained questions which were created using the theoretical framework as a guide and followed a similar structure with background questions, main questions, and a debriefing question (Creswell, 2012).

Additionally, an interview protocol was created for the program administrators (see Appendix C). This interview guide included overall questions about the program, changes that have occurred within the program, and their opinion about how the PAR program affected the PTs’ confidence and teaching practice. It also aimed to elicit responses about possible factors that contribute or hinder a PTs’ ability to improve from the administrative perspective. This administrator interview guide also contained questions related the conceptual framework.

Lastly, a focus group guide (see Appendix D) was used for members of the PAR panel. This focus group guide included questions about the reports that CTs made to the PAR panel. Like the interview protocols, questions that related to the four components of self-efficacy were also addressed.
**Teacher Efficacy Scale**

Researchers use surveys to learn about attitudes, opinions, behaviors, or characteristics of group of participants (Creswell, 2012). In addition to the interview guides, a short form of the Teacher’s Sense of Efficacy Scale, which was developed by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) at Ohio State University, was used as an instrument to capture PTs’ current level of teaching self-efficacy (see Appendix D). This teacher efficacy scale was used to create a self-efficacy portrait of each PT that was being interviewed in terms of classroom management, instructional practices and student engagement (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). The Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale was tested and found to be reasonably valid, reliable, and a useful tool for researchers to determine teacher self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Each of the survey questions aligned with one of the four components of Self-Efficacy according to Bandura (1977) and it addressed variables that affect teaching quality.

**Data Collection**

In qualitative research, multiple methods of data collection are used to provide for triangulation, reliability, and accuracy of information (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Several data collection procedures were used for this study. First, nine semi-structured, in-depth interviews with five participating teachers, two consulting teachers, and two program administrator were conducted. A short 12-item self-efficacy survey was completed by PT participants as part of the interview process. Also, a focus group with members of the PAR panel was conducted. Additionally, in order to better understand the processes of PAR, a document review was conducted of the evaluation tool that is used by the program as well as program flyers and handouts.
Interviews

Interview appointments were scheduled at a convenient location away from the district office or at a school site, such as a coffee shop in an area close to the interview participants. The interview environment was set up ahead of time in a location where noise was at a minimum so that we were both able to hear each other and surrounding noise did not interfere with the recording of the interviews. I asked participants to choose a location that was most comfortable for them. Interviews were scheduled after school hours; therefore, no more than two were scheduled in one day. The interviews lasted about an hour or an hour and a half. Interviews were recorded using a digital recording device after participants gave consent. In addition, I made sure to take notes on unspoken data such as facial expressions, body language, etc.

In order to put participants at ease, the interview began with an initial greeting and introduction. I explained my research goal and assured them that I was not there to judge them or evaluate their teaching practice. I introduced myself to participants as a student and a researcher who is interested in learning about processes for veteran teacher professional development. Before asking questions, I informed all participants that I was there to learn from them because I wanted to find ways to improve programs like PAR that work with experienced teachers. I acknowledged the extensive amount of experience that they bring to the table so that they would feel validated. Then, I reviewed the informed consent form with the participants. Once the informed consent form was signed, I began the interview.
I started the interview with questions that put the participants at ease such as, “What is your favorite part about teaching?” Lastly, I also made sure to smile and nod periodically to increase their comfort level (Glesne, 2011). I began with a grand tour question, which was an open-ended question that allowed participants to talk about something that they know well (Glesne, 2011). I asked main questions and follow-up questions in order to probe for more information (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Once all questions were asked, I thanked the participants for their time and provided them with a gift card to show my appreciation. I reminded participants that they can look over the interview transcriptions and they were allowed to make any changes, if needed within 30 days of the interview via e-mail.

The second data collection procedure was one-to-one interviews with two PAR CTs. These interviews were conducted at the district office in an interview room after office hours. These rooms were available to central office staff as long as they were reserved ahead of time. I asked an office assistant to reserve the rooms with at least two days’ notice. Interviews took place on Tuesdays since that is a day where consulting teachers are at the district headquarters and are not in the field. These interviews lasted approximately one hour. Like the PT interviews, the CT interviews were recorded using a digital recording device. In addition, reflective memos were written for each interview.

The CT interviews began with a similar greeting as the PT interviews and a quick explanation of my role as a student and researcher. I explained my research goal and assured them that I was not there to evaluate their effectiveness. Then I provided an introduction to the protocol as well as the informed consent form. At the conclusion of the interview, I thanked participants and provided them with a gift card as a token of my
appreciation. I reminded participants that I would allow them to look over the interview transcriptions and they would be able to make any changes.

Finally, the interviews with the program administrators were also conducted in meeting rooms at the central office after work hours. Since the program administrators and I had a relationship, there was no need for introductions. Instead, I reminded them of the purpose of the study and emphasized that I was interested in learning as much as I can about an effective processes for veteran teachers. At the conclusion of the interview, I also provided the program administrators with a gift card to thank them for their time.

**Focus Group**

In addition to the interviews with PTs, CTs, and the program administrators, one focus group was conducted with members of the PAR Panel. A focus group collects data though group interaction lead by the researcher (Morgan, 1996). The use of focus groups was a helpful way to learn about the reports that CTs make about PTs in order to learn about how PTs change their practices after participating in the program from the perspective of a PAR panel member. The reason that I chose to use focus groups with PAR panel members was because there were fewer confidentiality issues and focus groups sometimes can be more productive than individual interviews because of the synergy that is created among a group of individuals. It is also a more efficient way of collecting data form various participants in less time (Morgan, 1996).

**Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale**

The administration of the Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale, which includes 12 Likert-scale questions about aspects of teaching, was conducted with each PT during the interview session. The Likert-scale ranging from (1) “Nothing” to (9) “A great Deal”
measured each PT’s teaching self-efficacy in relation to how much they could do to affect student engagement, instruction, and classroom management. The purpose of this efficacy scale was to create a self-efficacy portrait to supplement the data gathered from the interviews. PTs were asked questions about their responses to the survey in order to get a deeper understanding of their sense of current self-efficacy.

**Document Review**

In order to gain a more holistic view of the phenomenon being researched, I supplemented the interviews with a review of pertinent documents used by the program such as the Teaching and Learning Framework (TLF), which is the basis for the Stull evaluation. The TLF is the current document that is used by the BCSD in order to set expectations and identify practices for effective teaching. The review of this document provided a picture of the process that PAR uses for evaluating teachers. In addition, I reviewed pamphlets and flyers that were created by the PAR program in order to grasp an overview of the program. I also reviewed the program website for additional information. The rationale for reviewing program documents and website was to get an understanding about the process that this program uses to support their PTs.

**Data Analysis**

**Preliminary Data Analysis**

During the process of data collection and interview transcription, I began early data analysis. This involved constantly reflecting on the data as it was collected and tried to create possible codes that were based on the theoretical literature, empirical studies, and the research questions of the study (Glesne, 2011). The theoretical framework on Bandura’s sources of self-efficacy, which are mastery experiences, vicarious experiences,
verbal persuasion and psychological factors, represents some of the theoretical codes that were predetermined. Reflections were documented using a field journal where I noted possible themes, analytical memos, and concepts or issues that need further exploration (Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

As I transcribed the interview data, I simultaneously wrote analytical memos as new concepts, ideas, possible codes, or new questions about the study emerged so that these thoughts were maintained and not forgotten (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Although the survey results yielded data in numeric form, statistical analysis was not conducted due to the small sample size. Instead, the compiled descriptive data from the survey added to the qualitative data that was gathered from the interviews.

**Qualitative Analysis: Coding and Thematic Data Analysis**

Once qualitative data is collected and organized, researchers read through the data line by line to assign a label or code to text segments (Creswell, 2012). These codes are used to organize data into chunks of categorized information so that the researcher can later assign chunks to themes that relate to the theoretical framework and research questions (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Coding occurred more than once because it will allow for redefining of categories or adding new ones (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). As I coded my data I compiled a draft list of potential codes. Then I read though the remaining data, carefully assigning codes from the code list and added to the list as new codes emerged. Then I categorized the codes from the list into different concepts. In order to chunk information more clearly, I used different colors to make the different chunks and concepts visually separate.
After the coding process, I began the process of thematic data analysis. Thematic data analysis is a process of closely reviewing data for themes and patterns (Glesne, 2011). Using concepts that were gathered from the literature and the conceptual framework, as well as analytical memos and data displays comparing similarities and differences across cases; I examined and compared the data so that patterns and categories would begin to emerge. Data displays may include matrices, graphs, flowcharts, and other visual representations (Glesne, 2011). Interpretation is the process of using the data and themes to draw conclusions about the study by presenting the information through the lens of the theoretical framework to tell a story (Peshkin, 2000; Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

**Study Validity**

In qualitative research, validity refers to the degree that the results have trustworthiness and there is confidence in the findings (Hendricks, 2009). Validity can be defined in several ways. This includes truth-value validity, transferability, consistency, neutrality, and outcome validity. In order to increase validity, several strategies were utilized. Truth-value and neutrality validity was increased by the use of member checks, triangulation, peer debriefing and accuracy of data recording. In order to increase outcome validity, data was thoroughly analyzed and results were presented clearly (Hendricks, 2009).

Credibility refers to how the author accurately portrays the perceptions of the participants by describing how they actually think, act, and feel (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2003). In this study, credibility was enhanced in several ways. Triangulation was provided by including multiple data sources. The audio taping and verbatim transcription of interviews also added credibility (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2003). In order to ensure
accuracy of interview transcripts, member checks were conducted. Furthermore, in order to control for bias, I monitored my own subjectivity by keeping a journal throughout the research process.

This study also ensured dependability. Dependability refers to the degree that one can track the process and procedures that are used to collect and interpret (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2003). A study is dependable if it is constant over time and if the methods can be duplicated by researchers (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This study gained dependability by thoroughly describing the methods and procedures that were used. This allowed other researchers to see a clear picture of the research methods that were conducted. Interview protocols and other artifacts are also included (see Appendices A-E).

Transferability refers to the ability to apply findings from the context of the study to learn valuable lessons in other similar contexts (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2003). Transferability was provided in this study by providing detailed description about the context and background in order to offer the element of a shared experience (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2003).

**Role of the Researcher**

Since I have worked with the PAR program as a professional development workshop presenter for the last two years, I experienced some advantages as well as some disadvantages. I previously developed a good rapport with the gatekeepers of the program; as a result, they were willing to provide me with access to some of the participants in this study. The challenging aspect about working closely with this program was that PTs may have felt that I worked with the program and may have not provided me with completely
honest answers if they felt negatively about the program. I needed to make sure that I established rapport with these teachers so that they felt comfortable and were willing to share information. More importantly, I needed to make sure that I built trust with these teachers, ensuring them that I would hold their responses in complete confidence and present the information they provided with honesty and integrity.

I held several roles as I conducted this study. My main roles were researcher, doctoral student, and education professional. Since I was asked by the PAR program to deliver periodic workshops about teaching English Learners, I also played a role as a professional development provider for some of the participants in the study. As a central office administrator for the District Intern program, I was an advocate for ensuring that quality teachers are placed in every classroom. Finally, as a primary investigator, I also played the roles of advocate, learner, potential reformer, and writer. I managed my roles as a researcher by building trust and rapport with each participant. I emphasized that I was there to learn from them as they were the expert of their own story. I was open about the purpose of the study and was clear that this study will give a voice to a population of teachers with a wealth of experience in order to learn more about how to meet their specific needs.

**Researcher Bias**

Given my role as a central office administrator, I made several assumptions about the quality of teaching for the target population of teachers that could have potentially affected my study. In working as a professional development provider with several teachers who have been referred to PAR, I noticed that some of the participating teachers did not feel they needed to change their practice because they have been successful for so many years.
I also noticed that some teachers show minimal improvement after receiving intensive support. In my experiences working with several veteran teachers, many veteran teachers have low expectations and poor attitudes about their students. They always seemed challenging to work with because they have lost trust in administrators and in the system. I was concerned about the possibility that veteran teachers may have reached a point in their career where they are defeated, burnt out, and unmotivated. I believe that a good teacher must have high expectations for all students and although some students may have more challenges than others, we should never stop pushing them toward success. Therefore, when I hear a negative comment about students’ abilities or comments that express low expectations, I quickly become defensive and make negative assumptions about this teacher.

These biases and assumptions had the potential to affect my findings and the reaction to participants. Therefore, I needed to remain cognizant of my biases while I was interacting with the PTs who were participants in this study. When I heard teachers place the blame on students by making statements such as, “These students do not want to learn,” or “Students at my school are not interested in school,” my biases were further supported as I became vexed. In qualitative research, it is crucial for the researcher to identify his or her role and his or her subjectivity (Peshkin, 1988). Subjectivity will unquestionably influence the findings in the investigation; however, the level of impact depends on how much the researcher responds to his or her subjectivity. If researchers recognize how their roles affect their ability to be objective, they are more capable of monitoring to what level the effects exist. Peshkin (1988) states that researcher can
divulge to readers where their own qualities have shaped the information gathered though the data.

Therefore, I utilized several strategies to counter this potential effect of my subjectivity. First of all, I made a conscious effort to control my facial expressions and body language during the interviews, making sure that I was not leading the responses or showing my emotions when I reacted negatively. In order to build trust with participants, I emphasized that the purpose of my study was to learn from them and not to judge or place blame on them. With this understanding, they may have been more willing to open up to me and be honest in their responses. If participants sensed that I was an advocate for them, they may have viewed me as their friend and not their enemy.

Furthermore, there were also effects of the case on the researcher (Glesne, 1999). Although I was going into the study with some prior knowledge on the topic, I needed to make sure that I was open to discovering what my participants were sharing with me. I needed to make sure that I was not only reaching conclusions that aligned with my preconceived beliefs but were open to themes and interpretations that may have been different than what I initially perceive. In other words, I needed to make sure that I was open to emerging themes from the data that was gathered.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to examine the processes and systems of support of a Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) Program in a large urban district. Five PAR Participating Teachers, two PAR Consulting Teachers and two PAR program administrators that met the necessary criteria were selected for in-depth
interviews. The primary methods of data collection in this qualitative case study were interviews. In addition, there was a focus group with PAR Panel members, document review, and a short survey, the Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale, given to all PTs in the study. Qualitative data was analyzed by coding, or sorting significant pieces of data into categories. Data was presented as descriptive narratives around the four factors of self-efficacy in the conceptual framework and the research questions that informed the study. The findings of the study will be presented in Chapter 4, followed by a discussion of the findings, implications for practice, and suggestions for further study, presented in Chapter 5.
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the processes and systems of support of a Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) Program in a large urban district. Specifically, the goal was to explore how the program’s support mechanisms provide the conditions for teacher growth and improvement in self-efficacy. This study was guided by the following research question: How does a Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program provide the conditions for teacher growth and self-efficacy among veteran teachers who have received a below-standard performance evaluation?

This chapter reports findings based on semi-structured interviews with five Participating Teachers (PTs) from elementary and secondary schools, the two Consulting Teachers (CTs) who work with them and two PAR administrators who oversee the organization of the program. Data was also collected from a focus group of two members of the PAR Panel. The PAR Panel governs policies and procedures for the program in accordance with the state Education Code parameters and local teachers’ union Bargaining Unit agreements; it also oversees PAR implementation and hearing reports about Participating Teacher progress. Data was also gathered through review of documents that were provided by the program’s administrator.

The theoretical framework that guided this study is Bandura’s theory of teacher self-efficacy, which has been consistently linked to teacher quality and teacher effectiveness (Bandura, 1977; Jamil & Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness, 2012; Putman, 2012). Components of self-efficacy include mastery experiences or performance
accomplishments, vicarious or observed experiences, social persuasion or performance feedback, and physiological factors or attitude and motivation (see Chapter 2). As I coded the data using ATLAS.ti software, key terms such as praise, feedback, observation cycles, feelings of frustration, the role of trust, and unsatisfactory evaluations appeared most frequently. As I grouped these concepts, most were easily categorized into the four major factors that contribute to expectations of self-efficacy, according to Bandura (1977). As I further analyzed the data and wrote analytical memos, new themes also emerged from important quotes and influenced my data analysis that was constantly evolving.

Findings from this chapter will be presented in the following order. It will begin with a description of background information on the program and the study participants. Then the Sense of Self-Efficacy Scale results for PTs who were interviewed will be provided. Following that, findings from interviews and focus groups will be presented though the lens of the conceptual framework, Bandura’s four factors of self-efficacy. Lastly, data about how PTs changed their teaching practice will be described. Within most of the sections, findings will begin with the perceptions of program administrators and Consulting Teachers since they represent the program’s intentions; this is then compared with PTs’ reactions.

Background on the PAR Program and Study Participants

Groups Serviced by PAR

PAR provides services to three types of teachers in BCSD. The first group of teachers that are serviced are permanent (tenured) teachers who are contractually mandated to participate in PAR due to receiving a below-standard Stull evaluation, or a Notice of Unsatisfactory Service, known as an UNSAT, from their principal. This group of teachers
makes up about 90% of PAR PTs, according to the program administrator. Mandated teachers exit the program when their end of year Stull evaluation overall meets standards according to the Teaching and Learning Framework. Additionally, one of the members stated that PAR recently implemented a new rule that a PT cannot participate in PAR for more than two years in a four year period.

The second group of teachers that is served by PAR consists of non-permanent (probationary) teachers. Priority is given to those who are assigned to schools with the greatest needs. A very small number PTs fall into this category because most non-permanent teachers in the district are already receiving support from induction and internship programs. The third group, which makes up about 9% of PTs, is comprised of teachers who volunteer to work with a Consulting Teacher or take workshops with the goal of improving their teaching practice.

**Services Provided by PAR**

A review of program pamphlets, flyers, and web pages revealed that the main service this PAR program provides is individualized intensive support for PTs from a highly trained Consulting Teacher. Early in the year, PTs and CTs collaboratively work to establish performance goals that are based on areas where the PT needs improvement, as indicated by their administrator on the Stull evaluation. PTs and CTs have planning conferences about once per week. CTs observe PTs two to three times per week and take scripted notes about what teachers are saying and doing in the classroom. Following the series of observations, PTs and CTs engage in reflective conversations where they discuss the scripted data gathered by the CT, as well as student achievement data. A PT works
with a CT for the length of one school year. If a PT returns for a second year of PAR, they are assigned a new CT.

Other PAR services include a series of professional development workshops that are free and open to all teachers in the district. PTs are encouraged to participate in professional development opportunities that are aligned to their areas of focus. Some workshops that are offered include: Building Strong Connections to Support Student Success, Interactive Direct Instruction, Classroom Management Plus, Interactive Student Notebooks, Literacy Strategies in the Common Core, The Power of Presence, and the ABCs of Student Engagement. According to the pamphlet that was published by PAR, PTs are allowed to observe “model” teachers; however, as we will see, this practice no longer occurs. Lastly, PAR CTs provide PTs with access to a library of resources and instructional materials.

This program is unique from other PAR programs in several ways. First of all, it is jointly governed by the teachers union and the district’s appointed representatives. Members of the PAR Panel consist of 60% teachers and 40% administrators. They are responsible for overseeing, training, and evaluating Consulting Teachers to ensure that the vision, goals, and policies of the program are implemented. They also review CTs’ reports about PT progress and monitor and ensure that adequate records are maintained. Finally at the end of each school year, the PAR Panel determines and submits findings to the Board of Education regarding the progress of Participating Teachers who are mandated to participate in PAR.
Unlike other PAR programs across the United States that can be used to get rid of incompetent teachers, this PAR program does not result in the dismissal of teachers. According to the PAR administrator who has worked with the program since its onset in 2000, the district’s teacher evaluation system and the teachers’ participation in PAR are “parallel processes.” This means that “PAR does not determine whether a teacher keeps their job or not; PAR’s role is to provide guidance and assistance in the areas of instruction.” The PAR Panel does, however, submit to the Board of Education findings reported by CT regarding the progress of teachers who are mandated to participate in the program. The Board of Education uses information from PAR reports to make decisions about employment of these teachers; however, according to the program administrator, the Board of Education rarely moves for dismissal of teachers.

Also, unlike other PAR programs that were addressed in Chapter 2, the degree of improvement that a below-standard teacher makes while in the program does not determine whether they keep their job or not. “It is up to the [site] administrator and HR to take action on an individual that they’re moving for dismissal,” according to the program administrator. Although the processes of peer assistance and review and teacher evaluation are parallel, PAR’s intention is that if teachers make improvements by working with their CT, it will reflect in the evaluation that is conducted by their principal. If teachers have a successful Stull evaluation, they will exit the PAR program. If teachers receive another below standard Stull evaluation, they will continue working with PAR for up to two consecutive years. “It’s not about saving teachers’ jobs; it’s about ensuring high quality instruction in the classrooms,” the administrator said. She stated that by keeping this goal as “front and center, everyone works for the goal, and the politics leave the
room.” In other words, this program is not like other PAR programs that have been used as a means to dismiss poor teachers.

CTs do not report any information about PTs to PTs’ site administrators; therefore, teacher evaluations are based on site administrator observations and student performance outcomes, as the PAR program administrator explained:

The [site] administration is there to evaluate, so we don’t provide administration with any information, positive or negative, that will influence their evaluation. But what we hope is that when they [site administrators] go into the room, they see changed practice, that they alone, based on their own evidence, will see if a teacher’s improved or not.

These program policies raise some questions and concerns. With the minimal number of observations that a principal actually does in a year in this district, it would seem likely that administrators are bound to miss the changes in practice that the teachers in the program are making. Also, it may be possible that PTs show signs of improvement, but not on all five standards of the Teaching and Learning Framework used in the Stull evaluation. As a result, an overall improvement may not reflect on the Stull evaluation, which may result in the teacher receiving another below-standard evaluation.

**Participant Characteristics**

Table 4.1 below describes characteristics for the participants of this study. As can be seen, both program administrators who were interviewed were in their 60s, had worked with the program over ten years, and retired shortly after the interviews. Both Consulting Teachers worked as full time CTs with PAR for approximately two years. These CTs
provided services to PTs who were interviewed in this study. All PTs were veteran teachers with teaching experience that ranged between 10 and 15 years. All but one PT were white females in their 40s. Richard was the only male PT, who was also in his 40s. Shirley, who was the oldest PT, was in her 60s and came into teaching and had a previous career as an attorney. PAR Panel members in the study consisted of one male high school English teacher and one female principal.

**Table 4.1**

*Study Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Years in position</th>
<th>Subject Taught/Grade Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>PAR Administrator</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carol</td>
<td>PAR Administrator</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen</td>
<td>Consulting Teacher (CT)</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raquel</td>
<td>Consulting Teacher (CT)</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>English High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terri</td>
<td>Participating Teacher (PT)</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shirley</td>
<td>Participating Teacher (PT)</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Math High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nancy</td>
<td>Participating Teacher (PT)</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Kindergarten 4th Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
<td>Teacher (PT-Volunteer)</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard</td>
<td>Participating Teacher (PT)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Math/Science Middle School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manuel</td>
<td>PAR Panel Member (Teacher)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>English High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracy</td>
<td>PAR Panel Member (Admin)</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Principal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* L=Latino  A=Asian American  W=White  F=Female  M=Male
Sense of Efficacy Scale Results

All PTs in this study participated in a short survey called the Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale, which was developed by Tshannen-Moran and Woolfolk (2001). For the purpose of this study the short version was used as part of the interview so the survey would not prolong the interview too much. The questions of this survey were categorized by the authors into three subgroups including: classroom management (1-4), the ability to motivate students (5-7), and instructional strategies (7-11). The last question, question number 12 that was about assisting families, did not seem to fit in the other categories. As described in Chapter 3, this survey was used to create a self-efficacy portrait of each PT interviewed in terms of classroom management, instructional strategies and student engagement; however, the sample was too small for statistical analysis. Overall, most PTs reported a higher sense of self-efficacy than anticipated since self-efficacy is associated with teacher effectiveness and the teachers in this study were struggling teachers. All but one reported a sense of self-efficacy that was higher than 6, which indicates they felt they had quite a bit sense of teaching self-efficacy. As we look at the categories, PTs reported a lower sense of self-efficacy in classroom management and in motivating students than in instructional strategies. This seemed very consistent with what CTs reported PTs selected as goals and focus areas. According to the program administrator, classroom management and connecting with students was the number area where PTs needed improvement. Interview data across the five PTs also corroborated the lower sense of self-efficacy in classroom management and ability to motivate students. Instructional strategies had a slightly higher average.
Table 4.2

*Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale Results for PTs: How Much Can You Do To . . .?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Terri</th>
<th>Richard</th>
<th>Nancy</th>
<th>Elizabeth (Volunteer)</th>
<th>Shirley</th>
<th>Item Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Control disruptive behavior</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Calm disruptive students</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Create Classroom management systems</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Get students to follow class rules</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Motivate students</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Help students believe they can do well in school</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Help students to value learning</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Craft good questions</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Use a variety of assessments</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Implement a variety of strategies</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Provide alternative explanations</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Assist families</td>
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PT Mean: 8.25 7.75 7.25 6.25 4.33 --

*Note: 1-2 Nothing, 3-4 Very Little, 5-6 Some Influence, 7-8 Quite a Bit, 9-10 A Great Deal*
Upon analysis of each PT’s self-efficacy portrait, some interesting trends emerged. Terri, a 15 year veteran teacher who was 43 years old, had the highest sense of efficacy according to the survey. She scored a mean of 8.25 which indicated that she felt that she had quite a bit of influence on student outcomes. Terri was supported by Karen as her CT. Interestingly, Karen reported that many of her PTs had “delusional efficacy.” According to Karen, “Delusional efficacy to me is a person who thinks everything is fine. They don’t want to work on themselves.” She described Terri as having “high efficacy [quote marks in air] because she believes she is doing everything correctly. However, her consciousness [of her teaching ability] is low, because she is not a strong teacher at all.” Thus, when Terri reported that she had a strong sense of self-efficacy; it may not be indicative to her actual teaching-efficacy, it may just be what she reported on the survey.

Richard, a 12-year veteran teacher who was 40 years old, had the second highest sense of efficacy. He scored a mean of 7.75 which indicated that, like Terri, he felt he had quite a bit of influence on student progress. Richard’s CT, Raquel, had similar comments to Karen. She said that several of her PTs “like to sound like they are confident because they are not.” In other words, she stated, “I think they want to sound like know what they’re doing because they don’t.” However, this was not the case for Richard. According to Raquel, Richard had made “a great deal of improvement” since she has been working with him. She attributed this to his ability to be highly self-reflective. She said that “he is one of the most honest PTs” she has ever worked with. He had opened up to her this year and was really taking his teaching seriously. When Richard compared his self-efficacy to last year, before he entered the PAR program, he stated that he would not have rated
himself as high at that time. “It’s higher now because now I can see what I am doing is affecting the students.”

Nancy, who has been teaching for ten years, had the third highest sense of efficacy. She scored a mean of 7.25 which indicated that she also felt that she had quite a bit of influence on student progress. Nancy was also supported by Karen and according to Karen was struggling as a teacher so her high rating was surprising. Interestingly, Nancy stated that she rated herself the way she did because, “Well, I know I can do something about those things [on the survey], but sometimes I just don’t know how do it.” Thus, it seems she may have misunderstood the question.

Elizabeth, who was the only teacher who volunteered for services, had a mean sense of efficacy score of 6.2, which indicated she felt she had some influence on improving student achievement but she was definitely on the lower end of the spectrum. Elizabeth seemed to be very open to the process, unlike other PTs. She was very self-reflective in her interview, and openly admitted she struggled with many teaching areas of teaching. Furthermore, her CT Raquel also stated that Elizabeth was “more open to the process than her other PTs” and that she “has the most accurate view of her teaching practice.” In this case, when PTs are open to the process and reflective, the survey may be a more accurate self-efficacy portrait.

Shirley, who was 64 and in her second career with only ten years of teaching experience, had the lowest sense of efficacy. She had a mean score that was much lower than the others of 4.3. This extremely low score indicated that she felt she had very little influence on her students’ success. Shirley’s PT said that she was one of “her most difficult
cases.” Not because she is hard to work with, but because she knows that there is not a lot she could do to change her practice. According to her CT, “Shirley has given up on herself and her students.”

While the Sense of Efficacy survey provided a partial picture of PTs’ self-efficacy, interview data provided a more detailed and rich description of how PAR’s support systems contributed to each of the components of self-efficacy in Bandura’s model. The first component that will be examined is mastery experiences.

**Mastery Experiences: “I am Eventually Going to get it Right”**

As stated by Bandura (1977), an individual’s ability to perform a task is influenced by past positive and negative experiences with similar tasks. If teachers are successful in a previous lesson or teaching assignment, they are more likely to feel confident in their ability to repeat this success in the future. Other aspects of mastery are a teacher’s ability to reflect on a past experience and take action. This section describes teachers’ past negative experiences, self-reflection, and opportunities within PAR to build mastery by implementation of new teaching strategies that are recommended by their CT or that they learn from professional development.

**Negative Evaluations of Teachers’ Past Performance**

As stated previously, the main reason that PTs come to PAR in the first place is because they have had previous negative teaching evaluations. These feelings of failure and ineptness, for most, have resulted in negative teaching evaluations. Even the one PT who volunteered for service, expressed that her past teaching experiences was unsuccessful. Findings suggest that PTs’ negative teaching experiences have made it
challenging for them to improve their teaching practice since they may come to the program with a low sense of self-efficacy.

The Stull process is the official evaluation system for teachers in the Big City School District (BCSD). This district has a multiple measure evaluation system which includes student performance outcomes; however, it is mainly based on classroom observations by a trained administrator or another certificated professional as a second observer. Teachers are evaluated using a rubric or continuum called the Teaching and Learning Framework. The rubric describes four levels of practice. These levels are Ineffective, Developing, Effective, and Highly Effective. As stated previously, teachers who are mandated to participate in PAR are teachers who have had an overall rating of ineffective or a Notice of Unsatisfactory Service, due to below-standard teaching skills. Ninety percent of PTs in PAR and four out of five PTs in this study were mandated to participate in PAR as a result of their negative teaching evaluation. By definition, they were referred to PAR because their most recent teaching experiences resulted in an overall below-standard Stull evaluation or a Notice of Unsatisfactory Service, or “UNSAT.”

These experiences with negative evaluations may have adversely affected their self-efficacy, which can make PTs unapproachable and difficult to work with initially. Both CTs in the study revealed that during the initial meetings with PTs, the PTs appeared bitter, angry, and apathetic due to the fact that they were mandated to report to PAR. Karen described that PT’s “feel like they've been a little bit beaten up by the system, so they don't have any more confidence in themselves.” Karen also shared that that one of her most difficult PTs had an initial assumption that Karen would judge her and report negative results to her principal rather than provide her with support:
She really saw it as, “You're here because of the principal. You're here because the principal gave me a below-standard evaluation. You're here to judge me. You're here to criticize me, you’re here to evaluate me, you’re here to report on me”… and that’s really what they believe. They don't believe that I'm there to support [them].

Both CTs described PTs’ confidence as being so low as a result of being identified as an “Ineffective Teacher” that at times the PTs refused to meet with them. In the beginning of the school year PTs and CTs are matched. CTs schedule informal meetings with PTs in order to meet them, discuss the program, and establish rapport. Raquel, another second year CT, described how she had to “chase” one of her PTs:

I mean that [chase] in the literal sense and also in the figurative sense, where I had a [PT] teacher run out of the room when she saw me. She would hide in her car when she knew I was coming or she would just disappear, so I would kind of look for her. Then I would call her and e-mail her and leave her messages. Any which form, I didn't send her smoke signals, that was about the only thing I didn't do to try to meet with her.

Raquel also shared that while this was one of the most extreme cases, “chasing” is a common practice early on in the PAR process.

PT resistance to the PAR process was a common theme in the data. For example, Georgia, one of the program administrators, referred to this resistance period as “wonking. She described “wonking” as the period when a teacher is complaining about being identified as an ineffective teacher and needing to report to PAR. According to Georgia, the PT might say:
“Willie the administrator doesn’t like me, you know. I get the bad kids. I wish you would go next door and see how good they [students in other classes] are compared to mine. You know, that one’s worse [teacher], I don’t care what you say; I’m going to do it my way because I have been teaching for over 20 years.”

CTs and program administrators agreed that PTs have low self-confidence or self-efficacy as a result of their unsatisfactory teaching evaluation. Karen added that PTs become discouraged when they have been teaching successfully for a long period of time and then are suddenly deemed an ineffective teacher: “They have been working well for so long doing what they thought was good teaching, and then a new principal comes along and gives them an unsatisfactory evaluation.” Similarly, Georgia, the program administrator, stated “that a lot of times, it’ll be a new principal who comes in and then it’s sort of like, ‘Well I was fine until this new principal came.’”

Additionally, Raquel reported that some PTs lose confidence once they find out that their principal is going to give them an “ineffective” Stull evaluation. They give up on the possibility of being an effective teacher, which inhibits the improvement process:

I think at the beginning of the year they seem to have started out strong, and by strong I mean dedicated. . . . It's really bad right now; it's the worst I've seen the entire year. I just had a conversation with one [PT] on Friday, and I said, "You're not teaching. I don't see you teaching, this is very different than what I saw at the beginning of the year.” The teacher said, "It's over. The principal already came in here six times with second observers. It's over." I said, "Well, you've got seven weeks left, and the kids are still in here." "Yeah, but it's over."
Thus, these negative experiences seem to perpetuate more negative experiences. In other words, the prospect of receiving an UNSAT from their principal seems to have the effect of undoing the work that the PT has done with the CT. Could it be that parallel processes of teacher evaluation and inhibit the growth of PTs? Even PTs who reported high self-efficacy on the survey seemed affected by the below-standard Stull evaluation. For example, Terri, whose overall self-efficacy score was 8.25 said:

I don’t know what it is, I mean I feel like I’m doing everything right then he [principal] gives me a note telling me that I need to engage the students more, I need to talk to them more respectfully. I feel like I’m being respectful and they are engaged so I can’t figure out how to give him what he wants because I’m just so frustrated.

In the interview, this PT often expressed that that she was confident about her teaching ability; however, once the subject was brought up about her teaching evaluation from the principal and she recalled being told that what she was doing was wrong, she felt discouraged.

Terri initially appeared to be a confident teacher who seemed to want to give the impression that she was not affected by being referred to PAR, but as time went on during the interview, she began to open up and let down her barriers. She shared her fear that the principal would give her another “UNSAT” despite the fact that she had made improvement. Then she pulled out a printed report from her most recent teaching evaluation. She showed off the several areas that indicated improvements; she stated with pride, “See I improved in all of these areas that I set for my goals.” Since she was being
assessed on so many other components other than her focus areas; overall, it was still considered an overall unsatisfactory evaluation. She scored ineffective in areas such as creating an environment of respect and rapport, use of reflection to inform future instruction, and teacher interaction with students. When asked if she thought she would have a more successful teaching evaluation this year, without hesitation she replied, “No!” At that moment Terri’s body language indicated that she may have felt uncomfortable and she no longer seemed interested in participating in the interview as she continued to answer with single word responses. How can a teacher with such a high self-efficacy score appear so confident one moment and so defeated the next? Perhaps this is what the CT Karen was talking about with her term “delusional efficacy.”

Similarly, the PAR Panel members reported that most PTs are extremely resistant to the PAR process as a result of being referred due to unsatisfactory evaluations. Tracy, the PAR Panel administrator member, said that many PTs “are just not going to be open to the process and they don't want it no matter what you do.” They do not feel like anything they do will make a difference so “sometimes they don't sign the agreement [to participate in the program] and sometimes they sign and they say, ‘I signed but I’m not really going to participate.’”

As we have seen, the previous negative experiences with teaching evaluations that PTs have had prior to PAR continue to resurface and affect their progress while they are in the PAR program. Thus, PAR CTs face the challenge of not only ensuring that PTs have opportunities for mastery experiences as they try to improve their teaching but of counteracting the negative experiences that PTs have had previously. Additionally,
teachers’ ability to reflect on their teaching experience may also be a factor that contributes to mastery experiences.

**Self-Reflection on Teaching Practice**

PAR program leaders value PTs having the opportunity to reflect on their teaching practice. Self-reflection is a regular practice in PAR observation cycles. According to the program administrators and CTs, PTs are observed several times a week by their CT and their CT collects observation evidence. At the weekly conference, PTs get a chance to reflect on their teaching practice. CTs and PAR administrators felt that the more willing and honest PTs are about reflecting on their teaching practice, the more successful they are in improving their teaching practice. According to Carol, the top PAR administrator, the ability to be self-reflective leads to the greatest amount of growth. She stated:

> The most effective Participating Teachers we find who are the most reflective…They are the teachers who recognize where they are and where they need to be… We see that attitude, participation, and the ability to reflect has the most positive impact on a teacher's improvement.

Similarly, Manuel the PAR Panel member, heavily emphasized the importance of self-reflection. He stated that one of the strengths of the PAR program is guiding PTs through self-reflection by helping them collect data about their teaching practice:

> PTs are guided through seeing, realistically, what's happening in their classroom, and making their own professional judgments and evaluation. That helps immensely, because then not only does it fix the problem at the moment, it lends itself to a more ongoing form of constant self-improvement, self-reflection.
Furthermore, like Carol, Manuel felt that the ability to self-reflect makes the difference between an effective and non-effective teacher. He stated that self-reflection is “what makes the difference between people who continue to grow in the profession and the people who don’t.”

Similarly, CT Raquel reported that the teachers who were able to recognize their own strengths and weaknesses made the biggest improvement but sometimes teachers have difficulty with self-reflection. She stated, “Without that awareness it's so hard to improve at anything… Sometimes they are not aware so that's when videotape [of PTs teaching] becomes very helpful because then they can actually see themselves.” Karen, the other CT, agreed that “taking them through that self-reflection process is probably more important than [them] actually watching other teachers.” She also said that many PTs have “inaccurate views of themselves.” When asking them to reflect on a lesson, sometimes PTs say that they are doing a good job, which is often inaccurate. When PTs are unable to accurately reflect on their practice, CTs ask them to base their assertion on the evidence that was provided to them.

Interestingly, only one of the five PTs seemed to embrace the self-reflective process. Richard, a PT with one of the higher efficacy scores, was very candid about the fact that he needed to improve. He realized that he is not finished growing as a teacher and although he has setbacks, he knows he is making continual improvements:

I’ll have good days and bad days. I chart my successes on that chart over there to help me reflect on my teaching. I started at the zero mark… As long as you're going up, that's good but obviously, there's going to be ups and downs. . . . You're not
there and you’ll probably never be there but as long as you are going up [improving] you’re doing good.

Richard was extremely positive and felt that having his CT help him reflect on his lessons, has helped him to make changes to his practice. The other PTs did not indicate that they felt that self-reflection was beneficial to their teaching practice.

PTs are guided though the self-reflective process in order to ensure they have an accurate view of their teaching practice. Through the use of questioning and cognitive coaching, CTs assist PTs in ensuring that they learn from their prior experiences so they can continue to improve. In addition to having opportunities to reflect on their teaching practice, PTs are also provided with opportunities to practice mastery of effective teaching strategies.

**Opportunities to Practice Mastery**

As stated above, PAR provides free professional development workshops to all teachers in the district and PTs are encouraged by CTs to attend workshops that are related to their individual focus areas. Following the workshops, PTs and CTs meet and discuss the strategies from the workshop that CTs can expect to observe PTs implementing in a subsequent observation. Administrator Carol took pride in the program’s professional development (PD) model because CTs have the chance to follow up by observing PTs and assess the level of implementation:

Now, what works with our PD is that when our PTs take our workshops, we get to see if it is implemented, and yes, we have our consulting teachers go to the PD, so they know what to expect so they can provide appropriate feedback to PTs.
According to Richard, he and his CT make a plan for new strategies that he will implement that she would expect to see next time she visits. He stated that “she encourages me to try out what I learned in the workshops and it forces me to try something I would have never had the courage to try before. . .Then I see that it works because my students are doing better in class and I want do more of it.” Richard stated that each time he tries something new, he gets better every time. He also commented that he appreciates having the freedom to choose which strategies he will implement. “She [CT] doesn’t tell me what I have to implement. Instead she leaves it up to me.” He then compared it to his principal who mandated specific strategies; working with the CT is “not like when they [site administrators] come in and bark at us, do this, do that, don’t do that, do this.”

Similarly, Nancy also reported that most of the new strategies that she implemented were learned at PAR PDs. Then she would try them out in her classroom and notice a difference in her students:

When I got my credential, the one thing they never really talk about is classroom management, and that's the biggest problem you have as a teacher is classroom management. I now do all the things I learned from Fred Jones [Tools for Teaching Classroom Management Strategy] and I have better control over my students.

Other PTs shared that the frequency of CT observations gave them many chances to practice these new skills. According to Terri, “She [CT] comes a lot so out of a zillion observations, I am eventually going to get it right.”
While PAR provides some opportunities to have positive mastery experiences, it seems as if at times it is challenging for PTs to overcome their prior negative teaching experiences which resulted in them having to report to PAR in the first place. It appears that with sufficient time, CTs can work with PTs to get beyond these negative experiences by providing them with guidance toward more successful teaching experience as they work towards mastery. In addition to having opportunities for mastery experiences to develop efficacy, teachers also benefit from opportunities to have vicarious experiences.

**Vicarious Experiences: “Let Me Jump in and Model for You”**

Vicarious experiences are when a person observes another person’s experiences and compares them to their own task. If a person sees someone who is similar to them succeed, it can increase self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977). However, the opposite is also true and seeing someone similar fail can lower self-efficacy. How does the PAR program provide opportunities for PTs to have vicarious experiences by observing other similar teachers and how does this affect their self-efficacy?

**Opportunities for Observation**

The literature in Chapter 2 revealed that PAR programs throughout the U.S. provide opportunities for teachers to observe CTs and other experienced teachers in the classroom. Thus, it was surprising to learn that the PAR program of BCSD does not emphasize such observation. First of all, the PAR CTs themselves are not allowed to demonstrate lessons to PTs due to the program’s design. The PAR administrator never provided a clear rationale for this rule. According to one of the PAR Panel members, one reason is that the PAR program does not want the CT to have an effect or influence on
student outcomes as a result of their lesson demonstrations. Furthermore, PAR Panel member Manuel stated that demonstration is not the most effective way to change teacher practice:

It's not the role of the CT to provide a demo lesson, because that would be that person's professional decision about how to do the whole shebang. When you're teaching, you're doing student engagement, you're doing classroom management, you're doing all of the components, and you're not just tweaking one thing. . . . You can't really do one strategy in isolation, so when a person models, they're bringing all of these other things with them to this one moment, and it may not be as useful. Whereas if a PT is guided through seeing, realistically, what's happening in their classroom, and making their own professional judgments and evolution, that helps immensely, because then not only does it fix the problem at the moment, it lends itself to a more ongoing form of constant self-improvement, self-reflection.

According to this view, PTs would not benefit from a CT modeling a particular strategy because the CT would be using several best practices and it may be difficult for the PT to pinpoint the specific strategies that the CTs are aiming to demonstrate.

Interestingly, every PT that was interviewed reported that they would have benefited from an opportunity to watch their CT or at least another teacher demonstrate a lesson. Shirley, who felt that the PAR program did not help her to improve her teaching, stated that observing another teacher would have been helpful to her but she was not given the opportunity. She felt the PAR program would have been more beneficial to her by “maybe finding another teacher who's doing basically the same teaching that I am doing
and observing that person.” Nancy, another PT, also stated that “well gee, wouldn't it be
great if we could just have like a day a month where we could go around and watch other
people teach?” According to PAR administrators, the budget does not allow for PTs to
observe other teachers because it would require substitute coverage for the PTs; funding
has been cut for substitute coverage in the last two years district-wide.

Similarly, Terri stated that she wished that she could observe her CT like they do in
other districts:

In other districts the best practice is that if . . . the participating teacher is doing a
lesson and the consulting teacher is watching, and the participating teacher is just
like doggy-paddling through, the consulting teacher will say, “You know what, let
me jump in and model for you.” Sometimes it [teaching] makes your brain just kind
of wonky, and so if someone [CT] notices that I’m drowning, rather than watch me
drown, which to me is counterproductive, they can say, “Oh yeah let me finish the
lesson.” If they see I’m frustrated and literally doggy-paddling, they could jump in
to say, “You know what, hey, let's try this way.”

Terri had researched the way PAR worked in other districts and expressed that she was
extremely frustrated that her CT would sit through an unsuccessful lesson without taking
over the lesson. Interestingly, Terri seemed more concerned about the CT jumping in to
save the lesson, than in actually learning from the experience herself. For example, she did
not discuss how her CT provided her with feedback about what she could do differently
next time.
Karen, a CT, took a different approach and found a way around not being able to model or demonstrate lessons by role playing effective teaching strategies during her individual conferences with PTs. Karen stated:

Modeling what the teacher should do is the best practice for teacher improvement. It took a lot of thinking on my end because we're not allowed to demonstrate lessons. It's really important to be able to model with the [PT] teacher. Sometimes we role play instead, so I'll write down the interaction with the kid and maybe it wasn't a positive interaction. I'll say, “Okay now let's do it again, Okay I’ll be Steven [a student], you're you,” and we act it out.

Karen said that her PTs find role playing to be extremely helpful because they get a chance to see her in action before they actually try it out with students.

Nancy, who is one of Karen’s PTs, said that the best thing about her CT is that she “does things that she probably shouldn’t do… She shows me how to do certain things by acting like a teacher and I play her student.” Nancy said this was really beneficial to her because “telling someone they should do something is not as helpful as showing them how to do it.” Thus, Nancy (PT) and Karen (CT) have an effective way to provide Nancy with a vicarious experience to improve her self-efficacy, despite PAR’s restrictions.

CT Raquel also found a way to provide vicarious experiences for her PTs. Raquel “went around” not being able to have her PTs observe by accessing a website called The Teaching Channel and watching videos with her PT. However, she said that “it's not the same as modeling the lesson with her own kids because many times the teachers on The Teaching Channel do not have the same population of students as her PTs. She said that
often times her PTs say, "Oh, well all those kids look wealthy and they [students from other districts] look like they know what they're doing. This is very different from BCSD."

For example, Raquel’s PT, Elizabeth, felt that the videos were helpful but only when the population was similar to hers. She stated,“If the students look like your students, it is more believable that you can do it too.” In order to “really set the focus on the teacher and the strategies the teacher's using,” Raquel prefaced the videos by saying, “We are not looking at the type of students, we're looking at the skills that the teacher has. We're looking at the strategies that the teacher is using.” And after watching the video, she used the following discussion questions with the PT: “What did you notice about the teacher? What did you notice about the tone of the teacher? What are some of the things that the teacher said?” Raquel said that these questions “keep the conversation very focused, which doesn't leave a lot of room for, ‘The kids are nice in that classroom.’”

Interestingly, the program description in the PAR pamphlet stated that the program allows for PTs to observe “model” teachers but this practice no longer occurred. Not one PT mentioned that they had the opportunity to observe model teachers. According to Raquel, they have a protocol for PTs’ observation of other teachers, however, in order to do this, a substitute would be required and the district no longer allocates funding for substitute coverage. Both PTs and CTs recognized that there is a need for opportunities for PTs to observe model teachers; however, it seems that it is a missing component from the current PAR structure.

As we have seen, due to program design, there are very few opportunities for PTs to improve their self-efficacy with regards to vicarious experiences. If they are fortunate to have a CT who finds ways to get around this restriction, they will have some opportunities
and benefit from them; however, as the program currently stands, there are not many such opportunities. By contrast, the program had many opportunists for PTs to receive verbal persuasion or feedback.

**Verbal Persuasion: “Someone Who is in My Corner”**

According to Bandura (1977), verbal persuasion refers to direct or indirect feedback, praise, or encouragement given to a person about their performance or a change in their behavior. It is comparable to a coach giving a pep talk, a teacher praising his or her students, or a parent offering words of encouragement to a child. Using verbal persuasion in a positive light leads an individual to put forth more effort and therefore have a greater chance to succeed. However, if the verbal persuasion is negative, it can lead to doubts about oneself and the chances for success will become lower. Also, verbal persuasion’s effectiveness is directly influenced by the level of credibility of the person who is providing feedback; where there is more credibility; there will be a greater influence (Bandura, 1977)

Verbal persuasion was the most prominent component of self-efficacy that was addressed in the interviews with all participants in this study. According to PAR administrators and PAR Panel members, CTs are expected to conduct frequent classroom observations in which they “script” what the PTs and students are doing and saying in detail word by word, in writing, as accurately as possible. According to panel member Manuel, CTs “collect non-evaluative evidence of teacher practice.” PAR administrators, CTs and panel members unanimously emphasized the importance of collecting evidence of teacher practice from PT observations that was not subjective or based on opinion. This is because according to the cognitive coaching model that is used to train CTs, PTs should
use the evidence to draw their own conclusions about their teaching instead of CTs telling
them what they should do. During CT and PT conferences, CTs share the evidence, which
includes scripted notes, with PTs. According to Carol, using the evidence, CTs implement
strategies from cognitive coaching to guide PTs as “draw conclusions about what they did
well and how they need to improve.”

CT Raquel shared an example of how she used the evidence to help her PTs draw
their own conclusions:

I show them the notes [CT’s observation script] and I try not to do any of the
talking. I try to just show them the notes and say, "So, what do you notice?"
Sometimes, [they’ll say] "I did a really good job, it was really great." "Okay, well
can you point to something that you felt was successful during the lesson?" Then
that opens the conversation for them to talk about specific things that they do.

When PTs are not able to draw their own conclusions based on the evidence shared
with them, CTs need to guide their thinking a little more. For example, Raquel will discuss
the time a teacher spends on a specific task:

"Well, I noticed that you spent 30 minutes on trying to get the kids to be
quiet and getting them to line up. How do you think you might shorten this
time to maybe ten minutes, five minutes, and two minutes?" It depends on
their attitude, if they're receptive and they go, "Yeah, you're right. . . . Yeah
that is a waste of time." Sometimes you'll get, "Your notes are wrong
because I didn't spend 30 minutes doing that. You're lying."
CT Karen, however, felt that cognitive coaching only works in certain circumstances. If the PT is not able to draw his or her own conclusions based on the scripted observation notes, the CT may have to go into what she calls “consulting mode” where she provides them more direct feedback where she shares specific strategies that would work with students.

When PTs were asked how they felt about the feedback provided by their CTs, they had varied responses. Some were receptive while others felt impatient. Terri described her frustration with a typical meeting with her CT because she was asked to describe what she noticed about her own teaching, rather than the CT giving direct feedback:

Like, she'd come in and spend a million hours in the morning and then we'd talk about what she saw, and she'd say…and this would drive me nuts “Well what do you think about this?” And I'm like, “Just tell me. Please just tell me what you think about it.” So it would be a lot of reflecting, listening, reflective listening, which is annoying to me, but it is what it is.

Terri felt like she may have benefited more from more direct feedback, rather than responding to questions from her PT. Richard, on the other hand, felt very much validated with the feedback his CT provided because he felt like it was a “positive approach”, which was contrary to what his principal provided to him:

I think it's more like a positive approach versus like, "Okay, look. You're not doing that right. You're not doing that right. You're not doing that right." At least for me, my experience [with cognitive coaching] has been very helpful, very positive. I think meeting with my PAR coach, just talking to her. I guess you open up a little
bit with the things that you want to do and things that you're doing wrong, that you probably will start to do right.

Raquel, a CT, used a strategy where she gave immediate feedback to PTs with a white board during a lesson: “I might put a note on it and hold it up to the teacher because that way they can implement it in that moment . . . That way their feedback is immediate, and it has been effective.” Elizabeth, her PT, mentioned this technique as what she found most helpful about her CT. She commented:

She [Raquel] gets a little more involved than she’s supposed to, which I find helpful because I feel very alone there [school site] She has a whiteboard and if I’m not good at remembering to praise the kids--it’s not something I’m in the habit of, so she’ll remind me. She’ll write on the whiteboard “specific praise” to remind me. Yeah, and it helps tremendously. I feel less alone. I feel like there’s somebody there who’s in my corner who’s not just observing and totally standing back.

Elizabeth seemed to appreciate the active involvement and immediate feedback that Raquel provided to her that went beyond the cognitive coaching approach.

Several PTs expressed that they felt better about their teaching practice when they receive positive feedback from the CT and this made it easier to accept the negative feedback. Richard, a PT, felt that although at times, his CT Raquel criticized his teaching practice, she also had more positive things to say, which made him feel more confident and willing to change his practice:
She’s always been supportive in a positive way. Obviously there's been criticism here and there but it's taken, like I heard, 90 positives and maybe ten negatives. That's it. That's understandable . . . it opens you up more to say, "Okay, you're looking at my positives. Thank you for acknowledging that. Now, I could look at the things that I should be working on that I might be omitting, that I might be a little lazy on.”

CT Karen discussed how she made a point to provide validation to her PTs when she that they were implementing new teaching strategies successfully. “I observed her [Nancy] the other day and I saw that she implemented four out of the five of the things that we talked about. When that happens, I have to make sure to praise her for it.” Her PT, Nancy, believed that the feedback that Karen provided greatly increased her confidence in teaching. “Sure, there are days that you might need a little push or a little criticism,” Nancy said, “but when they finally tell you that you are doing something well, you feel validated.”

**Trust and Credibility**

As seen in Chapter 2, when individuals who are giving feedback are highly respected and trusted, there is greater influence on others’ self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977; Putman, 2012; Jamil & Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness, 2012). In addition to stressing the importance of providing feedback to PTs, PAR administrators and CTs emphasized the importance of trust in PT-CT relationships. PAR makes an effort to ensure that Consulting Teachers are trained in listening strategies that build trust and rapport between CTs and PTs. According to Georgia, a PAR administrator, trust is built into the program in the manner in which they provide non-evaluative feedback. The PAR
program aims to ensure that PTs feel supported by their CTs and not judged, criticized, or evaluated:

I think that non-evaluative and non-threatening support is strength of this program. And when I say non-threatening, I want to be clear that I don’t mean somebody that goes in there and says oh, everything is wonderful. Yeah, but non-evaluative means that you don’t say it’s good and you don’t say it’s bad, but someone who gains their trust and is able to deliver the word for change in a non-evaluative, non-threatening way.

Additionally, CTs build trust in PTs by just listening to them, hearing their frustrations, and empathizing with their experience. According to Raquel, “We work with skills through cognitive coaching . . . ‘I hear what you’re saying and I know your frustration is there, let’s see what we can do about it and, here’s what I can provide for you.’”

Karen also felt that it was important to build trust with her PTs and said she had a good relationship with most of her PTs; however, she reported that building a trusting relationship can be challenging after PTs have had negative experiences with administrators:

It is peer assistance, but there's kind of a little bit of not peer in a way, even though it technically is. I mean, we're not evaluators but they [PTs] know that we're kind of coming in there as an expert. With some of them, they may not be trusting of you at the beginning.
One key to building trust is to ensure confidentiality between the CT and the PT. With time, Karen said, PTs will begin to feel like they can confide in their CT and be assured that nothing that they say or do will be reported to their administrator or anyone other than the PAR Panel:

At the beginning when we met there were a lot of tears and now she [Terri] smiles. Building that trust and rapport is huge. I think one of the things I always tell them at the beginning is that it's highly confidential and that if you ever see me talking to your principal, I am not telling them anything about what I am seeing in that classroom, because I would hate to have them walk by the office and see me in there without knowing this.

Karen described how her relationship with her PT Terri changed from the beginning of the year and she attributed this to the effort she made to build trust and rapport though assuring confidentiality.

Likewise, Raquel also believed that non-evaluative and confidential support that PTs provide helps to build trust. Raquel described an approach she uses for gaining trust and credibility with her PTs. She assures them that she is their peer who is also a teacher and she is there to support them and not report to administrators. She also shares with them her background and experience:

“I'm not here to evaluate you. I don't work with the principal, I work with you….I'm a classroom teacher as well. Here's a little bit about my experience, this is what I do.” Then they say, “Oh well, you're always writing things about me.”
Then I say, “Well, here they are [notes]. This is what I'm writing. I want to show you what I'm writing so that we can discuss it.”

When Raquel finishes an observation, she makes sure to share the notes, or scripted evidence, with her PT so they know exactly what she is writing. She makes an effort to be as transparent as possible so that PTs do not get a wrong impression. She felt that if PTs got the impression that she was sharing information about them with an administrator, their relationship could be harmed. Thus, it is critical that the CTs make every effort possible to maintain confidentiality. This is something that the program takes extremely seriously according to Carol, the program administrator. Once PTs begin to feel like they can trust CTs, the work can actually begin.

While PAR administrators and CTs emphasized the importance of building trusting relationships between CTs and PTs, PT were not as articulate when they were asked to describe the relationship with their CT. They did say that they trusted their CT; however, it was for reasons that were different than what CTs provided. For example, Elizabeth described her relationship with her CT as “friendly” and “comfortable.” She also said that she trusted her CT’s feedback because of her CTs prior experience in education makes her qualified:

She’s been a literacy coach so I know that she has that experience. She has her Master’s degree so I know she’s got extra experience, extra education so I trust if she tells me something… it’s not like she’s coming up with something out of the air.
Similarly, when Richard was asked about whether or not he trusted his CT, he stressed that she should be trusted because she was a caring educator who cared about students, teachers and the school district, and she took her job seriously.

Shirley, on the other hand, did not feel like she could trust her CT entirely because the CT was “not on her side.” She did not feel like her CT was on the “administration’s side” either. She described her CT as being “somewhere in the middle,” which meant Shirley could not fully trust her. The other PTs stated that that they did trust their CTs because they knew that their conversations were confidential and that they knew their CTs had the knowledge and experience that it takes to do their job.

In sum, the PAR program provided various opportunities for PTs to have verbal persuasion and the program ensured that the CTs who were providing feedback are trusted and have credibility. PTs’ self-efficacy was also affected by physiological factors, which include their emotional state, attitude and motivation.

**Physiological Factors: “I Just Feel Her Support”**

As we have seen in Chapter 2, physiological responses refers to the anxiety or feelings that a person has when they are in stressful situations such as being observed while teaching, making a presentation to a group of colleagues, or being evaluated by an administrator (Bandura, 1977). All of these tasks can cause physical or emotional reactions like agitation, anxiety, sweaty palms and a racing heart. Although this element of self-efficacy was the least influential of the four in this study, it is important to note that if teachers are more at ease with the task at hand, they will feel more capable and have higher feelings of self-efficacy.
Also related to physiological response is a teacher’s overall emotional state and motivation. As noted above, the fact that PTs are identified as “ineffective teachers” has resulted in them feeling unmotivated and “beaten up by the system,” as CT Karen described it. PAR Panel member Manuel stated that frequent negative comments result in unmotivated teachers with a negative attitude. He stated that sometimes CTs will notice that PTs are starting to show signs of improvement, but administrators come in and interrupt the process by only pointing out the negative:

A PT is starting to improve, they'll [site administrator] come in their classroom, and instead of writing about, "This part was good, this part was shaky, this part needs improvement," it was, "Sucks, sucks, sucks, sucks" all the way down. "These things are all terrible," and there's no compliment, there's no "This was okay." Sometimes it's stuff that the person has no control over, and if you're trying to help someone get better, that's not the way to do it.

During interviews with PTs, most described feeling a sense of rejection, as if they were being singled out for personal reasons. For example, Shirley expressed feeling like an outcast at the school due to her age and ethnicity. She reported, “If you're white and over 50, he [principal] doesn’t want you here.” As a result, Shirley seemed to stop making an effort to improve her teaching. She seemed to accept the fact that there was little she was able to do to improve student achievement, so she continued to just “get by” whether or not her students are learning. “I think by the time they [students] get to high school, it is very difficult to change habits and patterns of behavior. So if I’m keeping them in my room and nobody is killing each other, then everything is okay,” she said. Shirley’s attitude and emotional state clearly affected her self-efficacy and her teaching
performance. As was seen previously, Shirley had the lowest sense of self-efficacy score according to the self-efficacy survey. Shirley seemed unmotivated to teach because she no longer saw a purpose. The fact that her students were “under control” was good enough; she was not concerned with whether or not they were learning.

Similarly, other PTs believed that their administrators did not like them, which made them feel defeated and unmotivated. Richard stated, regarding his site administrator, “If you’re telling me all these things that I'm doing wrong, and you're telling me nothing's right . . . you just feel bad.” Consistent criticism had an impact on Richard’s attitude and motivation. Richard stated:

If it's somebody that's always looking at the negative, you're not as easily motivated to do something because you're like, "Well you know what, a lot of things I get out of you are negatives." So you just keep doing the same thing because no matter what you do it is wrong.

When PTs were given demands and criticism without support by administrators, the PTs described feelings of anxiety and lack of motivation. PT Terri, who suggested that she was in PAR because her principal did not like her, stated that she had received no support from her school site. Instead, she had only received demands, which made her feel extremely frustrated to the point that she was in tears during the interview:

The support that was offered [by administration] was basically dogma. “This is this, do this, do this, do this, do this”, but with no procedure how to get there or if I'm using red markers all the time, you need to use black markers, but nobody provides me any black markers. Nobody tells me where to get any black markers;
nobody tells me why I need… It's just boom, do this, but there's no support … for me to what you're telling me I have to do.

Other PTs had similar stories about their feeling anxious at their school site and frustrated with their administration and the fact that they were often criticized without receiving any support. When the topic of administrator support was brought up in the interviews, each PT had a change in attitude and demeanor, such as smiles changed to frowns which indicated a negative physiological response.

On the other hand, the support that PTs received from their CT seemed to make them feel more at ease. Although some PTs did report that there is some “pressure with being observed” and at times this made them feel nervous or uncertain, for the most part, PTs reported that peer support made them feel less anxious and supported. Richard reported that he enjoyed having his PT observe him, however, when his students were not cooperative, he felt uncomfortable. “I guess sometimes I might be a little embarrassed, when the kids are not listening and she's here.” Even with that apprehensive feeling, Richard still found that the observations and meetings with his PT made him feel more confident about his teaching ability because his CT provided him with a great deal of positive feedback. “If she validates what you're doing well and it makes you feel good, you say, ‘Okay. I can do this well. Now, I can work on this.’”

Elizabeth also described feeling more calm or at peace when her CT was in her room, which was the opposite of how she usually felt at her school site due to lack of administrator support:
Physically I feel more at ease when she’s [CT’s] there. I feel like I’m not so alone. Because of my experience with the principal and not getting support from her, I’m feeling like there’s some support. Every morning I’m anxious. I feel really anxious every morning. There have been a couple mornings when I haven’t realized that she [CT] was going to come and when I see her [CT], it puts me at ease. She’s not necessarily saying anything to me it’s just her there. I just feel her support.

Elizabeth had a positive physiological response when her PT was present in her room. She felt supported, which affected her physiologically, making her more relaxed and comfortable.

All PTs had been working with their CTs for over six months at the time of the interview; therefore they had some time to get used to the idea of being observed and seemed to feel like it made them feel supported rather than criticized or judged. Thus, it appears that when PTs feel supported by someone, they become more confident and more willing to try new strategies without the fear of being judged if they are doing something wrong. On the other hand, when PTs feel criticized, judged, without the feeling of support, they lose motivation and confidence. The next section will discuss data regarding change in PTs’ teaching practice.

**Change in Teaching Practice: “Like Turning Around an Aircraft Carrier”**

As we have seen in Chapter 2, teacher self-efficacy has been shown to have a positive effect on teacher quality. This is because the more teachers believe that they can have a positive effect on student outcomes, student engagement, student learning, and classroom management, the more successful they will be at achieving those outcomes
(Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001; Tschannen-Moran & Johnson, 2011; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). PAR administrators, CTs, and PTs in this study all believed that PTs made some improvement in teaching practice as a result of PAR but that it may not be substantial enough for the PTs to achieve a Stull evaluation that “meets standards.”

According to administrator Georgia, PTs did generally improve their teaching while in the program; however, the progress they made may not have been noticed by administrators because generally administrators observe a PT as little as two times a year. She stated, “They [PTs] have great improvement. However, you know the administrators will say [on evaluations], little to no improvement.” Furthermore, she stated that sometimes the improvement or change in practice is more minimal for some, especially teachers who have been teaching a long time, because they have developed habits or “muscle memory” that may be hard to break. She compared changing their teaching practice to “going in and turning around an aircraft carrier” because they have been teaching the same way for so long without ever realizing that what they were doing was not effective:

You know we always fight with the issue of skill or will…is it their skill that keeps them from performing or is it their will? And, sometimes, you know they’ll say, “Well, this has worked for me” … Sometimes you’re fighting 20 years of doing it that way.

She also described some extreme cases where “sometimes people are sick” and improving practice is “just not going to happen.”
Likewise, PAR Panel member Manuel said that most teachers make moderate improvements: however, most go “unnoticed by administrators who do sporadic visits.” He stated that the type of improvements that most teachers make in PAR can only be viewed by someone who has “made frequent observations,” such as their CT. Manuel also described the small percentage of PTs who have been teaching ineffectively for so long without anyone giving them constructive feedback that it is nearly impossible to improve, especially in the period of one or two years. It would seem that when PTs do the same thing for so long they may develop habitual ineffective teaching:

The same way that a person who has just starting teaching needs a ton of support, this person [veteran teacher] needs a ton of support, too. The only differences they may have, five years, ten years, or 15 years of, I guess, maladaptive teaching, where they've started to gain habits, because they had longer to have those bad habits develop. It's harder to unwind all of that, especially if for a lot of that time they were receiving evaluations that didn't really provide them with any feedback.

In his view, PTs that cannot be helped or refuse to change their practice were very rare. Manuel believed that PTs would probably make more improvements if frequent observations with feedback were a “standardized practice.” He stated if administrators would visit teachers more frequently and provide them with feedback, support and suggestions, instead of “assuming that they're doing great”, that it would “mean that fewer people would wind up in PAR.”

When the CTs were asked about their PTs’ change in practice both agreed that, a year was not always enough to bring about significant change; however, they noticed some
changes. They commented that PTs who had shown the most improvement were those who were more cooperative and open to the process. Raquel described one particular PT who changed her practice:

She's so much more open with me, because now she's showing me her lesson plans. Now when I walk in to do an observation, I know what she's doing whereas before I was just guessing. I can see her applying new strategies to improve student behavior and now more students are participating instead of one or two like before.

Unfortunately, both CTs expressed that much of PTs’ growth was hindered by the upcoming Stull or evaluation conference because they knew that most of their PTs would receive another “Ineffective” rating. Thus, the parallel processes of the Stull Evaluation and PAR may be counterproductive.

PTs also reported they made several changes in their teaching practice based on observation evidence from their CT, and several articulated specific examples of ways they have changed their teaching practice, as well as ways they have noticed it has affected their students. One of Nancy’s focus areas was improving the way that she interacted with her students. Nancy reported that when her CT provided her evidence of what students were doing and saying in response to her teaching, she was able to tell that she had improved her practice. She also said that her CT videotaped her, so she was able to see for herself that she was improving the way that she “responds to the kids.” She also noticed that she had a more positive rapport with her students: “I noticed that I am smiling more, and speaking more respectfully to my students.”
Similarly, Richard described how he changed his practice with regards to managing student behavior. Based on his CT’s observation notes, he said that when he noticed he was giving out too many warnings in class without providing a consequence, he began to only give one warning when students acted out; then when they did it again, he would give a consequence. He noticed that as a result, student behavior had improved for the most part: “Most of them stopped the negative behavior. There are still a few that are going to be testing you.”

Other PTs offered similar stories about how they did things differently as a result of PAR and how they noticed it has changed their students’ behavior. For example, Elizabeth realized that that she was not making her expectations clear to her students:

It just seemed like there was this mess going on all the time [when students were working in centers] and so I realized I didn't have it clear where you're going, what are you supposed to, what's my expectation. So now I make sure to make clear procedures and now my students know exactly what to do and now there is less of a mess.

Terri noticed how her change in teaching practice had affected student engagement. She stated, “I’m using some of the practices I've learned from my consulting teacher. I'm crazy because I say to myself, ‘Good job, you totally remembered how to do that and now look at all this engagement.’” Terri elaborated that these new practices included Think-Pair-Share, Thumbs up and Thumbs Down, and Choral Response.

By contrast, when Shirley was asked if she made any improvements in her teaching practice, she responded, “I don't know because I got a negative evaluation every year since
I started PAR.” Even after some prompting, Shirley would not conjecture whether or not she made improvement.

The data revealed that both PTs and CTs agreed that most PTs did change their teaching practice for the better; however, the degree to which each PT improved seems to depend on several factors. With that said, even if CTs determine that PTs improve their practice, the CTs’ opinion has no bearing on PTs’ overall Stull evaluation if the school administrator does not notice teaching improvement.

Summary

The findings from this study show that on the Sense of Efficacy Scale, most PTs had an overall high level of sense of self-efficacy. Interview data revealed that PTs were affected by the four factors of self-efficacy; however, some components were more prevalent in influencing PTs’ self-efficacy while others seemed to be overlooked in the design of the program or were constrained by district policy. For example, PAR’s observation cycle, which involves frequent PT observations followed by extensive feedback, provides the opportunity for PTs to have multiple opportunities for verbal persuasion by a mentor that they trust and respect. Additionally, these observation cycles provide opportunities for PTs to build mastery by practicing implementation of new teaching strategies while being coached by their CT. On the other hand, the program does not allow PTs to observe model teachers so they are lacking the opportunity for verbal persuasion. When CTs found a way around this, it was effective for PTs. Additionally, PTs expressed that they wished they had more opportunities to observe a model teacher or a teacher who had a similar context for teaching.
The data also revealed that some factors that affect PTs self-efficacy occurred prior to participation in PAR; however, they continue to affect PT progress. Prior unsuccessful teaching evaluations resulted in negative mastery experience. Furthermore, the continued lack of site administrator support continued to have a negative physiological or emotional effect on PTs.

The primary focus of this study was to explore how the PAR program’s support mechanisms provide the conditions for teacher growth and improvement in self-efficacy. It can be seen that PTs in this study faced several challenges; however, these challenges were lessened through the support and assistance of their CT. Additionally, the Stull teacher evaluation process that occurred simultaneously with the PAR process seemed to provoke anxiety and stress, which may have been counterproductive to the work that CTs were doing with their PTs.

The next chapter will include a discussion and analysis of the findings from the data. Then it will be followed by implications for policy and practice and recommendation for future research.
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

This chapter begins with a brief summary of the current study, which includes an overview of the problem, purpose statement, research question, methodology used, and summary of major findings. Following the introduction, the discussion section will provide an analysis of the findings. After the analysis section are the implications for policy and practice, followed by suggestions for future research. The conclusion ends this chapter.

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the processes and systems of support of a Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program in a large urban district. As an alternative to immediate dismissal for unsatisfactory performance, teachers are mandated to participate in this PAR program, working closely with a consulting teacher, with the objective of improving their teaching practice. Researchers have found a relationship between teacher self-efficacy and teacher quality or teacher effectiveness. Therefore, the main goal of this study was to explore how the program’s support mechanisms provide the conditions for teacher growth and improvement in self-efficacy.

This qualitative study explored one central research question: How does a Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program provide the conditions for teacher growth and self-efficacy among veteran teachers who have received a below standard performance evaluation?
Additional questions included: How do participating teachers feel that peer assistance and review has affected their teaching practice and self-efficacy? How do consulting teachers describe the changes in the participating teachers’ efficacy and teaching practice?

This qualitative research utilized a case study methodology to explore the phenomenon of Peer Assistance and Review using a purposeful sample of five veteran Participating Teachers (PTs) from elementary and secondary schools, the two Consulting Teachers (CTs) who work with the PTs in this study, two PAR administrators who oversee the organization of the program, and two members of the PAR panel, which oversees PAR policy and implementation. Data were obtained through in-depth interviews, a focus group, and a document review of the program’s pamphlets, flyers and website. The data were analyzed by coding using ATLAS.ti software, first reading though the data line by line to assign a label or code to text segments. Then these codes were used to organize data into chunks. These chunks were then categorized into relevant themes and patterns. Analytical memos were also written along the way, as new concepts, ideas, possible codes, or new questions about the study emerged. Findings were organized and presented using the theoretical framework of Bandura’s (1977) four sources of self-efficacy.

The main findings were that PTs’ self-efficacy was influenced by the four sources of self-efficacy; however, some components were more prevalent and effective in increasing self-efficacy than others. There are constraints on opportunities for teacher self-efficacy built into the structure and operations of program. Furthermore, since PAR is part of a larger context, some constraints on PT self-efficacy came from sources outside of PAR. Lastly, the parallel processes of PAR and the teacher evaluation system are
counterproductive to PT self-efficacy. Each research question will be addressed in the sections below.

**How does a Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program provide the conditions for teacher growth and self-efficacy among veteran teachers who have received a below-standard performance evaluation?**

The PAR program provides several opportunities for PTs to grow in their teaching practice. These include goal setting, regular observations with feedback, professional development workshops, and guided self-reflection. According to the literature, when professional development is coherent or consistent with teachers’ goals, it does change teachers’ practice (Guskey & Yoon, 2009). Data revealed that PAR CTs met with PTs early in the school year to establish performance goals that PTs worked toward achieving. PAR suggested that PTs attend professional development workshops that were aligned to the Teaching and Learning Framework, which are the standards by which the district measures teaching practice. PTs were encouraged by their CTs to attend these workshops and expected to implement the strategies that they learned from these workshops in their classroom. Feedback was provided to PTs on a weekly basis regarding growth in their teaching practice and PTs were guided to self-reflect on how they were improving in relation to the goals that they established.

Furthermore, the structures that PAR provides are in alignment with the specific professional development needs of veteran teachers. As seen in Chapter 2, veteran teachers require professional opportunities that allow them to be self-directed, collaborative, and reflective about their teaching practice (Meiser & Ahern, 2010; Rodriguez & McKay,
2010; Walker & Slear 2011). Guided by the CTs, PAR PTs select their own goals based on areas that have been identified as a need for improvement by their administrator. PTs collaboratively plan lessons with their CTs and are required to reflect on their teaching practice.

Additionally, the data revealed that PAR does provide some conditions for PTs to improve their self-efficacy. As seen through the lens of the conceptual framework, the data suggests that some components of self-efficacy were more prevalent and effective than others in improving self-efficacy. Specifically, the program provided ample opportunities for verbal persuasion and some opportunities for teachers to have mastery experiences. Throughout the school year, PTs were visited by their CT quite frequently, and they received regular feedback about their teaching practice. PTs were also coached by CTs as they implemented new strategies. Physiological responses varied, however most were negative since PTs often were made to feel criticized, unmotivated, and defeated. By contrast, the PAR program did not provide opportunities for vicarious experiences because PTs are not allowed to observe other teachers in the classroom. While the program states that PTs have opportunities to observe model teachers, data revealed that this did not occur.

How do participating teachers feel that peer assistance and review has affected their teaching practice and self-efficacy?

Interestingly, results of the Sense of Efficacy Scale indicated that all but one PT had a relatively high sense of self-efficacy. However, interview data suggested that PTs were not as confident in their teaching practice as indicated on their survey. Furthermore,
the PTs were not able to articulate why they indicated strengths in certain areas. This may indicate that what they revealed on the survey was not how they actually felt. Inconsistencies between survey and interview results could be a result of the “delusional self-efficacy” phenomenon mentioned by a CT, meaning that PTs want to appear more confident than they actually were. Is it possible that PTs were portraying a higher sense of self efficacy to hide their feelings of ineptness in front of a stranger?

According to the data, most PTs felt that working with their CT contributed to growth in their teaching practice. Data revealed that while most said that they had started implementing new strategies and they noticed a difference in their students, their descriptions about how their practice had changed were general and they were not able to articulate specific changes. This could be because the PTs were reporting socially desirable responses, but their practice did not actually change, or they needed more probing in the interview. Additionally, all PTs stated that they were provided with opportunities to learn about new strategies though PAR-sponsored workshops and had a chance to practice these strategies while being coached by their CT.

PTs also shared that working with their PT increased their confidence or efficacy in teaching. Most PTs revealed that they benefited from the observation and feedback cycles, especially when feedback was positive, which made them feel validated and motivated. Feeling successful provided them with the motivation to improve their practice and thereby improve their students’ performance. On the whole, PTs trusted their CTs and valued the feedback that was provided because they saw their PTs as qualified with the experience, background, and credibility to provide them with valuable feedback and guidance. Finally, most PTs felt they would have benefited more from having opportunities to
observe model teachers, whether their CT or another teacher who is similar; however, the program structure did not allow for PTs to observe model teachers.

**How do consulting teachers describe the changes in the participating teachers’ self-efficacy teaching practice?**

Overall, PAR CTs described the changes PTs made as subtle improvements in areas such as classroom management and student engagement. The changes in their practice, however, may not have been noticed by PTs’ site administrators, who had not observed them on a regular basis. CTs also commented that with time, they noticed that PTs tended to become more trusting and open to the PAR process; however, the one-year time frame that a CT works with a PT may not be long enough to make substantial changes in teaching practice. Additionally, the Teaching and Learning Framework, which is the standard by which PTs are evaluated, has five standards; therefore, it is possible that if a PT is only working on one portion of the standard with their CT, the PT will not show signs of improvement in the other four standards and will therefore again be evaluated as ineffective overall on their Stull evaluation. PTs may need more than a year’s time to get comfortable working with a person and then actually have the ability to show signs of improvement; however, the current structure in PAR does not allow CTs to work with PTs for more than one year.

Generally, CTs felt that PTs had low self-efficacy. PTs who showed an increase in self-efficacy at one point in the year due to successful teaching experiences seemed to give up around the time of the interviews. CTs attributed the drop in self-efficacy to recent visits from administrators and the prospect of an upcoming unsatisfactory Stull evaluation.
The following section offers an in-depth interpretation, analysis, and synthesis of the findings.

**Discussion**

The discussion in this section begins with an explanation of the utility of the conceptual framework. It incorporates some of the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, along with Bandura’s theory of self-efficacy, in order to interpret the following themes: 1) Verbal persuasion and mastery experiences were the strongest influences on self-efficacy for PTs in this study; 2) There are constraints on opportunities for teacher self-efficacy which are built into the structure and operations of the PAR program, as well as district policy; 3) The parallel processes of PAR and the teacher evaluation system may be counterproductive to growth in PT self-efficacy. Finally, this section will conclude with limitations of the study and contributions to the field.

**The Conceptual Framework and Influences on Self-Efficacy**

As we have seen in Chapter 2, the conceptual framework for this study was based on the four major factors that contribute to expectations of self-efficacy, according to Bandura (1977), including mastery experiences or performance accomplishments, vicarious experiences or observed experiences, social persuasion or performance feedback, and physiological factors or attitude and motivation. This framework was relevant and appropriate to this study because it shed light on the structures of PAR that provided the conditions for PTs’ growth in self-efficacy, as well as where PTs were lacking opportunities for growth in self-efficacy. While this framework was a helpful way to organize the findings because many of PAR’s structures aligned to Bandura’s (1977) components of self-efficacy, it also limited the study because some of PAR’s support
activities may have been overlooked or deemphasized if they did not fit into the conceptual framework.

Figure 5.1 below shows how the structures, policies and activities in PAR or conditions at the site, as well as within the district, affected each of Bandura (1977)’s components of self-efficacy, which in turn influence teaching practice. As we have seen in Chapter 2, teacher self-efficacy is directly related to changes in teaching practice; therefore, the diagram reflects that relation (Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). Some of the components of self-efficacy are affected by structures or activities that are provided by PAR, such as observation and feedback by CTs, professional development workshops, and guided self-reflection while others are affected by outside sources which were out of PAR’s control, such as lack of administrator support and negative Stull evaluations. Also some factors such as positive feedback, CT and PT relationships, and PAR professional development workshops were more positive in their effect on self-efficacy, while some were negative, such as adverse feedback, unsatisfactory evaluations, and lack of opportunities to observe model teachers.
Figure 5.1 Conditions that Affect PTs’ Self-Efficacy in Peer Assistance and Review

Note: This flowchart is an adaptation of Bandura (1977) which shows that each of the four components of self-efficacy, represented by rectangles which are shaded, was affected by several factors. Factors that are directly related to PAR services are represented by rectangles. Outside factors that occur at the school site are represented by ovals. Dark arrows represent strong positive effects that enhance self-efficacy, while broken arrows represent a negative effect. Lighter arrows symbolize a minimal effect.
Verbal persuasion as a strong source of self-efficacy. As we can see indicated by the dark arrow, the strongest source of teacher self-efficacy in this study was verbal persuasion. This is contrary to what the literature states. Bandura (1977) states that verbal or social persuasion has a weaker effect on self-efficacy than mastery experiences; however, in this case, verbal persuasion seemed to have the most positive effect. This was a result of the fact that this particular PAR program model emphasizes CTs’ observation of and feedback to the PTs, which occurred quite frequently. The observation and feedback cycle was definitely seen as the strength of the program across all participant types.

For the most part, PTs indicated that they valued the positive feedback provided by their CT. They indicated that when their CT provided positive feedback, it made PTs feel validated and more willing to respond to any suggestions or criticism that their CT provided. As stated in the literature, when individuals who are providing feedback are respected with a high level of trust, there is greater influence on self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977; Putman, 2012; Jamil & Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness, 2012).

PTs in this study all stated that they trusted their CT for the most part; however, they felt that their PTs were a credible source due to their experience and training rather than because they had a trusting relationship. In order to ensure that CTs are respected and trustworthy, CTs in the program were put through an intensive screening and received extensive training so it was no surprise that they were highly respected by their PTs. However, in all cases, CTs and PTs had only worked together for approximately half a year, so it may be that they did not have enough time to build a full trusting relationship. This suggests that with more time, perhaps PTs and CTs would be able to build a stronger,
more trusting relationship, which could have resulted in a greater positive effect on PT self-efficacy.

Another aspect of verbal persuasion was the use of cognitive coaching which was heavily emphasized by CTs in this program. According to Garmston, Linder, and Whitaker (1993), when teachers talk out loud about the thinking behind their teaching, their decisions become clearer to them and their awareness increases. Cognitive coaching may be an effective strategy for veteran teachers because it requires them to make their own decisions about teaching based on their experience (Rodriguez & McKay, 2010). While CTs viewed this as an effective strategy, some CTs preferred that their CT just tell them the answers rather than they draw their own conclusions based on evidence provided by the CT. Likewise, teachers in other studies about cognitive coaching stated that early in the process they wanted the answers given to them because often times, they were not used to this type of thinking and did not know how to answer the coach’s questions (Garmston, et al., 1993). However, with time, they improved in their ability to think about their teaching practice, they began understand the benefit to thinking about their teaching. This may also be the case for the teachers in this study. Thinking about reasons why they do things, or reflecting on their teaching practice may not be something they are accustomed to at their school site. Although cognitive coaching is a common practice at many school sites, PTs in this study stated that they received no support at their school site prior to PAR, so it is likely they had no prior experience with the technique. Perhaps with more observation cycles and more practice, PTs could have benefited more from this practice.

**Practice may not make perfect: Constraints on mastery.** Mastery experiences are the most powerful source of self-efficacy when compared with the other
three sources, according to Bandura (1977). Research has shown that when teachers have completed a task successfully in the past, it sets an expectation that they can perform that task again successfully (Putman, 2012). In this study, however, mastery experiences did not seem to have as much positive effect as verbal persuasion. PTs were mandated to report to PAR after a history of unsuccessful teaching experiences that resulted in an “ineffective rating” on their previous Stull evaluations. Data revealed that these experiences decreased PTs’ confidence in their ability to improve their teaching and student achievement. The PAR program built in opportunities for PTs to develop mastery by having teachers create their own teaching goals, participate in professional development workshops, and have practice implementing strategies from the workshops. However, research has shown that when teachers’ sense of efficacy is low, they may have difficulty setting goals for themselves or will tend to give up easily when problems arise (Tschannen-Moran, & Johnson, 2011). Thus, in order to improve PT self-efficacy, it is critical that PTs have opportunities to have successful teaching experiences, and if possible, be protected from negative teaching experiences.

It is important to note, when teachers are implementing new practices, their self-efficacy may initially be lowered but with time when strategies are found to be effective, self-efficacy will rebound to higher levels (Ross, 1994). This seemed to be the case for the PTs in this study. Although the Sense of Self-Efficacy Scale results indicated that most PTs had a relatively high sense of self-efficacy, interview data suggested the contrary. Data revealed that PTs felt extremely unmotivated and frustrated with their experience with the teaching evaluation system and with the lack of support from their site administrators.
Furthermore, at the time of the interview, PTs were not able to specific changes they made in their teaching practice.

Furthermore, data revealed that while self-reflection was emphasized by program leaders, the impact on self-efficacy may have been less that what was expected. PTs were guided through a self-reflective process that was most effective when PTs were open to the process and they had an honest and realistic view of their teaching practice. The reflective process requires PTs to draw their own conclusions about their strengths and weaknesses; however, often times PTs do not have the skill or knowledge to make those decisions. Additionally, as shown in the data, some PTs had unrealistic views of their teaching practice and its effect on student achievement, did not realize that there was a need for improvement, or did not admit that they were struggling. In this case, PTs may require more than to be taken through a process of self-reflection in order to improve their teaching practice.

Finally, data from PTs, CTs and PAR Panel members revealed that although they were minimal, PTs did make some improvements to their teaching practice. These positive changes gave PTs a sense of success that contributed to positive mastery experiences. Therefore, it can be seen in Figure 5.1 that improved teaching practice contributes to mastery experience, which results in a circular relationship.

**Constraints on vicarious experiences.** In Figure 5.1, the broken arrow shows the limited influence that vicarious experiences had on the self-efficacy of teachers in this study. As we have seen in Chapter 2, vicarious experiences in the form of modeling by a master teacher positively influence teachers’ self-efficacy (Johnson, 2010). It was a
surprising discovery that teachers in this PAR program were not provided with regular opportunities to have vicarious experience by observing successful teachers, thus missing out on a very important factor for improving their self-efficacy. Both PTs and CTs identified opportunities for observation of model teachers as a need in the program.

Finally, it can be seen in Figure 5.1 that physiological or emotional cues are influenced by the quality of the mastery experiences and verbal persuasion that PTs experience. Therefore, unlike like other self-efficacy models that have physiological and emotional cues as a separate source, it seemed more appropriate to depict this source as a product of the other two sources. PTs in this study described feelings of anxiety, hopelessness, and frustration when they were criticized by their administrator and CTs described PTs becoming so unmotivated to the point that they stop trying. On the other hand, when PTs felt supported by their CT and they were given positive feedback, they felt more relaxed, at ease, and confident. According to Tshannen-Moran and Johnson (2011), teachers who do not feel confident about their teaching put in less effort and are less enthusiastic. They become self-defeating and as stress load increases, their motivation and confidence in their ability to improve student achievement decreases. PTs in this study reacted similarly. Their chances to improve their efficacy seemed to be hindered by these negative feelings.

The next section will discuss the interaction between the parallel processes of peer assistance and the district’s Stull evaluation process that were often referred to in the interviews.
Counterproductive Parallel Processes

Across the data, the “parallel processes” emerged as an underlying factor that had an influence on PTs self-efficacy. This term was used by a program administrator to describe the simultaneous processes of peer assistance and coaching from a CT and the Stull evaluation by a site administrator. The intent of these parallel processes was that PTs receive intensive support from CTs, which result in improvement of teaching practice; these improvements are then expected to be reflected in the Stull evaluation. The parallel processes were intended to work in tandem and support one another. Instead, in all cases, the data revealed that the processes seemed to counteract each other. In other words, the Stull evaluation system inhibits PTs’ ability to increase their self-efficacy. There are several reasons why the parallel processes are counterproductive.

Parallel processes are disconnected. Although both PTs and CTs agreed that PTs made improvements in their teaching practice, these improvements were not reflected on the Stull evaluation done by their principal. This indicates that there must be some disconnect between the two processes. When PTs enter the PAR program, they are guided by their CT to select goals or areas of focus for improvement based on a small number of components from the five standards in the district’s Teaching and Learning Framework. These areas of focus are based on suggestions made by the site administrator in their evaluation; however, PTs choose their area of focus. PTs work the remainder of the year toward meeting those particular goals. On the other hand, when teachers are evaluated, they are evaluated on the entire Teaching and Learning Framework instead of the few components that they have chosen for an area of focus. Therefore, while PTs may be making improvements with a more narrow focus, they are being evaluated on a larger set
of standards. There seemed to be a disconnect between the parallel processes because it seems to set PTs up for overall ineffective ratings.

**Stull evaluations are based on limited observations.** According to the literature and interview data, most Stull evaluations in this district are based on one or two teaching observations by a site administrator (Howard & McColskey, 2001). CTs, on the other hand, observe their PTs up to times per week. Thus, CTs have a greater exposure to PTs and their students than the site administrator. CTs are able to notice the changes teachers are making in their teaching. In this parallel process, however, any evidence of improvement or growth that a PT makes has no bearing or influence on their overall evaluation. The reason for this is that the relationship between a CT and a PT is supposed to non-evaluative and confidential, according to district policy, so CTs cannot share any information, whether positive or negative, with site administrators.

**Negative Stull evaluations diminish teacher motivation.** As we have seen, when PTs are evaluated by an administrator who only provides them with negativity and criticism, rather than supportive coaching, their teaching self-efficacy is hindered. CTs were frustrated with the fact that in some cases, their PTs were making progress up until the point where they were evaluated by their administrator. At that point the PTs seemed to give up as a result of the prospect of receiving another “Unsat.” According to the literature, when a teacher feels a sense of stress or anxiety, self-efficacy is negatively affected (Putman, 2012; Jamil, F. & Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness, 2012). It would seem that PTs have a better chance of being successful and improving their self-efficacy if they did not have the added pressure and anxiety that is brought on by knowing that the administrator who previously evaluated them negatively will be
evaluating them again. Perhaps PTs would benefit from postponing their Stull evaluation process during the time where they are participating in PAR.

**Limited timeframe does not allow PTs to demonstrate improved practice.** As mentioned previously, PTs in this PAR program are limited to two consecutive years in the program. Additionally, if PTs do remain for a second year, they will not typically have the same CT for the second year. As PAR administrators, CTs and PAR panel members stressed, building a relationship of trust and understanding is crucial for making an impact on improving teacher practice. And as we have seen in the literature, when individuals who are giving feedback are highly respected with a high level of trust, there is greater influence on self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977; Putman, 2012; Jamil & Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness, 2012). However, building trust can be challenging for PTs in this study. Teachers who are mandated to take part in the program usually had previous negative experiences with administrators and have difficult times opening up and trusting their CT, as well as trusting the PAR process. CTs realize that this process takes some time and spend a large part of the year using strategies to strengthen the bonds between CT and PT. It is not until PTs are open to the process and trust their CT that the work can actually begin. Then CTs spend the next part of the year teaching PTs how to reflect on evidence of their teaching practice in order to improve it. CTs state that some PTs take longer than others; all are not immediately ready to use evidence to draw conclusions about their teaching practice. Unfortunately, if a PT returns to PAR the following year, they will not work with the same CT, which means the process for building trust needs to start all over again.
Given that PTs were said to make gradual improvements in this one year process, it may be that they require more than one year of working with a CT to build trust, become open to the process, learn how to self-reflect, make changes to their practice, and notice improvement in student achievement. In other words, the type of improvement that administrators are expecting on the Stull evaluation may not be evident after one year of working with a CT. PTs who are mandated to report to PAR may need at least two full years of working with the same CT to make substantial growth without the threat of an immediate evaluation.

Thus, these parallel processes which are aimed at working in tandem to improve teacher practice may actually be working against each other. The next section will discuss the limitations of the study and potential contributions.

**Limitations of the Study and Contribution to the Field**

This study provided a large amount of data from multiple types of participants and credibility was enhanced by triangulation of various data collection methods. However, findings cannot be generalized due to the small sample size in this study.

Another limitation was that due to the highly sensitive nature of the study and the need for the program to maintain confidentiality, the selection of PTs for the study was dependent on the recommendation of the CT. Therefore, the PTs who were selected and were willing to take part in the study may have represented only a certain point of view and the study may have missed a point of view from PTs who CTs did not want to recommend or who did not want to participate.

Another limitation could be attributed to the nature of self-reporting. For example,
PTs and CTs may have been inclined to report that PTs made improvements to their practice, even if they had not, so there may be a social desirability bias in the data. In addition, due to the time constraints of the study, there may not have been enough time to build rapport and trust with the PTs during the interviews. Thus, some PTs appeared defensive early in the interviews, although they opened up with time. Perhaps a follow-up interview after familiarity was built would have resulted in more honest responses.

Finally, due to the confidentiality of participation in the program, access to PTs was limited. It was not possible to observe the PT classroom or PT and CT conferences or to examine student data from PTs’ classes. This was another limitation in this study.

Despite these limitations, this study provides several contributions to the field. Insights from this study could be helpful for other PAR programs with similar demographics, as well as educational leaders who are interested in improving veteran teacher self-efficacy and teacher quality. This study also sheds light on Bandura’s framework as it shows how the sources of self-efficacy influenced veteran teachers with prior unsuccessful teaching evaluations. Furthermore, it shows that mastery experiences and verbal persuasion may influence teachers ‘physiological or emotional responses, as opposed to Bandura’s (1997) framework, which has physiological and emotional responses as a separate factor influencing self-efficacy.

**Implications for Policy and Practice**

Based on this study, PAR programs, or educational leaders hoping to improve veteran teacher practice, may want to consider the following recommendations:

- Ensure that PTs have opportunities to observe either demonstration lessons by their consulting teacher or other effective teachers on a regular basis. This
would require the program to re-allocate some of their budget for substitute coverage. PTs need to see how successful teaching looks and how students react to successful teaching strategies.

- Increase the length of time that a PAR PT works with their CT to at least two years so they have enough time to build a trusting and opening relationship, and PTs have sufficient time to make appropriate changes to their practice.

- Increase the number of teachers who volunteer for PAR services by encouraging more teachers to volunteer for services and providing incentives to join PAR. Currently, there is a minimal number of PTs who have volunteered to receive PAR services. As we have seen in Chapter 2, veteran teachers need continued support throughout their career as they face new challenges and experiences. All veteran teachers, not just those who are struggling, but those who are experiencing new challenges or would like to rejuvenate their teaching would benefit from PAR more if they volunteered for the program out of a desire to improve their teaching, than if they were mandated to join as a result of a negative evaluation which taints their experience.

- Teach all teachers, both new and veteran, to be self-reflective and see teacher growth as a habit of mind. Although self-reflection on teaching practice is a regular practice for most California teacher induction programs today, veteran teachers may not have participated in an induction program or may not have been supported after exiting induction. The process of self-reflection and professional growth should be gradually introduced and reinforced over time so teachers are able to develop this habit of mind successfully.
• In order to decrease the number of unsatisfactory teaching evaluations, ensure that site administrators focus on positive teacher behaviors and positive results when providing feedback to teachers and that all teachers are consistently supported by regular observation, evidence-based feedback, opportunities to observe successful teachers, and practice in self-reflection. This should begin early in their teaching career because support can make a big difference in whether a new teacher turns into a successful or unsuccessful veteran teacher. According to Bandura (1977), past success breeds future success. Therefore, administrators, leaders of new teacher programs, and instructional coaches should ensure that teachers never reach a point where they have been teaching for over 10 years unsuccessfully.

• Suspend the official evaluation process for the PT during the time that the CT is working with their PT. This will allow for PTs to be more at ease with the process without the added pressure of an evaluation process that makes them feel anxious, insecure and unmotivated. Without the pressure of a formal evaluation, this time could be used to maximize communication between the CT and administrator. Furthermore, the parallel process could work better if the principal is well trained in the principles of cognitive coaching and visited PT more frequently or visited the PT together with the CT. The separation of these parallel processes and increased communication between administrator and CT could result in a more positive experience for the PT, more opportunities for positive mastery experiences and fewer negative physiological and emotional responses.
• Allow CTs to have some input in the official evaluation process as a way of reinforcing the “review” aspect of PAR. CTs spend a great deal of time in a PT’s classroom. They have the ability to assess how the PT’s students are progressing based on more than just student assessment data. They are able to observe student affect, attitude, and engagement. CTs should be able to have input in the evaluation process without compromising the confidentiality agreement with their PT.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

This case study examined the perceptions of PAR PTs, CTs, administrators and PAR panel members who have participated in one district’s Peer Assistance and Review program. This study has addressed possible effective strategies for improving the performance of ineffective veteran teachers and shed light on why changing veteran teacher practice is so challenging for many. Future research using qualitative and quantitative methods could investigate:

• The development of PTs studied longitudinally with interviews and observations, to find out how they are progressing and how many are still in the profession after a few years.

• A comparison of the effectiveness and improvement of PTs who have volunteered for PAR services compared to PTs who are mandated to take part in PAR.

• A comparison of the impact of BCSD’s program with other PAR programs, especially programs that have processes for observation of model teachers and peer (CT) evaluation.
An in-depth study from the perspective of the CT about the differences between PTs who are successful and unsuccessful.

**Conclusion**

This qualitative study set out to explore the support services that PTs receive through Peer Assistance and Review that allow them opportunities to improve their sense of self-efficacy and teaching practice. Using the lens of Bandura’s (1997) four sources of self-efficacy, it was evident that the PAR program has several support structures that enhanced self-efficacy, such as regular observation, evidence-based feedback, professional development workshops, guided implementation, and self-reflection. However, there were also competing structures that seemed to hinder self-efficacy, including the lack of opportunity to observe model teachers and time constraints that may not allow PTs to reach their full potential in the program. It is not enough to examine PAR program structures and policies without looking at the context in which it exists. PAR is part of an extremely large school district with various contractual agreements, district policies, and educational initiatives. Constraints of the larger context, including the threat of an upcoming Stull evaluation by an unsupportive site administrator, may inhibit PAR’s main goal, which is to improve teacher quality. PTs in this program could benefit from more time to develop mastery experiences, more opportunities for vicarious experiences (i.e., observations of successful teachers), and more encouraging verbal persuasion from site administrators, which would result in a healthier emotional state where the teachers are more open to change. In addition, the parallel processes of peer assistance and teacher evaluation need to be more connected so that they are working to improve teacher efficacy, instead of constraining it. If successful teaching experiences lead to higher self-efficacy,
and higher efficacy leads to successful teaching, a program that aims to improve teacher practice should make sure that teachers have opportunities to feel successful instead of like constant failures.

With that said, this study also shows how PAR makes multiple efforts to improve teaching practice by ensuring that PTs are supported by a well-trained, highly qualified CT, ensuring that they have access to quality professional development that is aligned to their goals, and ensuring confidentiality, which increases trust between the CT and PT. Thus, the PAR program ultimately aims to get rid of ineffective veteran teachers by turning them into good teachers, in the same way you can get rid of enemies by turning them into friends.
References


Vegara v. California, BC484642 (California Superior Court June 1, 2014).


APPENDIX A

Interview Protocol for PAR PTs

I. Pre-interview Session: Introduction/Background

Welcome and introduction: Good evening. Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. Before we begin the interview session, I’d like to give you the opportunity to read and sign the Consent to Participate in Research. You have the option, at any time to decline to answer any on the questions that I will ask you.

Purpose of the interview: As we discussed, this interview is intended to collect information for a research study about teachers with 10-15 years of experience who are participating in the PAR program. I hope that this interview will provide me with some insight to the experiences that you have encountered during your involvement in PAR and that I will learn about some effective strategies for professional development and supervision for veteran teachers such as yourself. During the interview process, I will ask you to take a short survey about your experiences with different types of teaching practices. Then I will follow up with some specific questions about your response to that survey.

Timing: Today’s interview will last approximately 60-90 minutes. Are there any questions before I get started?

II. Interview Session

Main Questions:

1. How many years have you been a teacher?
   i. At how many schools have you taught?
   ii. Which grades or subjects have you taught?
   iii. Have all you teaching experiences been in LAUSD?

2. How would you describe the PAR program to someone who wasn’t familiar with it?

3. Tell me about your overall experience in the Peer Assistance and Review Program.
   i. Please tell me some specific things that helped you and why these have been helpful.
   ii. Or can you tell me how the PAR program could have provided you with more support?
4. How did the support that you received from the PAR program compare to support that you have previously received at your school site from other support providers, coaches, administrators etc.? Example

5. How would you describe your teacher three years ago versus now?
   i. What did you establish as an area of focus when you were in the program?

6. Can you describe a typical meeting with your Consulting Teacher?
   i. How did you feel about those meetings?

7. What kind of changes (if any) did you make to your teaching practice when you participated in the Peer Assistance and Review Program?
   i. Why did you feel prompted you to make these changes?
   ii. Walk me through a time when you implemented a new teaching strategy and you noticed a positive change in your students.
   iii. Why did you decide to implement this specific strategy?

8. Describe some of the professional development workshops that you participated in through the PAR program?
   i. What are some strategies that you have learned? What strategies have you applied to your classroom?
   ii. Can you tell me about a time that you applied a strategy?
   iii. What were the results?

9. How did/do you usually feel when you attempt a new strategy in your classroom?
   i. Do do/did you feel anxious, excited, at ease, nervous….?
   ii. Why do you think you feel/felt this way? (Physiological Experiences)

10. When you learn new strategies and you actually implement them in your classroom, how do you know if these strategies are working?
    i. Do you receive feedback from your CT? (Mastery experiences)

11. Describe your relationship with your CT?
    i. How much do you trust the feedback he or she provided you? (Verbal persuasion)
    ii. Why do you feel this way?

12. Would you say that working with your CT has affected your confidence in teaching or your beliefs in your teaching ability?
    i. Why?
    ii. How?
    iii. What do you feel CTs can do to improve a teacher’s confidence?

13. How do you feel that the needs of teachers with more than 10 years of teaching experience differ from the needs of new teachers in terms of
professional development, evaluation, and support? Why do you feel this way?

14. To what extent is this PAR program set up to be useful to experienced teachers like you?
   i. Can you give specific examples of this?
   ii. In your opinion, what kind of PD or support is most useful to teachers like you?

Thank you for your participation so far. I am learning so much from you. We are almost done with the interview, so I am going to pause so that you can take this brief survey about teaching practices that I mentioned earlier. Then we will finish up with some follow up questions.

15. I noticed that you indicated that you have a “great deal” of influence on _______. If you would have taken this survey two years ago, before PAR, would you have made the same selection? Why do you think that is the case?

16. I noticed that you stated on the Efficacy Scale that you have ________ influence on _________. Can you tell me if there were particular circumstances that have made you feel this way?

17. Why do you feel that you have very little influence on _______? What do you think you would need in order to increase your level of influence?

18. Did the PAR program influence your ability to __________? If yes, how?

19. (For teachers who exited the district) I understand you are no longer teaching in the district. If you are comfortable talking about it, can you fill me in a little or comment on what happened? Do you feel that the PAR program could have done anything differently to change your current situation? Do you feel that you could have done something differently to change your outcome?

20. Let’s say you had a chance to speak to the program leaders of PAR, What are some suggestions you would make? Why are these important?

21. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Closing Questions: I would like to give you a final opportunity to help us examine these issues. Before I end today, is there anything that I missed? Do you have anything else to add at this time? Have you shared everything that is significant about these experiences with me? If there’s anything else that you recall after our interview session, I invite you to share it by contacting me.

III. Post-Interview Session: Debriefing and Closing
Thank you for participating in today’s interview session. I greatly appreciate you taking the time and sharing your ideas with me. I also want to restate that what you have shared with me is confidential. No names or other identifiable characteristics will be used in any report or document. Finally, I want to provide you with a chance to ask any questions that you might have about this interview. Do you have any questions at this time?
APPENDIX B

Interview Protocol for PAR CTs

I. Pre-interview Session: Introduction/Background

Welcome and introduction:

Good morning/afternoon/evening. Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. Before we begin the interview session, I’d like to give you the opportunity to read and sign the Consent to Participate in Research.

Purpose of the interview:

As we discussed, this interview is intended to collect information for a research study that explores the impact of the PAR program on teachers with 10-15 years of experience.

Timing:

Today’s interview will last approximately 60-90 minutes. Are there any questions before I get started?

II. Interview Session

Main Questions:

1. How many years have you been in Education?
   i. How many years have you been a Consulting Teacher?
   ii. What other education related jobs have you held?

2. How would you describe the PAR program to a teacher who wasn’t familiar with it?

3. Tell me about your overall experience working as a consulting teacher in Peer Assistance and Review.
   i. Please describe the specific support that you provide to your CTs?
   ii. How often do you meet with you participating teachers?
   iii. What type of activities do you and your participating teachers do?

4. Describe your relationship with your PTs who are participants in the study?
   i. What do you feel is the level of trust?
   ii. Why you think that is?

5. Can you walk me though a year-long process that you go through with PTs in Peer Assistance and Review?
   i. Please tell me some specific things that you feel have helped PTs improve their practice why these have been helpful.

6. Can you tell me about the process of observation and feedback for your PTs?
i. What influence would you say that feedback has on PTs’ practice and confidence in teaching?

7. Describe some of the training and professional development have you participated in through the PAR program?
   i. What are some strategies that you have learned?
   ii. What did you find helpful for your work as a CT?
   iii. What would you change?

8. Please describe a time when you demonstrated a lesson or arranged for your PT to observe another teacher.
   i. Can you describe what the conversation was like after the observation?
   ii. Did PTs seem more willing to try new strategies after the observation?
   iii. Did you notice that the PTs replicated certain strategies?
   iv. How do you feel this process has influenced any changes that CTs have made in their teaching practice? Please explain.

9. What kind of opportunities do PTs have to practice new strategies that they learn?
   i. How do you guide them as they practice?
   ii. How do you think this influences their confidence?

10. What kind of changes have your PTs made in their teaching practice since you started working with them?

11. Of all the support activities, what do you feel has the strongest effect on your PTs teaching practice?
    a. Observations, demonstrations, feedback, professional development, various personality traits within the teacher?

12. Some educators feel that veteran teachers have different needs than new teachers in terms of professional development, evaluation, and support. Do you agree or disagree? Why?
    i. To what extent is the PAR program set up to be useful to experienced teachers?

13. What do you think is the best way to support teachers with over 10 years of teaching experience?

14. It is my understanding that after a year of support, some teachers complete the PAR program and are recommended to return to teaching.
    a. Can you tell me some of the differences that you have noticed between teachers who are allowed to continue teaching and those who are discontinued?
    b. Can you

15. What do you think that you or the program could have done differently so that the teachers could have remained in the teaching profession?
16. Let’s say you had a chance to speak to the program leaders of PAR, are there some suggestions you would make?
17. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Closing Questions:

I would like to give you a final opportunity to help us examine these issues. Before I end today, is there anything that I missed? Do you have anything else to add at this time? Have you shared everything that is significant about these experiences with me? If there’s anything else that you recall after our interview session, I invite you to share it by contacting me.

III. Post-Interview Session: Debriefing and Closing

Thank you for participating in today’s interview session. I greatly appreciate you taking the time and sharing your ideas with me. I also want to restate that what you have shared with me is confidential. No part of our discussion that includes names or other identifiable characteristics will be used in any report or document. Finally, I want to provide you with a chance to ask any questions that you might have about this interview. Do you have any questions at this time?
APPENDIX C

Interview Protocol for PAR Program Administrator

I. Pre-interview Session: Introduction/Background

Welcome and introduction:

Good morning/afternoon/evening. Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. Before we begin the interview session, I’d like to give you the opportunity to read and sign the Consent to Participate in Research.

Purpose of the interview:

As we discussed, this interview is intended to collect information for a research study that explores veteran teachers’ experiences in the PAR program.

Timing:

Today’s interview will last approximately 60-90 minutes. Are there any questions before I get started?

II. Interview Session

Main Questions:

1. How long have you worked with PAR program?

2. What other educational experiences have you had before you took on this role?

3. Can you provide me with some background information about the teachers who are currently in the program? Or do you have some time of data report that you can provide me with the following information:
   a. The number of teachers referred to the program,
   b. Their ages
   c. Gender
   d. Ethnicity
   e. # years teaching

4. How does this data compare to other years? Why do you feel that there has been an increase or decrease?
   a. Can you please tell me more about that?

5. Can you walk me though a year-long process that a PT and CT would go through in Peer Assistance and Review?
6. Throughout the years that you have worked with the PAR program, what kind of changes have you noticed? What do you think has caused those changes?
7. Can you please describe a typical teacher who is referred to PAR?
8. How would you say that the support that the veteran teachers receive from the Peer Assistance and Review program differs from the support that new teachers receive? Why do you think this is the case?
9. In your opinion, how would you say that the PAR program affects PTs’ confidence in their ability to improve student achievement?
   i. Why do you think that has helped them?
   ii. What kinds of things have you heard from the field?
10. In your opinion, how would you say that the PAR program affects PTs’ teaching practice?
11. Can you talk to me about what you think veteran teachers need in regards to professional development, support, and evaluation? How does the PAR program respond to those specific needs? Would you say that the PAR program is designed to be responsive to those needs?
12. How do you ensure that the CTs that are working for your program are qualified, up to date to support teachers with years of experience?
13. It is my understanding that at the end of a year, some teachers are recommended to continue their employment while others are let go, resign, or retire. What is the percentage of teachers who return to the classroom and do not return to the classroom after PAR?
   a. What do you think about that data?
   b. Are you as the program leader satisfied with those data outcomes?
   c. Can you tell me about some specific examples of teachers who were removed?
14. What would you say is the strongest aspect of the PAR program?
15. What would you like to see improved with the PAR program? Do you have any plans to change anything about PAR in near future?
16. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Closing Questions:

I would like to give you a final opportunity to help us examine these issues. Before I end today, is there anything that I missed? Do you have anything else to add at this time? If there’s anything else that you recall after our interview session, I invite you to share it by contacting me.

III. Post-Interview Session: Debriefing and Closing
Thank you for participating in today’s interview session. I greatly appreciate you taking the time and sharing your ideas with me. I also want to restate that what you have shared with me is confidential. No part of our discussion that includes names or other identifiable characteristics will be used in any report or document. Finally, I want to provide you with a chance to ask any questions that you might have about this interview. Do you have any questions at this time?
APPENDIX D

Teacher Efficacy Scale Survey

Developed by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) (Short Form):

Teacher Beliefs: How much can you do?

Directions: This questionnaire is designed to help me gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that create difficulties for teachers in their school activities. Please indicate your opinion about each of the statements below. Your answers are confidential.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. How much can you do to help your students value learning?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students? (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)

9. How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies? (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)

10. To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused? (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)

11. How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school? (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)

(Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001)