Teachers' View of the Role VAM Plays in Their Work in the School and School Community

Timothy Michael Forrest Pressley
FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

TEACHERS’ VIEW OF THE ROLE VAM PLAYS IN THEIR WORK IN THE SCHOOL AND SCHOOL COMMUNITY

By
TIMOTHY MICHAEL FORREST PRESSLEY

A Dissertation submitted to the
Department of Educational Psychology and Learning Systems
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

2015
Timothy Michael Forrest Pressley defended this dissertation on July 14, 2015.
The members of the supervisory committee were:

Alysia D. Roehrig
Professor Directing Dissertation

Kathy Clark
University Representative

Susan Losh
Committee Member

Jeannine Turner
Committee Member

The Graduate School has verified and approved the above-named committee members, and certifies that the dissertation has been approved in accordance with university requirements.
As you go the way of life,
you will see a great chasm. Jump.
It is not as wide as you think.
-Joseph Campbell
First I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Alysia Roehrig, for your guidance and support throughout this process. I came to Florida State University so I could learn from you and the knowledge I have gained is priceless. Thank you for putting up with me over the years and pushing me to go beyond the basic requirements. I am leaving knowing I am prepared to make my own mark in academia.

I would also like to thank the members of my committee for your guidance throughout this process. Dr. Turner, thank you for guiding me through the motivational theories within my research and pushing me to think critically about my findings. Also thank you for your support of my teaching. I hope I provided you with enough stories from my teaching experiences and life that you can pass down to future students. Dr. Losh, thank you for your encouragement and interest in my topic. Dr. Kathy Clark, thank you for your feedback and guidance when it came to the policy aspects of my studies.

This document would not have been possible without the teachers who gave up their time to discuss the impact of the educational policies on their teaching. I want to thank the five teachers that participated in my pilot study. Your thoughts and perspective allowed me to get an inside view of how these educational policies are impacting teachers. Your perspectives guided me to look at the impact of VAM on instruction in the classroom, allowing me to dive deeper into the impact of VAM in my dissertation. To the 13 teachers that participated in my dissertation, thank you for giving up your time to share your thoughts about VAM with me. Your willingness to be open and honest with me on your perspective of VAM allowed me to learn about the specific impact of educational policies in the classroom.

A special thank you to all my friends, you all have been there as a support system throughout this process. I know I can always count on my friends to remind me how important it is to work hard and to play hard. To everyone who supported, checked-in on me and kept me sane during the process, thank you!

Most importantly, I want to thank my parents. Hard to believe, but I did it! Growing up I always thought educational psychology was boring, but I appreciate you showing me the world of academia and pushing me to pursue a Ph.D. Mom, I could never have done this without your support. You were there for the highs and lows of the process from the beginning of searching for a place to go to the frustration of writing and data collection and to the finished product. I would not have been able to focus like a laser on my research and teaching without your support. Dad, funny I used to think your work was extremely boring and now look at me! I know you have been watching over me and I hope to continue making you proud. I love you both and can’t thank you enough for everything.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES ........................................................................................................................ vii

LIST OF FIGURES ..................................................................................................................... viii

ABSTRACT ................................................................................................................................... ix

CHAPTER 1—INTRODUCTION ..................................................................................................1

CHAPTER 2—LITERATURE REVIEW .....................................................................................11

CHAPTER 3—METHOD .............................................................................................................40

CHAPTER 4—RESULTS .............................................................................................................51

CHAPTER 5—DISCUSSION .......................................................................................................76

APPENDICES ...............................................................................................................................89

A. IRB APPROVAL ......................................................................................................................89

B. PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT QUESTIONNAIRE .............................................93

C. PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT INITIAL INTERVIEW ...............................................96

D. PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW ......................................99

E. PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT FOLLOW-UP SURVEY ........................................102

F. EMAIL TO PRINCIPALS FOR ACCESS TO SCHOOLS ..................................................105

G. EMAIL TO TEACHERS .......................................................................................................107

H. INITIAL TEACHER SURVEY ..........................................................................................109

I. INITIAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS ...................................................................................113

J. TEACHER FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS ..........................................................115

K. TEACHER EFFICACY SCALE APPROVAL .....................................................................117

L. FOLLOW-UP TEACHER SURVEY ....................................................................................118

M. MEMBER CHECKING EMAIL ..........................................................................................120
LIST OF TABLES

3.1 Teacher Demographics by School .................................................................44

4.1 School Means for Teacher Knowledge of VAM ........................................52

4.2 School Means for Perceptions of VAM .......................................................56

4.3 School Means for Teacher Efficacy ..............................................................63

4.4 School Means for Teacher Perceptions to Changes Made to Instruction ....64

4.5 School Means for Impact of Merit Pay .........................................................69

4.6 School Means for Teacher Perceptions of Community ...............................72

5.1 Teacher Perceptions of VAM based on Control Value Theory (Pekrun, 2000, 2006)...............79
LIST OF FIGURES

1.1 Emerging theoretical model of preliminary findings (Pressley, 2014). ..................................8

4.1 Emerging theoretical model of current study findings .............................................................75
ABSTRACT

Assessment and accountability has been a major influence in public education since the introduction of No Child Left Behind and continue to influence teachers and students with the signing of Race to the Top. In Florida, the value-added model (VAM) is beginning to be implemented into teacher evaluations. These evaluations take into account student gains on NCLB assessments and formal instructional observations. However, teachers have had very little say in the implementation of this new law and the Common Core State Standards. When it comes to teacher understanding of a policy, teacher understanding can play a role in how teachers implement and approach a policy.

This instrumental qualitative study (Stake, 1995) focused on the role of VAM and merit pay play in how teachers view their work in the school and school community. Using Bandura’s Social Cognitive Theory (1984), Control-Value Theory (Pekrun, 2006), and the emerging model from my preliminary study (Pressley, 2014) I focused on how VAM and merit pay impacts teachers’ motivation to change their instruction. This study focused on 13 elementary teachers from schools with different grades (one A, two B, and two C) with three teachers from all but one school (C2). Overall, I found that the teachers had limited knowledge of VAM and had negative feelings about VAM being part of their evaluations. These feelings were based on the low value and low control teachers felt regarding their student test scores that are used to determine a VAM score. The teachers did not feel that VAM drove their changes in instruction; however, teachers were still changing instruction. The changes were made either for higher observation scores, student learning or were district mandated. When it came to merit pay, ten of the thirteen teachers did not want to give up tenure for merit pay. The teachers felt there could be mixed impact on the school community because of merit pay depending on the sense of community between teachers within the school or grade level team. Lastly, even though the teachers had negative feelings regarding VAM the teachers were not against teacher accountability. Based on these findings, implications for future research and practice are considered.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Beginning in 2001, with the introduction of the education law, No Child Left Behind (U.S. Department of Education, 2001; NCLB), states were required to assess student achievement in specific grade levels, depending on the state. These policies have now expanded since the implementation of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, which included the Race to the Top Fund (U.S. Department of Education, 2009; RTTT). RTTT asked states to create plans to adopt standards and assessments to prepare students for the future. In order for states to receive RTTT funding, the state must agree to use student test scores on teacher evaluations (Ravitch, 2011). RTTT was intended to evaluate and reward teachers based on their performance in the classroom, build data to measure student success, and turn around low-performing schools (Duncan, 2009). According to Secretary of Education, Arnie Duncan, one of the goals of the new RTTT standards was to “make sure every child is learning from an effective teacher” (Duncan, 2009, p. 5). Under RTTT, states, which were selected to receive funding, would classify teachers as highly effective, effective, and ineffective to help identify failing teachers (Ravitch, 2011). In order to push for every child to have an effective teacher, the data from student achievement assessments are now being used to determine the effectiveness of teachers and schools, with some states including these scores in the decision process of rehiring a teacher, as part of the decision regarding merit pay, or as a deciding factor in school reform. Thus, teacher effectiveness in this policy context has been defined “as a teacher’s ability to produce higher than expected gains in students’ standardized test scores” (Goe, Bell, & Little, 2008, p. 5).

One way that states assess teacher effectiveness is by using the Value-Added Model (VAM). VAM estimates the amount of impact a teacher or school has on student academic gains within a school year (Ladd & Walsh, 2002; Papay, 2011; Rivers & Sanders, 2002). VAM was originally developed by Dr. William L. Sanders to incorporate student achievement data in teacher assessment (Sanders & Horn, 1994). Thus, the original VAM attributed student gains to a specific teacher, which Sanders believed was the most important factor for student learning (Ravitch, 2011; Sanders & Horn, 1994). Several different statistical models, which vary in the classroom and school variables included, have since been introduced and implemented around
the United States (see Literature Review for overview of different models). Florida, in order to be eligible for RTTT funding, passed Senate Bill 736 in 2011. This bill tied student data to teacher evaluations and student scores to teacher pay for all non-tenured teachers beginning in the 2014-2015 school year (Florida State Senate, 2011). The implementation of the Florida VAM in 2011 means that student test scores are now being used for up to 50% of teacher evaluations in the state of Florida (Student Growth Implementation Committee [SGIC], 2011; Senate Bill 736).

Though the goal of RTTT and Senate Bill 736 was to ensure that every child has an effective teacher, not everyone saw the new laws as an appropriate way to assess the effectiveness of a teacher. For example, the Florida teacher unions pushed to legally block tying student test scores to teacher pay. These lawsuits focused on many different aspects of VAM in teacher evaluations. One set of lawsuits argued that evaluating teachers using data from students they do not teach is unconstitutional in the state of Florida (FEA, 2013). The outcome of this lawsuit resulted in the signing of Senate Bill 1664, which revised evaluation criteria for teachers. The new bill stated that a teacher can only be evaluated by the performance of his/her own students (Senate Bill 1664, 2013). One of the most recent lawsuits dealt with teacher VAM scores becoming public information. It was ruled that teacher VAM scores were public and therefore could be shared publicly by news outlets (Solochek, 2014). Even with all of these lawsuits, school districts were not stopped from implementing VAM, and beginning in the 2014-2015 school year most Florida districts began to incorporate a merit pay system based on teacher evaluations (SGIC, 2011). While this policy likely will have a major impact on teachers, their jobs, and income, teachers have had very little say in the implementation process. This study provided teachers the opportunity to give their opinions and perspectives on the use of VAM. Specifically I looked at how the implementation of VAM affects the teachers’ behaviors as well as the school community.

**Effects of VAM**

Although there is not much current research on the effects of VAM in schools, several researchers have voiced their opinions either supporting or opposing the use of VAM in schools. When it comes to opposing the use of VAM in teacher evaluations, a major concern is the influence it will have on teacher collaboration within the school community (Baker et al., 2010; Burris & Welner, 2011). The use of VAM has the potential to have negative effects on
professional learning communities within schools (Baker et al., 2010; Burris & Welner, 2011; Valli, Croninger, & Walters, 2007). For example, it may create a poor community environment where teachers are competing with each other over pay and their jobs (Ravitch, 2011). This lack of community within a school is a concern because schools with a more collaborative teaching environment have been shown to have larger student gains (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Goddard, Goddard, & Tschannen-Moran, 2007; Jackson & Bruegmann, 2009). Another potential negative effect of VAM could be the lack of sharing of school resources between teachers because of competition (Valli, Croninger, & Walters, 2007).

Besides having less sharing within the school community another potential problem with the implementation of VAM is that it could push teachers away from jobs in the most needy of schools. These schools might include those that serve high poverty populations or a high percentage of English Language Learners. Teachers may prefer to teach at schools where students are getting support from home and have more stable test scores. Along with avoiding high-need students, there is potential for teachers to avoid working with individual students who are unlikely to have large gains in their test scores, such as gifted and talented students (Au, 2010; Baker et al., 2010; Clotfelter, Ladd, Vigdor, & Diaz, 2004; Harris, 2011; Mangiante, 2010; Ravitch, 2011). Lastly, putting more pressure on teachers to prepare students for state standardized assessments could lead teachers to continue narrowing the curriculum to focus on the subjects students will be assessed on for that grade level. Thus, teachers may reduce or eliminate time spent teaching non-tested subjects, which can include science or social studies to name a few depending on the grade level taught (Baker et al., 2010; Hamilton, 2012; Ravitch, 2011). Moreover, a teacher who understands that their evaluations are based on student performance on standardized tests may be rewarded for teaching to the test if he/she gets higher test scores (Corcoran, 2010).

Though there have been many potential negatives discussed due to the implementation of VAM in teacher evaluations, there are some potential positives as well. One potential positive effect of VAM is that parents can use this information to see how effective their child’s teacher has been in previous school years. VAM scores can also provide parents information about teacher performance that can be used for school choice decisions (Hamilton, 2012; Ladd & Walsh, 2002). With the most recent court decisions in Florida, teacher VAM scores are now even easier for the public to access. The inclusion of VAM in teacher evaluations may also push
teachers to use more formative assessments (i.e., day-to-day assessments used to shape instruction) throughout the school year, which may allow teachers to create interventions and enrichment activities for their students (Kubiszyn & Borich, 2013; Quattrochi & Chapman, 2010). These formative assessments can then be used to prepare students for the summative assessment (i.e., assessments used to gauge students’ learning at the end of a unit or school year) at the end of the school year (Kubiszyn & Borich, 2013; Quattrochi & Chapman, 2010). In the school setting, schools that provide chances to help teachers learn to interpret VAM scores correctly may be able to help teachers learn from VAM results. Teachers and administrators could use this knowledge to help identify professional development areas so teachers can continue to improve their instruction. Faculty and administration might also be able to build professional learning communities within the school, which would allow teachers time to look closely at the data to help develop and target instruction (Hamilton, 2012; Ladd & Walsh, 2002; Quattrochi & Chapman, 2010; Sanders, 2000).

The implementation of VAM provides an accountability system that is intended to ensure that every student has an effective teacher, one of the primary goals of RTTT (Duncan, 2009). VAM might even be seen as a motivator for teachers to work harder to become more effective (Harris, 2011). It is important for students to have very effective teachers in the classroom because teachers play an important role in student learning. Excellent teachers have been found to have higher student achievement, ask higher order thinking questions, and have better classroom management (Stronge, Ward, & Grant, 2011; Stronge, Ward, Tucker, & Hindman, 2007). Lastly, the implementation of VAM has potential to help reward the highly effective teachers as well as weed out the least effective teachers in schools (Harris, 2009).

No matter the effects of VAM, the main reason to use VAM is to determine how effective a teacher is in the producing student learning gains (Ladd & Walsh, 2002; Papay, 2011; Rivers & Sanders, 2002). In order to get the most complete picture of teacher effectiveness it has been stressed that student test scores should not be the only aspect included in teacher evaluations. With the possibility of negative effects of using VAM in teacher evaluations, researchers have supported the use of multiple sources to be included in teacher evaluations. Specifically, researchers do not think VAM should be the only form of data in teacher evaluations, especially when high-stakes decisions, such as a person’s job are on the line (Hinchey, 2010; Measure of Effective Teaching Project [MET], 2013). By including more than
just student test scores in a teacher’s evaluation, the evaluation might illustrate a more complete representation of the teacher’s current effectiveness. Some possibilities that could be included to represent a more accurate teaching level include classroom observations or student surveys (MET, 2013).

**Importance of this Study**

Understanding teachers’ perceptions regarding VAM is important because how teachers’ perceive VAM could inhibit teachers’ sense making of the implementation of the policy and their teacher evaluation scores (Schmidt & Datnow, 2005; Spillane, Reiser, & Reimer, 2002). This is important because teachers are a key component of education reform (Schmidt & Datnow, 2005). A teacher’s understanding and perceptions could potentially affect the teacher’s behavior when it comes to his or her teaching. Moreover, Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986) suggests that these perceptions have the possibility to influence a teacher’s motivations and ultimately a teacher’s behavior in the classroom. Nevertheless, very little research has been published to date on teachers’ perceptions regarding the implementation of VAM in their teacher evaluations. Previous studies on VAM have mainly focused on the validity of the models and the potential effects, as discussed in Chapter 2, of using VAM on teacher evaluations.

This topic is also important to me personally because I have spent time as an elementary school teacher, teaching fourth grade at a Title 1 school in Fort Worth, Texas. As a former teacher, I experienced the stress associated with preparing students for mandated standardized tests and I know the importance of getting a good evaluation on one’s yearly evaluation. A teacher’s number one job is to help every student in his or her classroom learn the content for the school year. A teacher’s evaluation is similar to a report card on how well someone else, usually a school administrator, believes the teacher did that job. Though RTTT focused on giving all students an excellent education (Duncan, 2009), teachers are rarely, if ever, consulted on the new policies and laws that often affect their classroom teaching. Thus, one of my goals in conducting this study is to provide a venue for teachers’ voices to be heard.

In particular, my study focused on teachers’ perceptions of VAM and how it affects their motivation to change their teaching. The Social Cognitive Theory guides this study, specifically the notion that reciprocal interactions of behavior, person, and environment may help explain one’s motivation (Bandura, 1986). It is important to focus on teachers’ motivation because a teacher’s motivation may influence many different aspects of classroom instruction, especially in
this high-stakes testing era. For this study, I defined teacher motivation as one’s drive and expectations of success at a specific task (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). Because the implementation of high-stakes tests, many teachers have been motivated to change their teaching to focus on test material (Abrams, Pedulla, & Madaus, 2003; Finnigan & Gross, 2007). Teacher motivation can even have an effect on students’ motivation to learn (Roth, Assor, Kanat-Maymon, & Kaplan, 2007; Tournaki & Podell, 2005).

Along with Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986), this study was influenced by control-value theory (Pekrun, 2006) as well as the emerging model that was developed based on the findings from my preliminary study (Pressley, 2014). By using these theories and model, I was able to take into account several different determinants and theories (e.g., values, expectations, control, perceptions, and attributions) that may influence teacher motivation related to the implementation of VAM in teacher evaluations in Florida. In the next section, I describe my conceptual framework for this study, discussing how the determinants and theories associated with social cognitive theory, control-value theory, and my emerging model may play a role in teachers’ motivation to change their teaching behaviors.

**Conceptual Framework**

Part of the conceptual framework for this study is based on Bandura’s Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986), which focuses on the triadic reciprocal interactions between person, behavior, and environment. In Bandura’s Triadic Recipocality Theory, person, behavior, and environment all are posited to influence each other. Within a VAM based teacher evaluation context that results in merit pay, the person, behavior, and environment determinants may help explain a teacher’s motivation to change his/her teaching.

According to Bandura (1986), the environmental determinants are not fixed and must be activated in order to have an influence on one’s behavior and personal determinants. Within this particular study the environmental determinants might include the school community, grade level teams, and any administrators who play a role in the VAM process. Depending on the attitudes about teacher evaluation within the school environment, it could influence the amount of collaboration between teachers or how teachers approach their teacher evaluation scores.

The behavior determinants are defined as the action taken by an individual (Bandura, 1986). In relation to teacher evaluation and merit pay, a teacher’s behavior would focus on his/her instruction within the classroom as well as a teacher’s planning of instruction. For this
particular study I asked teachers about their behavior during day-to-day instruction, during formal and informal observations, as well as their methods for preparing students for the state standardized tests that are part of a teacher’s evaluation score.

The third set of determinants in this model is the person determinants. According to Bandura, the person determinants focus on one’s preferences, affects, thoughts, beliefs, personal characteristics, etc. (Bandura, 1986). For this study, the person determinants could include a teacher’s understanding of his/her teacher evaluation score, the value and control a teacher feels regarding his/her teacher evaluation, as well as any attributions for previous teacher evaluation scores. Several of these components are represented in control-value theory in regards to a teacher’s emotions and motivation.

**Control-Value Theory**

Along with Bandura’s Social Cognitive Theory (1986), this study is influenced by control-value theory (Pekrun, 2000, 2006) as it applies to teachers’ emotions and motivation when dealing with their personal VAM scores. In control-value theory, a person’s perceptions of an outcome can play a role in the emotions a person feels about an outcome or activity. Due to everyone having different perceptions of outcomes or activities, the way one teacher perceives his/her VAM can be different from another teacher, even if both received the same VAM score.

Within control-value theory, the basic assumptions focus on a person’s sense of control over and value for an outcome. These appraisals will influence a person’s motivations and emotions related to the outcome or activity. A person’s motivation and emotions can be based on a person’s perceptions of the outcome before or after receiving an outcome as well as during an activity. The two appraisals that play a role in a person’s emotions and motivation within control-value theory (Pekrun, 2000, 2006) are control and value. The control appraisal can be labeled as high to low depending on a person’s perception of control over obtaining a particular outcome. Simplified, the control appraisal is based on how much a person perceives he/she can influence or has influenced the outcome. A value appraisal is seen as the amount a person appreciates or cares about obtaining a particular outcome. According to Pekrun (2006) a person can have a positive value, thus holding a high value for the outcome, or a negative value, which is associated with not valuing the outcome. For example, a person with a high value of success as well as a high amount of control over the outcome will have anticipatory joy and more motivation to achieve the outcome. Whereas if a person does not value an outcome and feels
he/she has low control for the outcome, he/she would feel hopelessness and less motivation to achieve the outcome (Pekrun, 2006).

For this study, control-value appraisals may help explain a teacher’s emotion, attributions, and goals when dealing with his/her teacher evaluation and merit pay results. When looking at their teacher evaluations teachers may have separate perceptions of control and value for the VAM and observation parts of their teacher evaluation scores. This is possible due to teachers’ perceptions of each aspect as well as their particular goals for their students. The different appraisal perceptions for each aspect of his/her teacher evaluation may influence a teacher’s emotions and motivations surrounding his/her overall teacher evaluation score.

**Emerging Model**

This study was also influenced by my preliminary study (Pressley, 2014). The findings from that study were used to develop an emerging theoretical model (Figure 1.1).

---

**Figure 1.1** Emerging theoretical model of preliminary findings (Pressley, 2014). This model shows the relationships between the person, behavior, and environment determinants in regards to teacher motivation and the implementation of VAM. Dotted arrows suggest possible relationships in the future once merit pay in implemented.
This emerging theoretical model describes how the teachers’ lack of knowledge of their teacher evaluations leads to their dissatisfaction with their teacher evaluation score. The dissatisfaction with their teacher evaluation score is due to their expectancies based on their prior teacher evaluations and student test scores. Teachers who are dissatisfied with their teacher evaluation score are then motivated to learn more about their teacher evaluation, in particular the VAM aspect of their evaluation. The teachers who are not dissatisfied with their teacher evaluation scores are less motivated to learn more about the calculation of their VAM. Along with pushing teachers to gain knowledge about their teacher evaluation and VAM, their goals push the teachers to change their instruction. These changes in teaching are made based on what the teachers’ value. For the five focus teachers in my preliminary study, the value of receiving a high score on their observations and student learning was high. Because merit pay had not been implemented yet, the teachers could only speculate about the influence it would have on the school community. Teachers believed that merit pay would have a negative influence on the school community; it could also change teacher collaboration on grade level teams. The implementation of merit pay could potentially influence teacher dissatisfaction with their teacher evaluation scores as well as teacher behavior based on the effects on school environment.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this instrumental qualitative case study (Stake, 1995) was to explore elementary teachers’ perceptions of the effects of VAM being implemented in teacher evaluations specifically on their school community and motivation to change their instruction. This study focused on teachers’ knowledge of VAM in teacher evaluations, the affect VAM and merit pay have on the school community, and the teachers’ perceptions of their behaviors within the classroom due to the implementation of VAM in their teacher evaluations. The teachers’ perceptions were defined as teachers’ feelings and motivation toward the implementation of VAM. VAM was defined as an estimate of the impact a teacher or school has on student academic gains within a school year (Ladd & Walsh, 2002; Papay, 2011; Rivers & Sanders, 2002). For this study, I asked the following research question: What role does VAM play in how teachers view their work in the school and school community? Additionally, the following sub-questions helped address the primary research question:

1) What knowledge do teachers have of VAM?
2) How do teachers feel about having VAM as part of their teacher evaluation?
3) How do teachers perceive VAM influencing their motivation to change their teaching?
4) How do teachers perceive that merit pay (based in part on VAM scores) will influence of their school community?

In the following chapters, I review the current literature discussing VAM, and teacher motivation. I also discuss the current VAM laws and model in Florida. I then describe the specific methods for this study.
CHAPTER 2  
LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of the value-added model (VAM) is to calculate a quantitative score that represents student growth during a year of instruction under a specific teacher (Braun, 2005; Harris, 2009; Sanders & Horn, 1998). Schools and districts can also use VAM as one of the main forms of evaluation to determine how student performances change from year to year within schools and classrooms (Ladd & Walsh, 2002). Though the state of Florida is currently in the beginning stages of implementing VAM into teacher evaluations, VAM has been used in other states and districts for many years (Hill, Kapitula & Umland, 2011).

One of the first states to implement VAM into teacher evaluations was Tennessee in 1993. The Tennessee Value Added Assessment System (TVAAS) was implemented due to the passing of the state bill known as the Education Improvement Act in 1992, which focused on establishing equal funding for every district in the state of Tennessee (Sanders & Horn, 1998). Created by Dr. William Sanders, TVAAS includes data from the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP), which includes scores from five subject areas tested in grades three through eight. The subjects tested include math, science, social studies, reading, and language arts. The TVAAS also includes end-of-course exams for five math courses at the high school level. These scores are accumulated over time to determine how effective teachers, schools, and districts are over time (Rivers & Sanders, 2002; Sanders, 2000; Sanders & Horn, 1998; Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997).

Due to this accumulation of data over time, this model is known as a layered model, which allows teacher effects to go across grades. Thus, each year students’ VAM is calculated using their current performance along with their previous scores within that school. This use of longitudinal data enables tracking of teacher effects throughout different grade levels (McCaffrey, Lockwood, Kortez, Louis, & Hamilton, 2004). Along with providing information in regards to effectiveness, the TVAAS reports can also be used to help schools develop a proper curriculum that challenges and allows for growth for all students (Sanders & Horn, 1998). In this model, student and school effects are not controlled for when computing a teacher’s VAM. In the state-level models the district effects are included in the analysis (Hill et al., 2011). By not including any student or school effects, this model does not include race or socioeconomic status,
which could affect overall VAM scores (Amerin-Beardsley, 2008). Tennessee was still using the TVAAS until the spring of 2014 when the state board of education decided against tying VAM scores to teacher license renewal decisions. The state has yet to develop a new plan for measuring teachers’ performances (Cheshier, 2014).

Though the model being used in Tennessee, which does not control for student or school effects, has led to the most popular VAM used today, The Education Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS), there are several other models being used across the United States that include different variables (Amrein-Beardsley, 2008; Hill et al., 2011). One model that has been in place for several years is the Dallas Independent School District Model. The Dallas model controls for student demographic and school variables and does not include students’ past test scores for the current teacher’s VAM (Hill et al., 2011; Weerasinghe, 2008). Though it does not control for past student scores, the Dallas model is considered one of the more complete models because it includes students’ race, which can help balance the school effects on teachers’ scores (Harris, 2011; Ladd & Walsh, 2002). The reasoning to include race is “at best it serves as a proxy for income and family characteristics, such as low income and single parent families, for which other data were not available” (Ladd & Walsh, 2002, p. 3). This allows schools with a high percentage of minority students to be evaluated similarly to other schools in the district (Ladd & Walsh, 2002).

Another popular VAM is the IMPACT model used in Washington D. C., which was first implemented in 2009 (DCPS, 2009). The IMPACT model uses previous student test results in the model (Hill et al., 2011), which would show previous student achievement coming into the current grade-level. All of these models are different in one way or another, which has led to some of the uncertainties regarding the variables that should be included in the model when it comes to looking at teacher effectiveness. The variables that are included or not included in each model could lead to different results, which could affect teacher jobs and pay (McCaffery et al., 2004). Variables, such as student characteristics and outside factors that are out of the teachers control, can have a major influence on students’ learning gains as well as the expectations set for students; these variables are not included in all models and can change teachers’ VAM scores (Ballou, 2005; Harris, 2011).
VAM in Florida

Florida VAM Model

Entering the 2014-2015 school year, VAM will be in the third year of implementation in the state of Florida. Under the Student Success Act and Race to the Top, VAM is used for as much as 50% of a teacher’s evaluation. By using VAM in teacher evaluations, the state hopes to see improved instruction, gains in student learning, as well as inform professional development decisions for teachers (Copa, 2012). As mentioned in the section above, there are many different types of VAMs, which include different variables in each model. In Florida, VAM includes student, classroom, and school characteristics. When looking at student characteristics, some of the variables added for each student include previous test scores, special needs of the student, such as disabilities or English language learner, as well as student attendance for the current year and previous student retention (Copa, 2012; Senate Bill 736). Classroom characteristics for this model include class size and the similarity of student test scores when they entered the class. Lastly, the school characteristics can vary by school, but control for school factors that are outside of the teacher’s control (Copa, 2012). An example of a school characteristic would be school demographics, such as if the school is labeled as a Title 1 school.

The other 50% of a teacher’s evaluation includes observations of instruction conducted by a school administrator. The observation component of a teacher’s VAM varies for each district, but would include formal and informal observations throughout the school year. These observations are based on a teacher’s instruction and other professional responsibilities within the school (Senate Bill 736). One of the popular tools used for teacher observations in Florida, and the tool used by the districts in this study, is the Marzano, Carbaugh, Rutherford, and Toth (2014) tool. Marzano et al. (2014) includes nine different domains that an administrator can look for when in a classroom. These domains include communicating learning goals, establishing rules and routines, helping students interact and practice new knowledge, engaging students, establishing effective relationships, and communicating high expectations (Marzano et al., 2014).

Florida Senate Bill 736

In 2011, the Florida senate passed Senate Bill 736, the Student Success Act. This Bill outlined the new performance based evaluations for teachers, administrators, and other instructional personnel to focus more on student performance. In order to evaluate teachers based on student performances the Bill states that beginning in 2014-2015 schools must
administer assessments that align with Common Core Standards and measure student mastery of content (NGA & CSSO, 2010; Senate Bill 736, 2011). Previously, the assessments used to calculate teacher VAM scores were the Florida Comprehensive Assessment (FCAT) and any other statewide assessment because these assessments were developed to assess what students were learning in the current year (Senate Bill 736, 2011). In the 2014-2015 school year, the new assessment to be used to calculate teacher VAM scores is the Florida Standard Assessment.

Senate Bill 736 states that any new teachers hired on or after July 1, 2014 will be part of the merit pay system. The merit pay system will allow teachers who are classified as effective or highly effective, to earn a bonus of 50% to 75% of their base salary each year. Teachers under the new merit pay system do not have the opportunity to hold tenure and are only eligible to sign yearly contracts. Current teachers who are classified as effective can continue with their tenured contract if they previously held tenure, which would opt them out of merit pay if they wish to stay on their current pay scale (Senate Bill 736).

In regards to contracts, school districts have the right to not renew any teacher contracts for teachers who receive two consecutive unsatisfactory evaluations, two unsatisfactory evaluations in three years, or three consecutive needs improvement or unsatisfactory evaluations. In order for a teacher to be labeled, as needs improvement a teacher’s score would be “below the standard for evaluation with some degree of statistical confidence-68%” (Copa, 2012, p. 38). A teacher who is labeled as unsatisfactory has a VAM score that “falls below the standard for evaluation, with a high degree of statistical confidence-95%” (Copa, 2012, p. 38). If a teacher who falls into one of these three categories does receive a new contract, the district is required to inform parents of students in that teacher’s classroom that the teacher has received unsatisfactory evaluations in the past (Senate Bill 736). It is important to note, that a majority of Florida teachers have been labeled as effective or highly effective. In the 2013-2014 school year, 41.9% of teachers were labeled highly effective, 55.7% effective, 1.4% needed improvement, 1.7% developing, and .3% as unsatisfactory (FLDOE, 2014).

**Florida Senate Bill 1664**

In 2013, Governor Rick Scott signed Senate Bill 1664, which altered the Student Success Act, Senate Bill 736. Originally, teachers who did not teach a subject or grade level that assessed students using a state standardized test at the end of the year had the average test scores of their school used in their teacher evaluations for the student performance part. This meant
that teachers were being assessed on students they may not teach during that particular school year. However, this new Bill requires school districts to develop new student achievement measures for the students of these teachers (Senate Bill 1664).

**Issues with VAM**

Policy makers, principals, and teachers are all trying to determine an accurate and efficient means of assessing teachers’ effectiveness. As introduced earlier, there are several different variations of VAM that make it hard to determine which one is most accurate and reliable for estimating teacher effectiveness. Determining the most effective model could be very important especially if more states begin to include teachers’ VAM scores as a part of teacher evaluations and for merit pay (Watanabe, 2011; Winerip, 2011; Wiser, 2011). Over the last decade several models have been developed because of validity and reliability concerns with the use of VAM in teacher evaluations.

One of the major issues with using VAM in evaluations is that the models contain many problems (Rothstein, 2009). Inconsistency in teacher rankings demonstrates that VAM estimates may not be robust for making high-stakes decisions. Researchers have argued that VAMs are very instable with VAM scores changing depending on the test given or the model used to calculate a teacher’s VAM (Goldhaber, Goldschmidt, & Tseng, 2013; Papay, 2011). The inconsistency of the VAM scores from year to year means that only one-third of the top teachers will remain highly effective teachers during the next school year, with one out of ten falling to the bottom quintile of teacher effectiveness (McCaffery, Sass, Lockwood, & Mihaley, 2009). This might occur because of the differences of students in a teacher’s class from year to year.

Inconsistencies also were found with teachers who were ranked differently with different models depending on factors such as student demographics and student characteristics. Teachers with more African-American, Hispanic, and low-income students were ranked lower when these characteristics were not controlled for in the model (Hill et al., 2011; Newton, Darling-Hammond, Haertel, & Thomas, 2010). Other issues that researchers found with VAM were that the tests given to the students also play a factor in teacher rankings (Lockwood et al., 2007; Papay, 2011). Papay (2011) found that calculating teachers’ VAM scores separately using three different reading tests resulted in different teachers ranked as best performing. Explanations for the differences include measurement error as well as when the tests were given to students. Therefore, Papay (2011) suggested that administrators should approach any high-stakes
decisions based on VAM scores with caution due to sensitivity of VAM scores. It is also important to note that the state standardized tests being used in the VAM were originally developed to assess student learning, rather than teacher effectiveness. The different use of the state standardized test than it was originally validated for can play a role in the validity of the scores (Riffert, 2005).

Along with inconsistency of scores from year to year, model to model, and test to test, researchers have found that VAM scores are inconsistent in differentiating between effective and ineffective teachers. A specific example of this was found by Hill et al. (2011). They found that teacher value-added scores did not always correlate with good teaching practices observed in the classroom. Instead, Hill et al. (2011) found teachers with high value-added scores could range from very effective teachers to ineffective teachers with poor classroom management, unengaged students, and very little teaching going on in their classroom. They further stated that the value-added scores make it impossible to see which teachers are using effective teaching practices and which teachers have inconsistent classrooms, some of which are “potentially harmful to students’ learning” (Hill et al., 2011, p. 824). The inconsistencies in VAM scores can be the difference between a teacher being labeled as effective or ineffective, which under new teacher accountability laws could be the difference in a teacher keeping a job (Baker, Oluwole, & Green, 2013).

Along with validity issues with VAM scores, other teacher effectiveness indicators have not always aligned with VAM scores. Polikoff and Porter (2014) conducted a study with 272 teachers from six different school districts in the United States, who taught either English language arts or math in fourth or eighth grade and also participated in the Measuring Teacher Effectiveness study (MET, 2013). The researchers looked at the correlations between teacher survey responses about instructional alignment as well as VAM scores and pedagogical quality measures, which included student surveys and observation scores. The findings from this study resulted in a weak correlation ($r < .30$) between pedagogical instruction quality and VAM scores. The researchers hypothesized that some reasons for such a small correlation could be the lack of training the participants had with the survey instrument, the small sample size, or unobservable classroom and teacher characteristics. Due to their findings, the researchers suggested several interpretations of their findings. These interpretations included: 1) “instructional alignment and pedagogical quality are not important in standards-based reform theory suggests for affecting
student learning” (p.16), 2) “instructional alignment and pedagogical quality are important as previously thought” (p.16) and the surveys used did not capture this aspect of teaching, and finally 3) VAM is not able to show the “differences in content and quality of classroom instruction” (Polikoff & Porter, 2014, p.16).

Because of the validity and reliability issues of VAM, researchers have suggested that VAM should not be the only determination of a teacher’s evaluation, but rather the evaluation should also include other variables such as teacher observations (Hill et al., 2011; Newton et al, 2011; Ravitch, 2002). Including other aspects in a teacher’s evaluation may help paint a more complete picture of a teacher’s effectiveness. These issues of concern over VAM have led the American Statistical Association (ASA) to release a statement with several recommendations on the use of VAM. Some of these recommendations include understanding the limitations of VAM especially in high-stakes situations, caution when interpreting VAM scores, and the understanding of VAM scores showing correlations, not causation (ASA, 2014). More specifically the ASA suggests that VAM cannot measure teacher’s promotion of creativity with students or collaboration with other teachers within the school. Also, because VAM is a statistical model, it has standard errors that should be reported with the teacher scores. Lastly, the ASA states that some VAM scores may be biased due to the specific students assigned to a teacher, such as gifted or special education students. Another potential outcome of the validity and reliability issues surrounding VAM are the lawsuits by teachers who have lost their jobs due to ineffective teacher evaluations and VAM scores. Due to the validity and reliability issues with VAM scores, researchers believe that VAM scores cannot provide enough evidence for termination (Baker et al., 2013; Pullin, 2013).

Although these studies (Hill et al., 2011; Newton et al., 2011; Papay, 2011; Polikoff & Porter, 2014) indicated existing validity issues concerning the use of VAM on teacher evaluations, there are aspects to point out when looking more closely at these articles. The first thing is that while a majority of these studies (Newton et al., 2011; Papay, 2011; Polikoff & Porter, 2014) used quantitative methods, they did not test correlations between VAM scores and actual observation scores. Hill et al. (2011) were the only researchers to include observations, interviews, and survey data in their approach when looking at the reliability of VAM in their specific case studies. Even though Hill et al. (2011) were the only researchers to use teacher observations, they only focused on one school district and specifically on 24 middle school math
teachers located in that district. The sample included in the study was fairly diverse, but it did not include teachers who taught special education students. The authors also did not specify the student demographics, even though several models used in the study did control for this variable, included in the specific case studies, which could affect a teacher’s VAM score. Furthermore, Papay (2011) also chose to remove classrooms with high numbers of special education and English language learning students. Along with not including classrooms with high numbers of exceptional students, the final sample used for the study only included 50 to 70 percent of the students per grade level. This seems like a fair amount of students to exclude, yet teacher VAM scores include all of their students not just a portion. Newton et al. (2010) also were limited in their data sets due to student mobility issues, and they also faced problems measuring student learning gains because they measured VAM based on end of the course exams.

Even though there have been several studies that provide support for the validity and reliability problems of VAM (Hill et al., 2011; Papay, 2011; Rothstein, 2009), not all research provides negative support for the use of VAM in teacher evaluations. One of the popular claims as discussed above is the inconsistency with labeling teachers. Though this seems to be an issue that needs to be looked at in the future, there are research studies that found VAM scores are significantly correlated with principals’ ratings of teachers; however, this correlation was weak (Harris & Sass, 2006; Jacob & Lefgren, 2008). However, one limitation in Jacob and Lefgren (2008) was that the authors had to normalize principals’ ratings to have the same variance to get their results. Thus the authors made sure that each principal had the same variance, which may or may not be the case when it comes to VAM differences between schools. The authors admit that doing this could lead to misleading correlations.

Researchers have also argued that teacher VAM scores have the potential to improve educational policy and student achievement compared to other models such as school value-added or decisions based on teacher credentials (Harris, 2009). VAM also can be seen as another tool to help hold teachers and schools accountable for student learning in order to continue pushing for effective teachers to be in every classroom: “Educators want to improve and value-added measures provide an additional tool in the arsenal to make this happen, both by holding individuals educators and leaders accountable and it holding practices and programs accountable” (Harris, 2011, p. 172). Lastly, VAM can give administrators some idea of what and how much a student has learned in a particular class (Baker et al., 2013).
Counterarguments against the ASA (2014) statement of recommendations regarding the use of VAM have been provided by Chetty, Friedman, and Rockoff (2014). Chetty et al. (2014) cited previous research studies that they argued countered the ASA’s points about the limitations and interpretations of VAM scores. Chetty et al. argued that VAMs are complicated statistical models, but teachers and administrators can be trained to properly interpret VAM data. Having teachers and administrators learn about VAM could reduce the limitations of VAM’s use in schools. Chetty et al. also argued that there is a growing body of evidence to support that teacher effectiveness as measured by VAM scores can be causally linked to student achievement. They cited four experimental and quasi-experimental studies that provide support of the causal impact of teachers’ on student growth scores, including the MET study (2013) and one of their own studies on the long-term effects of highly effective VAM teachers (Chetty, Friedman, & Rockoff, 2013). Chetty et al. (2013) used a quasi-experimental design linking teacher VAM scores to later students’ tax data. This was done to track the students’ adult earnings, college attendance and teenage birthrates. They found that students who had teachers with higher VAM scores made more money, were more likely to attend college, and were less likely to have a child as a teenager. However, this article did not include any random assignment of students. Since the release of Chetty et al.’s (2014) statement, other researchers have critiqued Chetty et al.’s argument, questioning the findings in the articles cited in Chetty et al.’s counterargument (Pivovarova, Broatch, & Amerin-Beardsley, 2014).

One way researchers have agreed the reliability of VAM could be improved would be by randomly assigning students to classes (Newton et al., 2010). This, however, is impossible in today’s world due to parents having the control to pick schools and school districts, as well as some schools allowing teachers with seniority to pick particular students for their classes (Braun, 2005). One of the few studies to randomly assign students was the MET Study (Kane, McCafferey, Miller, & Staiger, 2013; MET, 2013), which randomly assigned rosters of students (rather than individual students) to teachers. In the first year of the study, teacher effectiveness was measured based on student test scores, observations, and student surveys. Students were not randomly assigned during the first year of the study. In the second year of the study, rosters of students randomly assigned to teachers, who had been labeled as more or less effective based on their evaluation from the previous school year.
The MET study (Kane, et al., 2013; MET, 2013) found that students who were in more effective teachers’ classrooms had larger gains compared to their predicted scores in math and English language arts compared to students in less effective teachers’ classrooms. Along with focusing on the effects of teachers on student gains, the researchers also compared four different VAMs for measuring a teacher’s effectiveness using student test scores. The results from the four different models suggested “schools should control for student baseline scores” and not control for “mean characteristics of students” (Kane et al., 2013, p. 35).

The MET study (MET, 2013) also painted a picture of the pros and cons of using different weighting schemes for VAM, observations, and student surveys in teacher evaluations. The researchers compared four different weighted models to determine the best way to measure a teacher’s effectiveness. The researchers used the data collected on the teachers in MET (2013) to compare the four different models. The researchers did not state which was the best model but provided pros and cons of using the different models. Some of these include weighting student test scores 65 percent or higher to get the most accurate results, but might lead to negative effects such as teaching to the test. If a school was to lower the state assessment weight it might increase stability of VAM scores from year to year as well as increase the correlation of student test scores with other tests. However, lowering the student achievement aspect and raising the weight of observations and student surveys might lower reliability of teacher effectiveness composite scores. In the end, the researchers suggested that school districts should decide how to weight their teacher evaluations so that the results are reliable but are not pushing teachers to teach to the test (MET, 2013).

Even though researchers concur that randomization of students is key in the use of VAM (Newton et al., 2010), principals do not see randomization of students as a practical way to assign students and could be detrimental to student learning. Instead of using random assignment, principals look to place students to get the best outcomes based on student background and characteristics (Paulfer & Amrein-Beardsley, 2013). However, if the randomization of students was possible in schools, VAM has shown to be an effective way to evaluate teachers in this situation (Kane & Staiger, 2008).

Due to the high-stakes decisions being made using VAM scores, it is important to address these validity and reliability issues surrounding VAM. In the state of Florida, VAM scores will soon be used to award merit pay to teachers. Any validity and reliability issues surrounding
VAM could potentially affect a teacher’s perception of the VAM policy. It is also important to address how pay for performance may affect teacher motivation to change their instruction. Previous literature on merit pay focuses on the impact on student scores, but does not explore the role it plays in teachers’ motivation to change their instruction in order to receive extra money. As seen in my conceptual framework, the environment, person, and behavior determinants found in Bandura’s Social Cognitive Theory (1986) and Triadic Reciprocality Theory (1986) could potentially affect a teacher’s motivation to change his/her instruction.

**Teacher Perceptions of VAM/Student Data in Teacher Evaluations**

Due to the newness of VAM, there is limited research focusing on teacher perceptions of VAM or the use of student data in teacher evaluations. I could identify only two studies about teachers’ feelings regarding the inclusion of VAM on teacher evaluations. Lee (2011) conducted a mixed-methods study by analyzing reactions to VAM that teachers posted to the Internet. The teacher VAM scores were calculated and posted by a newspaper in California. The newspaper allowed the teachers whose VAM scores were posted an opportunity to respond to their score on an online message board. The postings were public and included information about the teacher including their VAM scores in English and Math, overall VAM ranking in the district, employment history and the teachers’ response to the post. All teachers included in this study were employed by a large urban school district. Lee (2011) also tested whether teachers’ opinions differed depending on their teacher evaluation ranking and if there was a relationship between teacher ranking and total years of teaching experience (Lee, 2011). Lee (2011) found that most teachers (221 out of 293) were either negative towards or disagreed with the use of VAM. The teachers who were more positive about the VAM were ranked as effective, but even most of them had some negative comments towards VAM or disagreed with VAM. Lee (2011) found that teachers did not want to be evaluated based solely on their VAM scores, but wished to have an evaluation that addressed the whole student, not just a simple test score, because many factors that teachers cannot control such as home life, parents, and incoming student level play a role in a student’s education.

A more recent study focused on teachers’ perceptions and teacher knowledge of VAM in Florida (Cocke, 2014). Cocke (2014) used a self-created online survey to get responses from 117 K-12 teachers from districts that were randomly selected from the five educational policy regions. The results from this study found that teachers had a lack of knowledge of VAM and
had negative feelings toward VAM. The teachers who were surveyed were not confident in the accuracy of VAM and were concerned that VAM scores could affect their teaching careers (Cocke, 2014). Some limitations for this study are that it did not include teachers from every district and not all teachers in the selected districts participated in the study, which make it hard to generalize the findings. For this study, I used questions focusing on teacher perceptions from Cocke’s (2014) survey in order to gain information regarding teachers’ perceptions of VAM.

When it comes to teacher knowledge of VAM, Amrein-Beardsley and Collins (2012) found in a mixed-methods quasi-experimental case study that teachers had limited knowledge of their VAM score. The first author in this case study was asked to testify in a court case on behalf of four teachers, who taught either elementary or middle school from Houston ISD. These four teachers were let go from their teaching positions because of their low VAM scores. The authors used these four teachers’ specific cases as a multiple case study focusing on the effects of using VAM in teacher evaluations. One of the main findings from this case study was that the teachers were confused with how student learning could be measured with a standardized test as well as with the actual calculations of VAM scores. This made it hard for the teachers to use the VAM output to guide their instruction or development. These findings are similar to the findings in my preliminary study (Pressley, 2014), in which the teachers had limited knowledge of the variables included in VAM and the calculation of a VAM score. The teachers in my preliminary study also did not see VAM as a useful tool for improving teaching (Pressley, 2014). Polikoff and Porter’s (2014) findings of weak correlations between pedagogical quality and VAM scores also provide evidence to suggest that teachers not use VAM outputs to change their instruction.

Another study did not specifically look at teachers’ perceptions of VAM, but did focus on teachers’ perceptions of including student data on teacher evaluations. Using a survey of 166 K-12 teachers, Hopkins (2013) found that the teachers had a positive view of including student data on their evaluations, especially after having experience with student data on evaluations. The teachers in this study also felt that including student data limited the amount of bias an administrator could have and made evaluations “more objective” (Hopkins, 2013, p. 117). However, the teachers who did not have experience with student data being used on evaluations had concerns such as not knowing or understanding how student data would impact their evaluation as well as feeling that including student data would push teachers to focus their instruction around the test content. A limitation of this study, however, is that the weight of
student performance in the evaluations was not the same for all teachers who participated in this study. In some cases test scores were only 20 percent of the evaluation for one teacher while they were 50 percent for another teacher’s evaluation. The differences in weights could possibly factor into teachers’ perspectives of the use of student data in their evaluation. However, this study did not compare how the different weights played a role in a teacher’s perspective of having student data in teacher evaluations. Overall, teachers with experience having student data included in their teacher evaluations felt their evaluations could help teachers develop lesson plans, identify areas of weakness in their teaching, and help identify students who are not grasping a particular concept, which contradicts findings of the research focused on teachers’ perspectives about VAM (Amrein-Beardsley & Collins, 2012; Pressley, 2014).

There are still limited research articles on teacher knowledge and feelings of VAM being implemented in their teacher evaluations. My studies adds to this literature as well as give teachers an opportunity to voice their feelings regarding a policy that impacts their career.

**Pay for Performance**

One way that states and school districts have pushed to motivate teachers to improve student outcomes is to begin paying teachers extra who have students with high standardized test scores (Springer & Winters, 2009). The implementation of merit pay for teachers could push teachers to become more effective teachers (Springer & Winters, 2009). Three experimental studies focused on teachers and merit pay in Tennessee and New York City, offering teachers in the treatment groups the opportunity to make extra money based on student performances and found no long lasting positive effects (Fryer, 2011; Springer et al., 2011; Springer & Winters, 2009). One of the performance based systems that has seen limited student improvement over time is based in North Carolina (Vigdor, 2008). However, the North Carolina system is based on whole school performance and not individual teacher results. When reviewing the pay for performance system in North Carolina, Vigdor (2008) found small gains specifically in math, but the results of the merit pay program did not close the achievement gap between low and high socio-economic schools. Vigdor (2008) also found one effect of awarding teachers based on the school’s performance has been teachers leaving lower-performing schools.

Even with these studies finding negligible effects on student achievement (Springer et al., 2011; Springer & Winters, 2009) or even worse results (e.g., decrease in student achievement) (Fryer, 2011), there have been studies conducted outside of the United States, which found
results that suggest merit pay can have a major positive impact on student performance (Lavy, 2002, 2008; Muralidharan & Sundararaman, 2011). The two following experimental studies found significant improvement in student test scores.

Muralidharan and Sundararaman (2011) used a mixed-method approach to measure teacher behaviors, motivation, and student achievement. The tests used for the student achievement was based on skills found in the textbooks used in schools. The study had an experimental design using random assignment by randomly selecting 500 schools in rural India that represented the different government run schools in that area of the country. The authors also did not provide evidence of validity for the test for student outcomes specifically created for this study. Among the differences in culture and school systems, it is important to note that the schools selected in Muralidharan and Sundararaman (2011) were rural schools in India, which had very low teacher pay especially when compared to teachers in the United States. Lastly, the merit pay system developed for this study did not included any penalties for ineffective teachers unlike the systems in Florida, where teachers could potentially lose their job based on their performances.

Lavy (2002) conducted a quasi-experimental study in Israel, providing group bonuses based on test scores, number of credit hours taken and the school’s drop-out rate. In order to participate in the study, the school had to be “the only one of its kind in the community and a secondary comprehensive school” (Lavy, 2002, p. 1290). Schools in the top third would then receive bonuses with 75% of the bonuses going to the teachers and the remaining bonus helping to improve the school facilities. This study found significant gains in test scores, an increase in credits taken, and an increase in students from disadvantaged backgrounds completing their secondary exams. Lavy (2008) also used a quasi-experimental design to conduct another study in Israel. This study focused on individual pay for performance bonuses for high school teachers in Israel. The bonuses were given to tenth, eleventh, and twelfth teachers and were based on their student’s national test scores. The bonuses ranged from $1,750 to $7,500 per class based on a rank-order of test scores. Lavy (2008) found forty-eight percent of the teachers received some type of award. He also found that students with teachers in the incentive program improved on their math and English scores. Lavy (2008) also found that teachers’ effort and instruction improved, especially when it came to lower performing students. Despite positive impacts of Lavy (2002, 2008) in Israel and Muralidharan and Sundararaman (2011) in India,
teachers in the US have not reported positive lasting effects in student achievement associated with merit pay (Fryer, 2011; Springer et al., 2011; Springer & Winters, 2009)

**Teacher perspective on pay for performance.** The main people that will be impacted by the implementation of merit pay in any school are teachers. Teachers’ perspectives could play a major role in the implementation of these policies. When it comes to teachers’ perspectives of the implementation of merit pay into schools on a descriptive questionnaire, a majority of teachers seem to oppose performance pay (Forand, 2013) and do not believe their teaching behaviors will change due to performance pay being available (Forand, 2013; Springer et al., 2011). However, private school teachers seem to be more in favor of merit pay compared to public school teachers (Ballou, 2001; Ballou & Podgursky, 1993). One concern teachers had with the pay for performance was the increase in competition between teachers, which could cut down on collaboration between teachers (Forand, 2013; Jacob & Springer, 2008). However, in an experimental study, treatment schools in Tennessee that were offered bonuses had an increase in teacher collaboration (Springer et al., 2011). Collaboration was not the only behavior that changed due to merit pay; more alignment with standards and test preparation occurred in these schools, similar to the literature discussed in the teacher motivation section.

Jacob and Springer (2008) surveyed K-12 teachers on their attitudes about pay for performance and found mixed teacher feelings. In this particular study, the researchers found that teachers had very little knowledge of the pay for performance system that was being implemented, similar to my preliminary study findings (Pressley, 2014). When it came to teacher attitudes toward pay for performance, most teachers did not think it was beneficial to teaching and learning, and elementary teachers were least supportive of pay for performance. However, new teachers, and teachers who felt that their principal was a strong leader, were more supportive of a pay for performance system.

With negative effects on collaboration being a concern of teachers (Forand, 2013; Jacob & Springer, 2008), one way merit pay could possibly increase collaboration would be by team pay for performance. Springer et al. (2012) conducted a two-year experimental study in Texas offering bonuses to grade level teams based on student VAM scores. Individual teachers on the team had to have personal VAM scores of average or better and the team had to be in the top third of the school to receive the bonus. Springer et al. (2012) found that 78% of the teachers did not believe in changing their instruction for the bonus and there was no difference in teacher
attitudes between the control and treatment groups with most teachers expressing that the pay for performance did not hurt the school community. There was also no difference in student achievement between the control and treatment groups. Springer et al. concluded that some possible reasons for these results could be the limited amount of time the treatment teachers had to implement change, lack of understanding by teachers of how the bonus system worked, and that teachers did not seem motivated by the chance to earn a bonus.

As Florida begins to implement merit pay for teachers in the 2014-2015 school year, the research suggests that there are mixed results when it comes to improvement of student outcomes. Given the right situations, merit pay has been shown to be effective, but currently the long lasting gains have yet to be seen in the United States (Springer et al., 2011; Springer & Winters, 2013). Along with the mixed results of student outcomes, teachers also seem to have mixed feelings toward the implementation of merit pay depending on the teaching situation (Ballou, 2001; Forand, 2013; Springer et al., 2011). Teachers worry about the negative effects of merit pay in schools, but do not believe it would change their quality of work or instruction (Springer et al., 2011). Even with the growing body of literature focusing on pay for performance previous studies have not specifically looked at the impact pay for performance has on teacher motivation to change their instruction. My study adds to the literature on teacher perspectives about VAM and motivation to change instruction due to the implementation of VAM in Florida teacher evaluations.

**Theoretical Framework**

As mentioned in Chapter 1, I used Bandura’s Social Cognitive theory and his Triadic Reciprocality model (1986), control-value theory (Pekrun, 2006), and my developing framework from my preliminary study to investigate teachers’ motivation to change their teaching as well as the effect of merit pay on individual teachers’ attitudes and behaviors and possible impacts on the school community. Bandura’s Social Cognitive theory (1986) describes how relationships among the environmental determinants, personal determinants, and behavior determinants play a role in one’s motivation. Within the conducted study, the implementation of VAM and merit pay policies (environmental aspects) in connection with teachers’ personal perceptions (personal aspects), and instructional behaviors (behavioral aspects) could potentially impact teachers’ motivation to change teaching. Furthermore, Bandura’s reciprocality model suggests that each of these three aspects (environment, person, behavior) reciprocally influence each other. For
example in relation to my previous research when teachers did not receive enough information from the school on VAM (environmental), which led to teacher dissatisfaction (personal) and thus led to teachers changing their instructional behaviors only during administrator observations (behavior). Similarly, Control-value theory (Pekrun, 2006) focuses on ways that a person’s perceptions of personal control and personal values affect his/her emotions, motivations, and behaviors. Reciprocally, a person’s emotions and/or motivations could influence his/her perception of control and value. From my previous research the amount of control and value a teacher felt regarding his/her teacher evaluation may have played a role in his/her behaviors when preparing lessons, delivering lessons to students, and preparing for formal observations.

In the following sections I describe the person determinants in a teacher’s perception of his/her teacher evaluation score. Theories addressing person determinants that I will overview have played a role help frame my research questions and helped me to analyze the data for this study. These theories include control-value theory (Pekrun, 2006), self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1997) and attribution theory (Weiner, 1972). I will also discuss literature on environment determinants that may play a role in a teacher’s motivation to change their instruction. Some of these environment factors might include the school climate (Johnson & Stevens, 2006) and collective efficacy (Bandura, 1997). The following sections will discuss the literature related to these person and environment determinants and their relationship to my particular study.

**Person Factors**

There are several factors that could be included in Bandura’s person related factors in respect to how teachers might change their teachings. In the following sections control-value theory, the impact of high stakes testing, self-efficacy theory, and attribution theory. Research shows that these could be important factors that influence teachers motivation to change their instruction.

**Control-value theory.** Control-value theory applies to a person’s motivation and emotion, which depend on the amount of perceived control and perceived value for the outcome or activity. Control-value theory can be used to help explain teachers’ perceptions about changing their instruction in order to get higher student test scores. Depending on the teacher, a teacher might feel that he/she has control of particular aspects of getting higher test scores. Each teacher will also have a different value of his/her teacher evaluation score depending on the goals that he/she has set for the school year. Some determinants that might impact the emotions and
motivations surrounding a teacher’s evaluation include the amount of control a teacher feels he/she has over his/her teacher evaluation and how much a teacher values his/her teacher evaluation (Pressley, 2014). Though there have not been studies conducted that focus on teachers’ motivation to change their instruction due to VAM or teacher evaluations, there have been studies that focused on teacher motivation in general as well as teacher motivation to change instruction due to standardized testing (Finnigan & Gross, 2007), teacher efficacy (Gabriele & Joram, 2007), and professional development (Harmon, Gordanier, Henry, & George, 2007). There have also been studies that focused on teachers changing their instruction because of the pressure put on students to do well on standardized tests given at the end of the year (Abrams, Pedulla, & Madaus, 2003; Barksdale-Ladd & Thomas, 2000; Finnigan & Gross, 2007). In this section I will review articles that focus on the positive and negative effects of teachers changing their instruction to get higher test scores and on teachers changing instruction due to the pressure put on students to perform.

High stakes testing. High stakes testing can have an impact on teachers’ instruction and the research has found that there can be negative and positive incentives of the role of high stakes testing. One of the negative incentives that motivates teachers in regards to their jobs is the pressure to have their students get high student test scores on standardized assessments (Abrams et al., 2003; Barksdale-Ladd et al., 2000). The pressure to get high student test scores can lead to teachers fearing loss of their professional status as well as fearing of loss of their jobs or money (Barksdale-Ladd & Thomas, 2000; Finnigan & Gross, 2007). Teachers saw the fear of being labeled as a bad teacher as hurting their credibility as expert teachers (Finnigan & Gross, 2007). Finnigan and Gross (2007) used a mixed methods study that looked at 10 low performing schools in Chicago, which included 5 schools that had just been removed from probation status and 4 schools still on probation for poor student test scores. Thus, the findings from this study may not be applicable to all teachers, especially those teachers who are teaching at high performing schools.

Finningan and Gross found (2007) that avoiding of these negative feelings can often be a motivator for teachers to change their teaching. A feeling of low morale can also lead to teacher burnout and a reason to leave the teaching profession. Supporting this research, Lee (2011) reported that when teachers’ student test scores are made public, it may produce feelings such as shame, guilt, and anger for teachers due to the lack of privacy and the pressure to perform. To
avoid the feelings of public humiliation teachers may feel the need to change their instruction to produce higher student test scores.

Another negative incentive of high stakes testing is the influence on teachers to change their instruction around the tests (Faulkner & Cook, 2006; Finnigan & Gross, 2007; Hargrove et al., 2000; Jones & Egley, 2007). To increase test scores teachers have changed their instruction to include building practice assessments similar to standardized tests for students to use in daily practice (Abrams et al., 2003; Smith, 1991) as well as focusing less on untested content and enrichment activities (Abrams et al., 2003; Barksdale-Ladd & Thomas, 2000; Springer et al., 2011). Teachers may feel that the amount of time spent on a subject is one of the aspects they can control to influence student outcomes. Even though teachers are making these changes in their teaching, not all teachers believe that these changes are developmentally appropriate for students. Indeed some of the changes made “contradicted their own notions of sound educational practice,” but these changes were made in order to prepare students for the standardized assessments (Abrams et al., 2003, p. 23; Jones & Egley, 2007). This change in teaching was prevalent with teachers who felt more pressure to have their students perform well on the high-stakes tests (Jones & Engley, 2007).

On the other side of the argument the pressure of high stakes testing has some positive incentives. Even though evidence suggests that some teachers may not believe standardized tests create effective teaching practices, teachers can see the rationale for testing for accountability purposes (Barksdale-Ladd & Thomas, 2000). Even changes made because of standardized tests can sometimes be seen as an improvement because it helps teachers focus on the curriculum (Debard & Kubow, 2002; Jones & Engley, 2007). Debard and Kubow (2002) surveyed 203 K-12 teachers, 33 administrators and support staff, 129 parents and about 2,000 students in Ohio. A survey was used to measure their perceptions of testing as an instructional approach. Faulkner and Cook (2006) found that even though the teachers and administrators felt that the testing policies helped align the curriculum. Still, they also felt it put too much pressure on students to perform.

Along the lines of using the state assessments as a way to help teachers focus on content, some teachers might use the state assessments as a way to pace their instruction throughout the school year (Faulkner & Cook, 2006). Faulkner and Cook (2006) surveyed 216 middle school teachers in northern Kentucky on their training, efficacy, and support of different instructional
strategies. The teachers also provided open-ended responses about the role the state assessments played in their instruction and teaching strategies. They found that a majority of teachers felt their teaching strategies were negatively impacted by the state assessments. Similarly, Leithwood, Steinbach, and Jantzi (2002) conducted a qualitative, interview based study of 48 secondary Canadian teachers and found the teachers were positively motivated to change the curriculum if they felt it would improve student learning. Changes in teaching due to the state standardized tests may help struggling teachers improve their teaching if teachers approach the changes the right way (Debard & Kubow, 2002; Jones & Engley, 2007). By approaching changes with the intent to improve student learning it may help teachers focus their instruction and implement successful learning strategies in order to prepare students for the state standardized tests (Faulkner & Cook, 2006; Finnigan & Gross, 2007).

**Pressure on students.** The pressure teachers’ feel to perform well is not the only pressure teachers feel in regards to standardized testing. Another major motivator for teachers to change their instruction is the pressure put on the students to perform on the standardized tests. Teachers know that if they do not pass the state tests the consequences for students usually involve summer school or even being held back a grade level (Barksdale-Ladd & Thomas, 2000). In order to keep student morale up some teachers offer students rewards, words of encouragement, and give students breaks from heavy workloads before and after the state standardized tests (Pressley, 2010; Smith, 1991). Indeed, one downside of the implementation of high-stakes testing is that it can lead to students losing their love of learning and creativity due to the focus being on the mandated standardized tests (Hargrove et al., 2000; Jones & Egley, 2007).

The current literature on teacher motivation to change their instruction mainly focuses on the implementation of standardized testing in schools from NCLB (2001). Now with the implementation of VAM, tying student test scores to teacher evaluations, there is potential for this new element to play a role in a teacher’s motivation to change their instruction. Because VAM is still fairly new in most states, especially in Florida, there currently is little or no literature focusing on VAM and teacher motivation to change instruction.

**Self-efficacy theory.** Another person determinant within Social Cognitive Theory that may play a role in teacher changes is self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). When looking at an outcome, such as student achievement, a person’s self-efficacy may play a role in attributions as well as the person’s emotions and motivation. Self-efficacy refers to a person’s thoughts on
his/her capability at achieving a particular outcome (Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy can influence a person’s reaction to challenges, the effort a person gives to an action, as well as a person’s behaviors (Bandura, 1997). Information regarding a person’s efficacy comes from previous success in the specific domain, observing others through vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion from others and a person’s physiological state (Bandura, 1986, 1997). One’s self-efficacy plays a major role in a person’s competence and performance in a particular domain (Bandura, 1997).

In the context of teaching, teacher self-efficacy is usually referred to as teacher efficacy. “Teacher efficacy is the teacher’s belief in his or her capability to organize and execute course of action required to successfully accomplish a specific teaching task in a particular context” (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998, p. 233). Having high efficacy is important for teachers and for their students. Teachers with higher efficacy put more effort into their job as well as are more likely to persist when faced with difficulties (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Steca, & Malone, 2006). Effort and persistence also predicted better job performances when controlling for previous student achievement (Caprara et al., 2006). If teachers have higher teacher efficacy regarding their instruction it may influence the motivation behind their changes in instruction. Teachers with higher efficacy may have higher sense of control of their instruction compared to teachers with lower teacher efficacy.

Another advantage of high teacher efficacy is that teachers with high teaching efficacy tend to make positive predictions of student academic achievement (i.e., have high expectations), especially with inattentive students in elementary and middle school (Tournaki & Podell, 2005). Along with making positive attributions about students’ academic abilities, teachers with higher efficacy have been more successful at raising student abilities, specifically in upper elementary mathematics (Midgley, Feldlaufer, & Eccles, 1989) and at the beginning of the year for elementary students (Anderson, Greene, & Loewen, 1988). These findings (Tournaki & Podell, 2005) were based on self-reported teacher surveys and did not include any observations. Another limitation in Tournaki and Podell (2005), as noted by the authors, was that during this study possible bias regarding student performance was introduced with a prediction of student success survey before the teachers were given the efficacy surveys. When it comes to changes and implementation in policy, teachers’ efficacy usually decreased until they adapted new strategies to deal with the change (Wheatley, 2002). Wheatley (2002) did not discuss VAM
specifically, but rather discussed the role teachers’ efficacy plays in regards to implementing all educational policies. In regards to the current study, these findings may suggest that teachers with higher efficacy may focus their changes in their teaching for the sake of student learning instead of making changes to raise test scores.

When it comes to variables within the school environment there are several that may influence a teacher’s personal teaching efficacy. The school principal and the emphasis within the school community on academics can predict personal teaching efficacy. Schools that have teachers with high, attainable goals and who also create a serious learning environment tend to have higher teacher efficacy (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993). Teachers who perceive their principals to have influence in the district tend to have higher personal teaching efficacy (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993). In order to create an environment that promotes teacher efficacy, schools should provide teachers with strategies and feedback for their teaching as well as opportunities to work with other teachers in the building (Dembo & Gibson, 1985).

Other influences on teacher efficacy include graduate degrees, the time of the school year, and previous teaching experiences. Teachers with graduate degrees seem to have higher self-efficacy compared to teachers who have not completed graduate degrees or are not enrolled in a graduate program (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993). The time of the school year can change teacher efficacy, with teachers feeling higher efficacy at the end of the school year compared to the beginning of the year, which is important because the teacher’s efficacy is more closely related to student achievement at the beginning of the school year (Anderson et al., 1988). However, Anderson et al.’s (1988) findings were only significant for third grade. Lastly, previous teaching experiences can play a role in a teacher’s efficacy, with mastery experiences increasing teacher efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). Creating an environment that supports high teacher efficacy is important because teacher efficacy is strongly correlated to teacher burnout and teacher commitment to teaching (Coladarci, 1992; Pas, Bradshaw, & Hershfeldt, 2012; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). For the current study, these variables (previous teaching experiences, level of degree, etc.) may influence a teacher’s efficacy and be a driving force for changes in instruction depending on the participants I am able to recruit.

The current study will focus on teachers’ efficacy in regards to their VAM and teacher evaluation score. VAM is still a new educational policy; currently there has not been any research on the role VAM plays on teachers’ teaching efficacy. Even in regards to teacher
efficacy and educational reform, there is currently limited research (Wheatley, 2002). My study will explore how teachers’ efficacy may play a role in their motivation as it relates to their motivation to change their instruction. Teacher efficacy is going to be different for every teacher, but is also an aspect that teachers’ may feel in control of due to previous teacher evaluation experiences.

**Attribution theory.** One way that self-efficacy can be impacted is through attributions (Bandura, 1997), in this case for student outcomes or teacher evaluations. Weiner’s (1972) Academic Achievement Attribution Theory explains how people perceive the causes of behaviors. These attributions can be described based on the person’s locus of control, stability, and controllability of the situation (Weiner, 1972, 1985). Locus of control is seen as either internal or external, based on how a person believes an outcome is based on their behaviors (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Rotter, 1966). Stability focuses on causes of the outcome changes or stays the same over time (Weiner, 1985). An example of the different stabilities would be one’s ability is stable, while the task difficulty would be unstable because this aspect would be different every time (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Weiner, 1985). Lastly, controllability focuses on how much control one has over a particular aspect such as having control over one’s skill or having no control over luck (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Weiner, 1985). These three aspects all play a role in a person’s attribution of an outcome (Weiner, 1985). In my conceptual model, the controllability aspect of attribution theory is similar to the concepts found within control-value theory (Pekrun, 2006). Within in this current study, attribution theory may play a role in the teachers’ perspectives of their VAM score and teacher evaluation score.

In my preliminary study, teachers had different attributions for different aspects of the teacher evaluation process. Teachers did not feel in control of student achievement and felt that their VAM scores were under external locus of control. Teachers felt that they were in control of their instruction and, thus, in more control of their observation scores compared to the VAM scores. Lastly, teachers attributed their overall scores to several aspects including having non-taught subjects included in their evaluation scores and the limited information standardized tests provide about their students’ learning (Pressley, 2014). These findings have helped guide my research questions for this study. Due to the limited amount of literature on teacher attributions, the following section discusses how teacher attributions may play a role in student achievement and how attributions change.
Teacher attribution can play a major role in the classroom setting, especially in the context of student interest and performance (Ames, 1975; Weiner, 1972). Teacher attributions have been shown to have major effects on student outcomes in the classroom when attribution training has been used in experimental studies. Students exposed to attribution training have been found to have academic gains as well as a more positive outlook on their academic skills and behaviors (Short & Ryan, 1984; Yasutake, Bryan, & Dohrn, 1996). Thus, teachers’ attributions of student outcomes could play a role in whether teachers try to change instruction. Since teachers are often seen as knowledgeable and significant adults to students in their classrooms, teachers’ attributions may influence a child’s interest in a particular subject (Eccles et al., 1983; Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). Teachers who attribute student success to student ability and characteristics, rather than outside factors, such as teacher help, may increase student performance and interest in the subject (Ames, 1975; Upadyaya, Viljaranta, Lerkkanen, Poikkeus, & Nurmi, 2012). Within the proposed study, teachers’ attributions of their evaluations may have larger impacts on their approach to teaching. Depending on how teachers’ attribute student achievement could influence student outcomes. Teacher attributions can also affect student motivation on a task, as Natale, Viljaranta, Lerkkanen, Poikkeus, and Nurmi (2009) found with kindergarteners’ reading motivation. Upadyaya et al. (2012) also found that teachers who attributed student failure to lack of effort rather than task difficulty, student interest in the subject decreased. These two studies, which used the same participants, had a small sample size (n= 16) of kindergarten students in Finland. This limits the findings due to differences in education culture between Finland and United States and also might explain the low Cronbach’s alpha on student interest value. The proposed study could help to explain the role of teacher attributions in how teachers react to their VAM scores and their overall teacher evaluation scores. Depending on how teachers attribute their student test scores, their attributions may play a role in changes made in their instruction. An example of this includes a teacher attributing his/her VAM score to types of test questions, which could influence the teacher to teach to the test.

Along with influence on student achievement and interests, teacher attribution can play a role in teacher burnout and their commitment to stay in teaching (McCormick & Barnett, 2011). When it comes to teachers’ attributions when implementing educational policies, a majority of teachers have negative feelings about new policies and their ability to implement the new policies in their classroom (Leithwood et al., 2002). With VAM and merit pay being new
educational policies in Florida, teacher attributions of these new aspects included in their evaluations could lead teachers to make changes in their teaching and ultimately could push teachers out of teaching. This may happen if teachers feel that their VAM and teacher evaluation scores are out of their control and are influencing the opportunity to receive extra pay.

Teachers’ attributions have been found to change depending on their years of experience. In Greece, more experienced teachers attributed student success to uncontrollable characteristics, such as intelligence, gender, and family background, compared to inexperienced teachers who believed student success was due to the teacher’s effort and ability (Georgiou, 2008). However, the researcher points out that the effect size between the two groups of teachers was fairly small, though the results were significant (Georgiou, 2008). On the other hand, when it comes to student failure, inexperienced teachers tend to attribute student failure to external factors (Brady & Woolfson, 2008). This trend is also found in teachers of special education, with experienced teachers blaming failure on controllable factors, compared to inexperienced teachers who blame failure on external factors that are out of the student’s control (Brady & Woolfson, 2008). In the proposed study, depending on the participants I am able to recruit, teacher experience could potentially impact teacher attributions of their teacher evaluation, which could affect the reasoning for changing his/her instruction.

Along with teacher experience, student characteristics also play a role in teacher attributions. Student characteristics such as social economic status (SES) (Georgiou, 2008) and gender (Fennema, Peterson, Carpenter, & Lubinski, 1990) play a role in teacher attributions about student achievement, with attributions of higher control and more stability for students from high SES and for males. The student characteristics may influence a teacher’s attributions of his/her teacher evaluation due to amount of support the students are receiving at home or students’ incoming achievement level. Because students are different each year for a teacher, the student characteristics may be seen as unstable to the teacher when attributing his/her teacher evaluation scores.

Current Attribution Theory literature focuses on the role teachers’ attributions play with students as well as the factors that can influence these attributions. Teacher attributions are important because they could possibly influence teachers’ motivation and behaviors in the classroom. My study explored the role teacher attributions play in teachers’ motivation in the context of their teacher evaluations.
Environment

The environment factors for this current study are going to focus on the role of merit pay within the school. I will specifically focus on how the implementation of merit pay impacts collaboration within the school as a whole and on the grade level teams. I am also interested in seeing if the implementation of merit pay plays a role in changing teachers’ instruction. Two environment factors that could play a role in teachers’ behaviors within the classroom are school climate and collective efficacy. The following sections will address the current literature on school climate and collective efficacy.

School climate. School climate has been defined as the “psychosocial environment in which teachers work with other teachers, students, and administrators” (Johnson & Stevens, 2006, p.113). School climate can relate to several different aspects of the school community. For this study I focused on the role of school climate in impacting teachers’ perspective of the implementation of merit pay. Specifically, I asked teachers if teacher collaboration within the school and within grade-level teams has changed due to the implementation of merit pay in teacher evaluations. School climate is important because it can influence children’s academic and social development (Esposito, 1999).

Within this study I used Johnson and Stevens (2001) School-Level Environment Questionnaire (SLEQ) to understand the teachers’ sense of school community. The SLEQ includes subsections that focus on teachers’ perceptions of affiliation, innovation, participatory decision-making, resource adequacy, and student support. Johnson and Stevens (2001) previously used this survey have found a positive correlation between teacher perceptions of the school climate and student mean achievement. Johnson and Stevens (2006) surveyed 1,106 teachers who taught in 59 different elementary schools in the same district. They found that a school’s climate had a positive relationship with student achievement in higher socioeconomic status (SES) schools compared to lower SES schools (Johnson & Stevens, 2006). The limitations of the study include not having all elementary schools represented in the study due to low responses from the 19 schools not included in the study as well as the district having a large Hispanic student population. These limitations make it hard for the results to be generalized to all school districts and school levels (e.g. middle and high school).

Another factor that could possibly play a role in teachers’ perceptions of the school community is the implementation of merit pay. The previous research on pay for performance
systems has found mixed results on the impact on the school community and teachers’ perceptions of merit pay in the school community. Springer et al. (2011) found that merit pay offered to teachers based on student outcomes increased teacher collaboration with their grade level teams; however, other research has found that teachers are worried about pay for performance systems increasing competition between teachers within the school, which could also cut down on collaboration between teachers (Forand, 2013; Jacob & Springer, 2008).

For this study, the school climate and collective teacher efficacy could possibly play a role in teachers’ value for their teacher evaluations as well as impact how much control they feel they have over certain aspects of their evaluations. Other teachers’ perspectives regarding merit pay and the school climate could influence individual teachers’ level of stress about the new policies. If the implementation of merit pay based on teacher evaluations creates a competitive atmosphere within the school community it could influence teacher behavior within the classroom. Lastly, depending on how the teachers feel the new policies are impacting them, teacher collaboration could be impacted by the school climate and collective efficacy.

**Collective efficacy.** Each individual teacher will have his/her own sense of teacher efficacy, but in regards to the school community, the teachers and administrators will help form the collective efficacy. Bandura (1997) defined collective efficacy as “a group’s shared belief in its conjoint capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given levels of attainments” (p. 477). Collective teacher efficacy focuses on the efficacy of all the teachers in the school community as a whole (Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2000; Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). Collective teacher efficacy is important to schools because it is highly correlated with student achievement (Bandura, 1993; Goddard, et al., 2000; Tschannen-Moran & Barr, 2004). Schools with high collective teacher efficacy had higher student achievement outcomes (Bandura, 1993). The collective teacher efficacy is also important because higher collective efficacy in the school can lead to higher individual teacher self-efficacy (Ciani, Summers, & Easter, 2007; Fuller & Izu, 1986).

Within this study, collective efficacy may act as a bridge between the person determinant of teacher-efficacy and the environment determent of school community. Due to the relationship between collective efficacy and teachers’ efficacy, the collective efficacy (Ciani et al., 2007; Midgley et al., 1989) of the school might indirectly impact student outcomes (Goddard et al., 2000; Midgley et al., 1989; Anderson et al., 1988). The collective efficacy of the school could
also play a role in the school climate depending on the teachers’ beliefs regarding the implementation of VAM and merit pay (Turner, Waugh, Summers, & Grove, 2009). These beliefs could potentially influence teacher collaboration and teacher behaviors.

Several factors can affect the collective teacher efficacy in a school (Bandura, 1993). Previous student test scores from mandated assessments can help predict teacher collective efficacy, with test scores positively correlated with collective efficacy (Ross, Hogaboam-Gray, & Gray, 2004). These findings suggest it might be possible for school grades, which are based on student achievement scores, to influence the collective efficacy. In the proposed study I hope to include teachers from schools with different school grades to compare the influences of VAM and merit pay on changes in teaching.

Other factors that could affect collective efficacy include teacher sense of control over test scores, school leadership and teacher experience. Previous student test scores can predict collective efficacy, but Ross et al. (2004) found that teachers’ personal control and responsibility of school outcomes may be an even stronger predictor collective efficacy. School leadership can also influence the collective efficacy through the amount of support principals give to their teachers (Bandura, 1993; Fuller & Izu, 1986; Newmann, Rutter, & Smith, 1989). The collective efficacy of the school will be more obvious to new teachers than experienced teachers as they are introduced to their new school climate (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). Lastly, teachers’ assessment of the faculty’s teaching competence as a whole can play a role in the collective teaching efficacy of the school (Goddard et al., 2000).

**Summary of Literature**

The value added model is in the third year of implementation in Florida, but VAM been used to in other states for the last two decades. Though VAM has been used in other areas of the country, each state has used different models that include a variety of school, classroom and student variables. This difference in variables has been one of the validity issues with VAM. Along with issues regarding variables to include in each model, there are validity issues regarding the alignment of VAM scores with effective teaching. These validity issues have led researchers to argue against the use of VAM in teacher evaluations and forewarn of future legal issues regarding teacher job decisions based on VAM. Regardless, high-stakes testing in schools has become a major influence on teacher motivation. Specifically teachers are feeling motivated to change their instruction to have students perform well on these high-stakes tests. In order to
improve teacher quality, some states have even begun pay for performance programs, but research results on these programs have produced mixed results. Some person determinants that may play a role in teacher motivation are control-value theory, teacher efficacy, and attribution theory. When it comes to the environment, some aspects that may play a role in teacher behaviors are the school climate and collective efficacy.

Because VAM and Merit pay are still relatively new educational policies, there is limited research focused on VAM and the implications in schools. In particular, there is very limited research on teacher perspectives about the implementation of VAM and the use of student data in teacher evaluations. The results of this qualitative, case study contribute to the literature on teacher motivation in the context of VAM implementation. For this study, I asked the following research question: What role does VAM play in how teachers view their work in the school and school community? Additionally, the following sub-questions helped address the primary research question:

1) What knowledge do teachers have of VAM?
2) How do teachers feel about having VAM as part of their teacher evaluation?
3) How do teachers perceive VAM influencing their motivation to change their teaching?
4) How do teachers perceive merit pay (based in part on VAM scores) will influence of their school community?

In the next chapter, I outline the method that I used to answer my research questions.
CHAPTER 3
METHOD

Research Approach

This instrumental qualitative case study (Stake, 1995) used several different types of data, both qualitative and quantitative, which allowed me to learn what teachers know and feel about the implementation of the value-added model (VAM) and merit pay. The purpose of conducting an instrumental case study is to give insight into an issue (Stake, 1995), in this case, the use of VAM within teacher evaluation. This method also allowed me to refine a theory (Stake, 1995), the emerging model from my preliminary study (Pressley, 2014). I also used aspects of grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) within the analysis in order to continue developing a theory focusing on the impact of VAM on teachers’ knowledge, feelings, and motivation to change their teaching. This study also allowed me to learn how teachers perceived their behaviors within the classroom and school community changed (or not) due to the implementation of VAM. Because the value-added model provides individual scores that have potentially large personal ramifications for teachers, it is important to understand how the implementation of VAM affects each teacher, especially teachers’ feelings, motivation to teach, as well as their behaviors within the classroom and school. These different types of data were chosen to help me get the most insight from teachers on their views and understanding of VAM.

This multiple case study focused on elementary teachers who were currently teaching at schools using VAM in teaching evaluation. I recruited several participants from different schools that allowed for multiple levels of bounded systems for this multiple case study. These levels are the schools and the teachers within the schools (Stake, 2005). This study was primarily interview based but also included an initial and follow-up survey to help triangulate the results.

Context

VAM was implemented in Florida in 2011 when Senate Bill 736, Student Success Act, was passed. This bill aligned the state standards with the nationally-funded initiative Race to the Top (U.S. Department of Education, 2009; RTTT). This bill required that student data from the FCAT or other state standardized tests be included in teacher evaluations. During the 2011-2012 school year, VAM was officially implemented into school districts across the state. In this new
model, 50 percent of a teacher’s evaluation includes student gains in test scores, VAM, and the other 50 percent is based on classroom observations. Districts were given the opportunity to determine how student data and observations were implemented into teacher evaluations, with guidance from the state on how to properly implement VAM into their teacher evaluations (SGIC, 2011). In the 2014-2015 school year, teacher VAM scores were to affect teacher merit pay for all new teachers, any non-tenured teachers, as well as any teachers who give up tenure to receive merit pay based on their VAM score (Florida State Senate, 2011). These were the laws that were in place before and during data collection for this study. After I collected all my data there was a new law put in place that was influenced by Florida introducing new assessments during the 2014-2015 school year. The new law is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

**Procedures and Sampling**

In order to gain access to my participants I first went through the Institutional Review Board (IRB; See Appendix A for approval) process for Florida State University and for the school districts where I wished to collect data. (See Appendices B, C, D, & E for approved consent forms.) I submitted an IRB application or a request to collect data to five school districts where I wanted to collect data. These five districts were chosen because each had multiple elementary schools that included a range of school grades at the elementary level. I also selected these five districts because colleagues shared with me that these districts might be more willing to participate in research than others in the state. Out of the five school districts I got approval from one to collect data. This district had A, B, and C rated elementary schools.

Using maximum variation sampling I hoped to get multiple teachers’ views at a variety of school accountability grades (A, B and C; Creswell, 2013). I would have liked to get some teachers from D and F schools, but I was not able to get approval to collect data from the districts that included D or F schools. Schools are given points for student performance and gains. According to the state in the 2013-2014 school year, 34% of elementary schools received a school grade of A, 16% of elementary schools received a grade of B, 28% received a grade of C, 14% received a school grade of D and 7% of all elementary schools received a grade of F (FLDOE, 2014). Eligible teachers had received a VAM score from the previous school year, taught at the elementary school level, and taught a state standardized tested grade level. I recruited participants from schools with different school grades, which reflect varying levels of school success according to the state of Florida, in order to compare teachers’ understanding of
VAM and explore how it might affect motivation to teach as well as their teaching behaviors. I also tried to recruit multiple teachers from each school in order to get several different perspectives from each school.

I chose the elementary school level because of my previous experience teaching at this level. Also at the elementary school level students tend to stay with one teacher throughout the school day (i.e. self-contained classroom), so there is likely to be a clearer connection between the teacher and student outcomes compared to upper grade students, who are more likely to be affected by multiple teachers. This is important because it cuts down on the validity challenges of multiple teachers’ influencing a student’s gains on the state assessments. In addition, teachers from the third, fourth, and fifth grades were targeted because these are the grade levels that take the end of the year state standardized test, which are used to calculate the student gains aspect of VAM because it provides a link between student and teacher using a valid and reliable test. Previously, Florida used the Florida Comprehension Assessment Test (FCAT) for their state assessment; however, as the analyses for this study were completed Florida began using the Florida Standards Assessment in the 2014-2015 school year as the state standardized test.

Once my IRB application was approved by the school district, I contacted the principals of all the elementary schools within the district. I explained my study to the principal via email. (See Appendix F for email.) I was also able to get in contact with two teachers in the district through another graduate student. Once I was in contact with those two teachers I was able to send them an email describing my study. (See Appendix G for teacher email.) By sharing information about my study, and myself, I hoped to give teachers information explaining why I wanted to conduct this study. I did this to begin building relationships with teachers so that they felt comfortable sharing their thoughts and perceptions of the value-added model with me. This email also allowed the participants to look over the consent form before participating in the survey. To help recruit teachers, any teacher who chose to participate in only the survey portion of the study was entered into a raffle for a $50 gift card that was given out at the end of the study. Within the survey I had a question asking for volunteers to participate in the interview portion of the study, noting that any teacher who completed the survey and participated in the two interviews would receive a $50 gift card, instead of being entered in the raffle, upon completion of the interview and follow-up survey.
Along with trying to recruit participants through school districts, as described above, I also reached out to Florida teachers via friends and on Facebook. I asked friends with Florida school connections to contact teachers outside of the school day. I specified in my recruiting that I was looking for elementary teachers in Florida, who were teaching third, fourth, or fifth grade and had a previous VAM score, to participate in my study. All data collected through teachers recruited via social media and friends were collected outside of the school day. Lastly, I was able to use snowball sampling with teachers that I had already recruited. At the end of the interviews I asked the teachers if they would be willing to pass on my survey link to other teachers that met the qualifications of the study.

Before each interview, I went over the consent form with the participant and gave the participant the opportunity to ask any questions regarding the study. Before I started the interview, all participants signed and received a copy of the consent form for their own records. The participants was also informed that their name would not be included on any of the transcriptions or notes, with teachers being labeled with codes such as teacher 1, teacher 2, etc. on each transcription. After each interview was transcribed the participant had the opportunity to add or delete any parts of the interview when reading through the transcription of the interview during the member check process. The member checking helped with the construct validity of the study. Only minor changes were made to the transcripts; however, two teachers emailed me after their interview to share that they were mistaken regarding the difference between their VAM score and their evaluation score. This information was also noted on their revised transcripts. The recordings of the interviews were deleted once the interview had been transcribed and checked by the participating teacher. Once the coding process was complete, I sent the teachers participating in the interview portion of the study my results to allow the teachers to check my results and to confirm that no teacher felt identifiable in the document. All the documents and data collected in this study were stored securely throughout the process.

I had a total of 29 participants complete the initial survey with 24 respondents indicating they were willing and qualified to participate in the study. I contacted the 24 teachers based on school grades in attempt to get multiple teachers from each school and represent schools with a range of school grades (A-C). Total I had 13 teachers (from 4 schools) agree to interviews. I set up phone interviews with teachers who agree to be interviewed at a convenient time for the teacher.
Participants

The participants for this study taught in two different districts located in northern Florida (7 from one district, 6 from another district). I interviewed 13 teachers from five different schools, with three teachers at four of the schools. (See Table 3.1 for teacher demographics). The school grades represented in my sample included one school with a grade of A, two schools graded B, and two schools graded C according to the state. In order for a school to be named an A school, it must receive at least 525 points (FLDOE, 2014a).

Table 3.1

*Teacher Demographics by School (n=13)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School District</th>
<th>Years taught</th>
<th>Effectiveness level</th>
<th>Tenure</th>
<th>Current grade level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 1-A</td>
<td>15-20</td>
<td>Highly Effective</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>4th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 2-A</td>
<td>10-15</td>
<td>Highly Effective</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>5th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 3-A</td>
<td>20-25</td>
<td>Highly Effective</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>5th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School B1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 4- B1</td>
<td>20-25</td>
<td>Highly Effective</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>4th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 5-B1</td>
<td>0-5</td>
<td>Highly Effective</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>4th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 6-B1</td>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>Highly Effective</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>4th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School B2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 7-B2</td>
<td>15-20</td>
<td>Effective</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>4th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 8-B2</td>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>Effective</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>5th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 9-B2</td>
<td>20-25</td>
<td>Effective</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>5th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School C1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 10-C1</td>
<td>15-20</td>
<td>Highly Effective</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>5th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 11-C1</td>
<td>25+</td>
<td>Effective</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 12-C1</td>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>Effective</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>4th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School C2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 13-C2</td>
<td>0-5</td>
<td>Needs Improvement</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>5th</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Years taught provided in ranges to protect teacher confidentiality. School district number indicates which schools came from same districts.
Out of the five schools represented in this study, three were labeled as Title 1 schools (schools B1, B2, and C1). This meant that these schools had a high number of economically disadvantaged students and extra resources, such as professional development and extra teachers, were provided to the school to help improve student achievement (FLDOE, 2014b). The title one schools ranged from 50% to 82% of students labeled as economically disadvantaged (eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch), while less than 30% of the student populations at the other two schools were economically disadvantaged. The five schools also either served a majority of white or black/African American students, with schools A, B2, and C1 majority white and schools B1 and C2 majority black/African American. Other demographics served by the schools varied only slightly, including Hispanic students ranging from 2.7% to 6.3%, Asian students from 0 to 3.5%, and English language learners from 0 to 3.6% (FLDOE, 2014c). Lastly, all but one school (C2) included above the state average (13%) of disabled students with the other schools ranging from 14.4% to 21.7% (FLDOE Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, 2014).

I was able to recruit and collect data from thirteen teachers (2 males and 11 females). The teachers included in this study included one third grade teacher, six fourth grade teachers, and six fifth grade teachers. The thirteen participants in this study had a wide range of teaching experience as well as included three levels of evaluation ratings from the previous school year. The participants teaching experience ranged from 3 to 34 years, with the average being 15 years of experience. Ten of the thirteen teachers who participated had tenure and chose to keep it rather than switch to merit pay, while only one of the three non-tenured teachers knew she was included in the merit pay system. The other two non-tenured teachers believed they were still on the old pay-scale. When it comes to the evaluation levels of the participants the state labels teachers in one of five different categories (highly effective, effective, needs improvement, developing, and unsatisfactory; FLODE, 2014). The participants in this study included seven highly effective teachers (53.8%), five effective teachers (38.4%), and one needing improvement (.08%) from the previous school year evaluation. According to the state in the 2013-2014 school year, 41.9% of teachers were labeled highly effective, 55.7% effective, 1.4% needed improvement, .7% developing, and .3% as unsatisfactory (FLDOE, 2014).
Role of the Researcher

My role in the research process was the primary investigator of this study. For this study that included collecting, coding, and analyzing all data.

When it came to previous personal experiences related to this study, several factors may have influenced my relationships with the participants. I am a former elementary school teacher at a Title I school in Fort Worth, Texas. This experience gave me first hand insight into the daily responsibilities and goals of a classroom teacher. Although VAM was not part of my teacher evaluations as a teacher, I am still familiar with the teacher evaluation process that teachers go through every school year. This experience also allowed me to work with experienced teachers on a daily basis, who I am still keep in contact with during the school year. These contacts allow me to continue to hear about the celebrations and issues of being a classroom teacher when it comes to teaching, administrators, parents, and policies.

Along with my experiences as a teacher, my teacher education background was focused on elementary education. I had the opportunity to experience many classroom settings, including low socioeconomic status schools, special education classrooms, and international classrooms. These experiences allowed me to see many different types of teachers teach and to be in several unique education settings. While experiencing these classroom settings, I was also gaining knowledge from professors and fellow students that I would later be able to apply to my own classroom.

My research background also informed this inquiry. The previous research that I conducted has focused on the effects of state standardized tests on teacher and student motivation (Pressley, 2010) as well as my preliminary study, which focused on teachers’ perceptions of VAM at a charter school in Florida (Pressley, 2014). I am also currently finishing off my Ph.D. in Learning and Cognition with a sub-emphasis in Educational Policy. Throughout my time in the Ph.D. program, I have expanded my knowledge through reading research articles, learning from professors, and engaging in conversations with other students on current issues in education. All of the professors and students I have interacted with have different experiences and views on education, which have allowed me to take on new perspectives and continuously shape my views on teaching and the education system.
**Data Collection**

The data collection for this study was conducted in two phases: initial survey and interview then a follow-up interview and survey. The initial survey and interview were done in the fall of 2014 and the follow-up interview and survey were done in the spring of 2015 during the month preceding the state assessments in Florida.

**Initial teacher survey.** The initial survey was emailed to the teachers by the school principal, the primary investigator, or other teacher participants or school contacts. The initial survey included questions that focused on teacher understanding and feelings regarding VAM and merit pay as well as basic demographic information. I asked teachers about their understanding and feelings regarding the new state assessment. I used this survey as a way of recruiting participants for the interview portion of the study. Some example questions included, “How many years have you been a teacher?” and “How satisfied were you with your value-added score?” (Full list of survey questions can be found in Appendix H.) The survey also included teacher perspective questions taken from Cocke (2014). These survey items use a 5-point likert scale that asks teachers to rate from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree.” An example item from this survey includes: “I am concerned that the new teacher evaluation system will add to my workload.” The Cronbach alpha previously reported for the teacher perception survey questions was .79 (Cocke, 2014).

**Initial teacher interview.** This interview was semi-structured and took about thirty to forty-five minutes to conduct. The interview included questions that focused on teacher’s understanding of VAM and merit pay as well as the teacher’s motivation to change their teaching due to the implementation of VAM and merit pay. I also asked teachers about the new state assessment that was used for their upcoming VAM score and merit pay. Some example questions included, “What do you know about the Value-Added Model as it is used in your teacher evaluations?” and “How do you feel having the Value-Added Model used as part of your teacher evaluation?” (Full list of interview questions can be found in Appendix I.)

**Follow-up teacher interview.** This interview was semi-structured and took thirty to forty-five minutes to conduct. The interview included questions that focused on the teacher’s feelings regarding their most recent VAM score, their motivation to make changes to their teaching due to VAM or merit pay, as well as the impact of merit pay on the school community during the school year. The follow-up interview also incorporated questions that are developed
based on the analysis of the initial interview data. Some example questions include, “Since seeing your VAM score from the previous school year, how well does it represent your teaching ability?” and “How useful is your VAM score for changing your instruction?” (Full list of interview questions can be found in Appendix J.)

**Follow-up teacher surveys.** This survey was emailed to the teachers who I interviewed. The follow-up survey included two subscales of questions from the Ohio State Teacher Efficacy Scale (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001; see approval in Appendix K). The two subscales I used for this study are efficacy in student engagement and efficacy in instructional strategies from the TES long form. I chose these two subscales because they focus on teacher instructional behaviors. The TES uses a 9-point scale that asks teachers to rate from “nothing” to “a great deal.” Example items from the student engagement subscale included items such as, “How much do you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?” Example items from the instructional strategies subscale include, “How much can you do to adjust your lessons to the proper level of individual students?” (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). The Cronbach alpha previously reported for the student engagement subscale was .87, and for the instructional strategies subscale was .91 (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001).

To assess the school environment, the survey included two subscales from the School-Level Environment Questionnaire (SLEQ; Johnson & Stevens, 2001). The two subscales I used for this study are the affiliation factors and professional interest factors. I chose these subscales because they focus on teachers’ perceptions of working within the school community and professional matters. The SLEQ uses a 5-point scale that asks teachers to rate from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” An example item from the affiliation scale includes “Teachers frequently discuss teaching methods and strategies with each other” (Johnson & Stevens, 2001). An example item from the professional interest scale includes “Teachers are keen to learn from their colleagues” (Johnson & Stevens, 2001). The Cronbach alpha previously reported for the affiliation subscale was .9, and for the professional interest Cronbach alpha was .7 (Johnson & Stevens, 2001). (Full list of interview questions can be found in Appendix L.)

**Data Analysis**

**Coding procedure.** I hand coded the initial interviews, and follow-up interviews using open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In this process, I read each interview, line by line, and coded each interview. I took notes during the coding process in order to get an overall idea of
the codes and themes I was finding for each teacher. After coding the teachers’ interviews individually, I grouped the teachers by school grade level (A, B, & C) and looked for themes across the teachers for each level. Open coding from the initial interviews helped me develop questions for the follow-up interviews that would allow me to ask more detailed questions regarding the teachers’ perspectives and behaviors within the classroom.

After I had completed the open coding process I moved to the axial coding process (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) to begin to develop the emerging theoretical model. During the axial coding process I discussed the conditions (i.e., schools that had administrators in the room more often), strategies (i.e., changes in instruction), and the consequences (i.e., valuing observation scores) with my advisor. These conversations led to early versions of the emerging theoretical model. As the iterative process of drafting models and going back to the data to compare the relationships between themes within cases, core categories that helped explain all the data were identified. This led to the development of the final emerging theoretical model, in which the core categories included control and no control.

**Survey results.** The data from the surveys were analyzed by descriptive statistics. The teacher efficacy and community sections of the follow-up survey were analyzed and scored using the scoring directions for those subsections. The results from the survey were used to triangulate the findings from the interview portion of the study.

**Potential biases.** There are several potential biases that may have impeded my data analysis for this study. I believe many of my teaching and educational experiences may have played a role. One potential bias in this study is the fact that I was a teacher and I am still in contact with current teachers about educational issues. My previous experiences with standardized testing and teaching evaluations have shaped my opinion of each. Along with my previous experiences, by continuing to have contact with current teachers, I frequently hear other (non-participating) teachers’ thoughts with regards to standardized testing and their evaluations. Another possible potential bias is how my current knowledge of the research in regards to the validity of VAM has shaped my view of the VAM system, which is covered in my review of the literature chapter. Though there are validity issues with VAM, I believe that as long as student test scores are not the only aspect of the evaluation process that VAM has the potential to help educators work toward making sure all students are learning from effective teachers. Lastly, my previous research, specifically my preliminary study, allowed me to learn about a select group of
teachers’ knowledge and feelings of VAM in their teacher evaluations. This previous study also helped shape the research questions for this study.

I made sure to be observant that I did not bring any of my previous findings into my new data and new analysis. By stating my potential biases above I have brought them to my attention before beginning to collect data to answer these research questions. In order to mitigate my personal biases throughout the research process I continuously reminded myself of any personal biases by using a reflective journal during data collection and analysis.

**Validity and reliability of findings.** In order to validate my findings I did several things in addition to reflective journaling to maximize my accuracy and credibility. I first asked the participants to member check the transcriptions of their interviews. During the interviews I reminded the participants that they would have the opportunity to check their transcripts and the results. I explained to the participants that they would have the final say in what was included in the transcript and the participants had the opportunity to read the transcription, check the transcription of their interviews for accuracy, delete any sentences that the participant does not want included in the final copy, or add more detail to their answers (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2009, p. 217). The teachers also received directions on the member checking process in an email when I sent the interview transcripts. (See Appendix M for member checking email.) Only two teachers (T4-B1 & T5-B1) clarified their answers, stating that they did not know their VAM score and confused their overall evaluation score as their VAM score in the first interview. I would clarify this confusion with these two teachers in the second interview. The only other changes made by the participants were minor edits such as clarifying spelling of names. I also sent the teachers who participated in the interview portion of the study my results. By doing this, the participants had a chance to read the results and make sure no teacher felt identifiable. When the participants were sent the results I included an email that included the same information that was the same as the other previous member checking emails (See Appendix L). During the coding process, I had two other graduate students, who were familiar with qualitative coding methods, read and recode three different sets of teacher interviews (first and follow-up) to determine the validity of the themes. After discussing and comparing codes, it was determined that we had 100% agreement of codes across all three coders. I also worked with two undergraduate students to code and validate codes found in the first interviews. Lastly, I had multiple forms of data to help triangulate the results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).
CHAPTER 4
RESULTS

The purpose of this instructional qualitative case study was to explore elementary teachers’ perceptions of the effects of the value-added model (VAM) being implemented in teacher evaluations specifically on their school community and motivation to change their instruction. This study focused on teachers’ knowledge of VAM in teacher evaluations, the perceived effects of VAM and merit pay on the school community, and the teachers’ perceptions of their behaviors within the classroom due to the implementation of VAM in their teacher evaluations. To achieve this aim, I asked the following research question: What role does VAM play in how teachers view their work in the school and school community? Additionally, the following sub-questions helped address the primary research question:

1) What knowledge do teachers have of VAM?
2) How do teachers feel about having VAM as part of their teacher evaluation?
3) How do teachers perceive VAM influencing their motivation to change their teaching?
4) How do teachers perceive merit pay (based in part on VAM scores) will influence of their school community?

In this chapter, I use these sub questions as a guide to present the results of this study.

Teacher Knowledge of VAM

A majority of teachers across all school levels stated they had limited knowledge of VAM. Teacher knowledge of VAM ranged from not knowing anything about VAM to knowing the purpose behind VAM and knowledge of Senate Bill 736 (Florida State Senate, 2011). Teachers also shared their limited knowledge on the first survey filled out (See Table 4.1).

All the teachers in school A knew VAM came from the student test scores on the state standardized test, but there was still confusion regarding personal VAM scores. Most of the confusion focused around how VAM scores were derived and used: “I have no idea how the actual VAM score comes to place… I know it means that part of it comes from how successful my children have done on their statewide assessment” (Teacher 2-A, 12-12-14). Other confusion resulted on how VAM was used with one teacher believing VAM was used to compare teachers and classes.
They compare my class and they find another class similar to my class and they project how much gain this student should make and then they look at another class and say if they made the gains or no they didn’t (Teacher 1-A, 12-11-14).

Table 4.1
School Means for Teacher Knowledge of VAM (n=13)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>How much do you know about VAM? (SD)</th>
<th>School Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>3.67 (3.06)</td>
<td>1-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>2.67 (0.58)</td>
<td>2-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>4.00 (4.36)</td>
<td>1-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>4.33 (1.15)</td>
<td>3-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>5.00 (N/A)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Scores range from 1-9. 1 being not at all and 9 being a great deal.

Besides the confusion of how VAM was used, Teacher 1-A knew certain variables such as student economic status and attendance was included in the VAM formula. Two teachers (1-A & 2-A) were also unsure of the percentage VAM was worth on the whole evaluation. All teachers also (correctly) believed subjects they specifically taught to their students were the only test scores that went into their VAM. Even with limited knowledge of VAM, the teachers in school A did not search out information about VAM. This may be why none of the teachers felt they had a change in knowledge regarding VAM throughout the school year. When the teachers in school A received previous evaluations and VAM scores their administration gave a brief explanation of their scores, but the teachers did not get details such as how it was calculated or the impact VAM had on their overall evaluation.

Similar to the teachers at the A-level school, a majority of the teachers at the B-level schools had confusion regarding their VAM scores. However, unlike the teachers at the A school the teachers at school B1 did not even know their personal VAM scores. In the first interviews the B1 teachers thought they knew their VAM score, but realized later they only knew their final evaluation score. Teacher 6-B1 shared that she was interested in learning about VAM.
and requested her VAM score from the Florida Department of Education website, but had not yet received it. More confusion with the teachers at B1 focused around the subject tests that were to be used on the personal VAM score. None of the three teachers were confident in knowing the subjects they would be assessed on and two teachers (incorrectly) believed they would be assessed on subjects they did not teach. This confusion was due to VAM including untaught subjects in previous school years. “It’s (VAM) going to come from both reading and math scores even though I only teach reading, and it comes from all of the teachers in the fourth [grade] not just the students that I teach” (Teacher 6-B1, 12-12-14). The teachers thought this problem had been fixed this year, but were not confident if this was true. This was the only school where the teachers shared the belief that untaught subjects may be included in their VAM scores. Previous VAM scores did have untaught subjects on evaluations, but this will not be the case moving forward.

When it came to information given to the teachers about VAM, the B1 teachers shared that district officials gave some information to them before the school year several years ago, but the information provided was not clear. The teachers at B1 had not received any information regarding VAM from their administration during their final evaluation meetings but did learn attendance was included in the VAM formula. A school administrator shared this information with them when the teachers voiced concern over student attendance hurting student test scores. The teachers at B1 did not value VAM enough to pursue information about VAM, stating it was of “low importance” (Teacher 4-B1, 2-10-15) as well as saying, “honestly it’s (VAM) not that important because I don’t really know what it is used for or who looks at it” (Teacher 5-B1, 2-17-15).

Teachers at B2 got their previous VAM scores, but did not know much about the meaning of their VAM scores. The only teacher who knew about VAM was a teacher at B2 who was also the teacher union representative for the district. This might explain B2 having one of the highest means (4.00) on the VAM knowledge survey question as seen in Table 4.1, though a score of 4.00 represented having between very little to some knowledge of VAM across the school, and the range of knowledge across teachers ranged widely (1-9). Even with his involvement with the union this teacher still had questions regarding the meaning of VAM scores and how the VAM would be used with the new state assessments. “My only interest in VAM, at this point is how it is going to be applied to the teacher evaluation” (Teacher 8-B2, 2-11-15).
The other two teachers (7-B2 & 9-B2) in the school did not know much about VAM even though they both received their VAM score in previous final evaluation meetings. All the teachers in B2 knew the only subject tests included in their VAM were the subjects they personally taught and VAM would come from their students’ test scores. Confusion regarding VAM seemed to be common in the school, with teachers sharing that school administrators lacked knowledge regarding the meaning of VAM: “It almost felt like the administration didn’t know any more than we did. My administrator is really cool and admits that there is a lot of this that he doesn’t understand either” (Teacher 9-B2, 10-20-14). This lack of information in the school was a main reason the teachers in B2 did not search out information regarding VAM. “No one really knows what VAM means, so there is no reason to pursue information when no one really understands it” (Teacher 7-B2, 1-26-15). Teacher 8-B2 agreed with Teacher 7-B2 stating, “my VAM score last year was [numerical number removed]; I have no idea what that means. The district has no idea what that means” (10-16-15).

The teachers in the C-level schools also had limited knowledge of VAM ranging from not knowing anything about it to knowing VAM comes from student test scores. Two teachers (10-C1 & 12-C1) at C1 knew their VAM scores came from their students’ end of year test scores and also included their current students’ scores from the end of the previous school year. Teacher 12-C1 shared the most information about VAM saying, “I do know it’s something about how the scores based on last year’s scores and this year’s scores and if they go up or down and how well overall they (students) do. I know it affects 50% of my evaluation” (10-28-14). The third teacher, however, stated “I don’t know anything about it” (Teacher 11-C1, 10-21-14), expressing confusion about how the VAM score was developed. Not knowing anything about VAM or the calculation of VAM “worries” Teacher 11-C1. All three teachers were given their evaluation scores, but never received any explanation of their scores from administrators. However, the teachers can go online to learn more information regarding their observation scores. The teachers had not received any information about VAM from administrators during the school year, but one teacher (10-C1) searched out information about VAM. Teacher 10-C1 did not feel she learned anything from searching for information on VAM. Teacher 12-C1 shared she wanted to learn more about VAM, but has not found time to do research on it.

The one teacher at C2 understood the VAM score includes “previous year scores for a given student or a given set of students for a teacher. Then in the spring the students’ scores that
teacher teaches go in and calculate it” (Teacher 13-C2, 11-17-14). Teacher 13-C2 also stated that she searched out information about VAM during the school year and understood the purpose of VAM as, “a way to motivate teachers to increase the progress of their students” (Teacher 13-C2, 2-10-15). Similar to school B1, C2 received professional development regarding VAM several years ago, but teachers had not received information recently. Teacher 13-C2 stated her understanding of the purpose of VAM came from her searching out information on her own time. Searching out information and receiving information from her school, might be reasons Teacher 13-C2 had a response (5.00) for VAM knowledge on the survey as seen in Table 4.1, that represents some knowledge of VAM.

Overall, 11 of the 13 teachers interviewed for this study had very limited knowledge of VAM. Only two teachers (Teacher 8-B2 and Teacher 13-C2) felt their knowledge went beyond knowing VAM was connected to students’ test scores. Teacher 8-B2’s knowledge was due to his involvement in the teacher union and Teacher 13-C2 had searched out more information on her own time to learn about VAM. Even with some teachers searching out information and receiving some information in professional development, teachers across the schools had a lack of knowledge about VAM. Looking across schools, teachers still had questions and concerns about their VAM scores, specifically the subject tests being used on teacher VAM score, and the use/calculation of VAM scores. No school grade level had a more clear understanding of VAM compared to another level. These questions and concerns regarding VAM played a role in teachers’ feelings and value of their personal VAM scores.

Teacher Feelings Regarding VAM

The questions and concerns teachers shared regarding their knowledge of VAM played a role in how the teachers perceived and felt about VAM being part of their teacher evaluations. The teachers who participated in this study all had negative feelings regarding their VAM scores being used in their teacher evaluations. The teachers’ negative feelings focused on the lack of control they felt over students’ test scores being used to calculate VAM as well as perceptions of inaccurate representations of their teaching ability by VAM scores. Teachers were also concerned about the lack of control over the new assessments. Florida introduced new assessments leading teachers to feel lack of control due to the questions surrounding the format and content of the assessments. Teachers had been given information about new types of question formats and testing duration, but the teachers still had a lot of questions and concerns
regarding the new assessments they had never seen. Along with the negative feelings of VAM being included in teacher evaluations, teachers also shared frustration and worries about VAM scores being public information in Florida. With VAM scores being public, the teacher VAM scores can be published in newspapers with little information tied to the VAM number. These findings were supported by the teachers’ survey answers when asked about their feelings of VAM. The school means for the teacher perceptions of VAM can be seen below in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2
School Means for Perceptions of VAM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>How much control do you feel you have over your teacher evaluation score? (SD) a</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>How well does your VAM score represent your teaching ability? (SD) a</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>How much do you agree that teacher evaluations should be public information? (SD) a</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>How much are you worried about your VAM score for the current school year? (SD) b</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>3.00 (2.00)</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>2.33 (1.15)</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>1.00 (0.00)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.00 (0.00)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>2.67 (0.58)</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>5.33 (3.06)</td>
<td>2-8</td>
<td>1.33 (0.58)</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>2.33 (3.21)</td>
<td>1-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>3.00 (2.00)</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>2.67 (2.08)</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>5.33 (3.79)</td>
<td>1-8</td>
<td>3.67 (4.62)</td>
<td>1-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>5.33 (0.58)</td>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>5.00 (1.00)</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>3.00 (3.46)</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>6.67 (2.52)</td>
<td>4-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>2.00 (N/A)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.00 (N/A)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.00 (N/A)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.00 (N/A)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>I am concerned that my teacher value-added score will be adversely affected by factors over which I have no control. (SD) b</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>My students’ achievement test scores accurately reflect how well I have taught the academic standards. (SD) b</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>I am confident that the value-added model adopted an accurate measurement of my impact on my students learning growth. (SD) b</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>I am confident that the FL VAM adequately controls for factors outside of my control that affect my students learning. (SD) b</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>5.00 (0.00)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.33 (0.58)</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>1.00 (0.00)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.00 (0.00)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>4.33 (1.15)</td>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>2.00 (0.00)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.33 (0.58)</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>1.33 (0.58)</td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>5.00 (0.00)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.67 (0.58)</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>1.00 (0.00)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.00 (0.00)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>5.00 (0.00)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.33 (2.31)</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>1.33 (0.58)</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>1.33 (0.58)</td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>5.00 (N/A)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.00 (N/A)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.00 (N/A)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.00 (N/A)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. a Score-range 1 - 9. 1 = at all; 9 = a great deal. b Score-range 1-5. 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree. (n=13)
The teachers in A-level school all had similar perceptions of VAM. They believed that VAM was not an accurate portrayal of their teaching and expressed feelings of concern over their VAM scores. The teachers in school A did not think VAM was an accurate portrayal of teaching because it includes factors outside of teacher control, such as student home life and student background. VAM also does not portray the other responsibilities a teacher should fulfill in order to be an effective teacher. Examples of these responsibilities include caring for students and communicating with parents:

I was pretty nervous about it (VAM) because it doesn’t take into consideration anything other than a one shot-test. It doesn’t take into consideration these children’s lives, what else is going on in their lives, when their birthday is, socio economic status. Nothing. It’s just here is the test score they took on one day and that’s supposed to determine whether I’m an effective teacher or not and I mean I’ve gotten it (high scores) every year but it’s not okay. (Teacher 3-A, 12-12-14)

Teacher 3-A shared her previous year’s VAM score was better than her observation score, but she still does not feel it is “very fair way to evaluate me as a teacher” (12-12-14). Teacher 3-A went onto share she “got lucky” with her highly effective VAM score because all the teachers on her team taught the same lessons and she believed the teachers did differently because of the type of students each had in their classroom. Similar to Teacher 3-A, Teacher 2-A had a highly effective VAM score last year but is still against the use of VAM: “I’m relying on 10 year olds and how they feel that day and what happened throughout the year and various things come into play… I do not have control with everything in 25 10-year-olds lives” (2-24-15).

Along with feelings of lack of control with VAM, the teachers at School A are worried about how the public will perceive VAM scores if they were released in the paper. One of the main worries of the teachers at School A was the public understanding the VAM scores.

When I was online all I saw were numbers and there wasn’t really a very good explanation of what the numbers meant so I think any person just going to look would not have a good idea of what that meant. (Teacher 1-A, 2-22-15)

Besides worrying about the public perception and understanding of VAM scores, Teacher 2-A felt it could also impact relationships with future parents of students, especially if parents don’t understand VAM does not show all aspects of teaching.

I would be concerned that the parents of students that were to come in to my classroom next year. They’ve already got this preconceived number in their head about me and they may not want me to be their child’s teacher because of that number. It would be very difficult for me to establish a rapport with people that
already have that preconceived notion about me. There are so many things that go on in the classroom on a daily basis that have no correlation with a number (VAM). I mean I could yell at my kids all day long and have a high VAM score but do you want that for your child? (2-24-15)

When it came to the new assessments, teachers at School A had received information regarding the new state assessments, but still had questions about them especially regarding scoring. Teachers shared that a lot of this information was given to them late in the school year, causing teachers to stress about covering all standards for the assessment: “I feel like I’m cramming it all in so that they can meet this writing test in two weeks and that’s not good pedagogy. This is not how the teachers teach and what we should be doing” (Teacher 1-A, 2-22-15). Along with the lack of information, School A teachers were worried the tests would be too hard and not be developmentally appropriate for the students.

Similar to the A School, the B-level school teachers seemed to not like VAM because of a perceived lack of control. The B school teachers also did not think their VAM scores were accurate portrayals of their teaching. The teachers at the two B schools were not happy VAM scores were public because of same reasons shared by the teachers at School A. The teachers at B1 used the word “ridiculous” to describe their feelings about using student test scores in teacher evaluations. “I think it’s ridiculous. The idea that so much of my evaluation on how well I’ve done my job is a result of how 10-year-olds performed on a test on one particular day” (Teacher 6-B1, 12-12-14). The lack of control over how students will react on a particular test day was a major concern for the teachers at B1 as shared by Teacher 5-B1.

It depends on during the day and how the students’ morning was before they took the test, what they feel like during that day. I know most of my students know the information while we are doing it in class but if a student takes a test and they get stressed out and don’t perform as well as they usually do in class. I don’t think it’s accurate. (12-10-14)

Along with the feeling of lack of control over VAM scores teachers at B1 did not think their VAM scores were accurate because previous years had included student scores of subjects teachers did not teach. Looking back all teachers at B1 were okay with their scores even though subjects the teachers did not teach were included in their previous VAM scores. However, the teachers at B1 shared they might feel differently if less effective teachers’ student scores were included in their personal evaluations.
When it came to VAM scores being public, Teachers at B1 were against the public having access to their personal VAM scores. Their negative feelings were focused on the lack of understanding the public might have when deciphering VAM scores and the lack of control teachers have over student test scores. Teacher 4-B1 shared, “I am opposed to it because it is a number that I don’t even know how it was calculated, knowing that I have a score that is based on things that were completely out of my control” (2-10-15). Similar feelings were shared by Teacher 5-B1 who focused on how parents might react to VAM scores without even knowing the meaning of the scores.

You will have certain parents who see that score and just automatically think that you are a bad teacher or they will throw a fit when their student gets that teacher. There are all sorts of things that could happen depending how the public views VAM scores. I am not even sure if they would know what a low or a high score is. (2-17-15)

The teachers were also worried about the new assessments that their VAM scores would be based off of for the school year. School B1 teachers had received some information throughout the school year, but they still felt the new test would be harder than the previous FCAT assessments. Teacher 4-B1 felt the rigor of the new tests sets students “up for failure,” and since her VAM will reflect those scores, it will be a “complete disaster” (2-10-15). Teachers 5-B1 and 6-B1 agreed they were not in favor of the new assessments and were worried about the format of the new assessments.

Similar to the teachers at B1, the teachers at B2 did not like VAM because of the lack of control the teachers felt over student test scores. Teacher 8-B2 was especially resistant against VAM being an adequate form of teacher accountability, sharing “I’ve always loathed VAM and will continue to loathe VAM until it goes away” (10-16-14). The teachers at B2 were mainly concerned about the lack of control, especially since B2 is a Title I school. Teacher 9-B2 shared her feelings stating, “there are so many factors that we cannot control. Having one high stakes test determining my effectiveness as a teacher is ridiculous” (10-20-14). Teacher 9-B2 described some of these out of control aspects as the lack of value families had for education in the school community and low socioeconomic status of families that are more concerned about their next meal than students getting an education. Because of lack of control over VAM scores, Teacher 9-B2, who previously had won awards for her teaching, did not think her effectiveness level was accurate (she was labeled as effective). Other aspects the teachers felt were out of their control
were student motivation on test day, the new assessments, the lack of resources for teaching the new standards, and the idea of one test day representing a whole year of learning. The sense of lack of control led teachers at B2 to believe their VAM scores were not accurate portrayals of teaching and caused stress, especially since the teachers did not know what to expect from the new assessments. Specifically, Teacher 7-B2 felt there was only so much he could do for students, and labeling his teaching ability based off student test scores didn’t make sense.

How can you look at me and say this kid did great so you’re an awesome teacher and then you turn around and look at this test score and say well this kid, he failed the FCAT, you obviously didn’t do what you needed to do to get him there. (10-9-14)

Just like the teachers at Schools A and B1, the teachers at B2 were worried about how the public might perceive VAM scores. Because of the lack of knowledge regarding VAM in the schools, the teachers did not feel the public would understand VAM either. The teachers shared statements such as “I would hate for it to paint a false picture of who I am as an educator” (Teacher 9-B2, 1-27-15) and “I think its wrong because even people who are in education don’t understand it, so parents who just pull it up they’re not going to know what that number means either” (Teacher 7-B2, 1-26-15). However, even with the lack of understanding of VAM, Teacher 8-B2 was not worried about the public perceptions and felt confident the teacher union would provide information if needed. Teacher 8-B2 felt this information would help the public see VAM is not an accurate portrayal of teaching.

Similar to teachers in the A and B schools, the teachers in the C-level schools were also against VAM because of the lack of control the teachers felt over student test scores. Teaches in the C level schools believed VAM was not an accurate representation of their teaching because of the lack of control the teachers had over students on test day, such as home life, motivation, etc. as well as the test being given one day out of the year. When it came to VAM being public, the C level teachers did not like the idea of teachers receiving bad press or the misinterpretation of VAM scores by parents. However, not all teachers in the C level schools were worried about parents’ interpretation because of the lack of parent participation at their schools.

Teachers at C1 were worried about their VAM scores because of the different student aspects the teachers felt were out of control. These aspects included student motivation, home life, and amount of sleep students got the night before the tests. “I really don’t have any control... I don’t think any teacher has control over making a student want to do it. I have kids just going
through and marking answers like they do not even care” (Teacher 10-C1, 2-19-15). Other problems the teachers were facing focused on working with students who came to them behind grade level and working with students who had limited attendance throughout the school year.

I am having to move them from 1st grade reading level all the way up to the end of 3rd grade. That is crazy and then my scores are tied to it and I have one child that has not even been to school he has missed twenty something days already.

(Teacher 11-C1, 10-21-14)

This year specifically (2015) teachers do not feel in control of the new assessments being used because of the lack of information given to them: “The new FSA assessment, it worries me because it just seems like it is going to be really hard for them. We have worked hard to prepare them for it but it’s just the unknown” (Teacher 12-C1, 2-5-15). It is interesting to note C1 had the highest mean (5.33; indicating some control) when asked about control over VAM as well as how worried the teachers were about VAM (6.67; indicating quite a bit of control) as seen in Table 4.3.

When it came to teacher perceptions on VAM being public the teachers at C1 were worried about VAM being public, but were less worried about parent perceptions at their school. Teacher 10-C1 was worried how the public will interpret the scores not understanding the impact of the outside factors mentioned earlier. However, Teacher 12-C1 was also worried, but instead about bad press for teachers. Teacher 12-C1 did not believe parents at C1 would care because of the lack of parental involvement at the school: “Honestly with my school I am not so worried about it because a lot of the parents are not really involved and it is like they don’t even care” (2-5-15). Lastly, Teacher 11-C1 shared that VAM being public will make her feel bad if the public negatively reacts to scores and does not think it is fair evaluations can be shared with the public, stating “I don’t like it and I think it is wrong” (2-18-15).

Teacher 13-C2 at C2 originally thought VAM was an accurate portrayal of her teaching when she received her first VAM score. However, after receiving her second VAM score she realized VAM did not include many important aspects of teaching: “I don’t think that actually it (VAM) matched the effort and everything that I did for kids” (11-17-14). Similar to other teachers, Teacher 13-C2 did not think test scores were always accurate ways of showing what a student actually learned during the school year. Other things that can impact student test scores are out of their control are “student moods on test day” as well as students coming in behind and without support at home to practice information learned in school.
Just like the teachers at C1, Teacher 13-C2 at school C2 did not agree with VAM being public because of how the public might interpret the scores: “They (parents) are going to say I don’t want my child in that class because her score was this or his score was that and they don’t understand the components of a VAM score” (2-10-15). Specifically, Teacher 13-C2 was concerned with parents interpreting VAM scores without knowing anything about the students in the class, such as students with learning disabilities or behavior issues the teacher was working with throughout the year.

Overall, all the teachers who participated in this study had some sort of negative feeling regarding VAM and its use in teacher evaluations. The main reasoning for the negative feelings focused on the lack of control teachers felt over student test scores as well as the perception that VAM scores were an inaccurate representation of their teaching abilities. These negative feelings led teachers to not value their VAM scores. The teachers were also not in favor of VAM scores being public due to the lack of information given to educators and to the public about the meaning of VAM scores. Lastly, teachers were specifically worried about the 2015 test scores because of the lack of information they had received regarding the new state standardized assessments. The teacher feelings about VAM and the assessments played a limited role in how teachers approached their instruction with students.

**Motivation to Change Teaching**

All the teachers in this study shared changes in their teaching in some form, but there were two reasons for teachers to changing their teaching that were prevalent in the interviews. The first reason teachers changed their teaching was for observations to include specific aspects administrators were looking for based on the Marzano (2007) domains (i.e., previewing new content, reviewing content, and stating lesson multiple times throughout the lesson), which was the protocol used in all the schools in this study for observations. These types of changes were more predominant with teachers whose administrator was not in the classroom often for observations or walkthroughs (Schools A & C1) throughout the school year. Because of lack of presence, teachers wanted administrators to be in their classroom more often to improve the evaluation process. However, teachers did not feel they were making major instructional changes during their observations and walkthroughs beyond the required ones. An example of a minor change made by teachers included stating the lesson objectives multiple times throughout the lesson, which they usually only did at the beginning of the lesson. The limited changes also
could be due to the teachers’ high sense of teacher efficacy with instruction and student engagement (See Table 4.3). A majority of the teachers in this study have been successful teachers in the past, which could lead to a higher sense of teacher efficacy (Bandura, 1986). Overall, teachers felt more control over their observations than over their VAM scores. Even with the perception of control, the teachers still felt they needed to include extra details required on the observation checklist in order to get the highest possible observation score.

Table 4.3

*School Means for Teacher Efficacy*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Instruction Efficacy Mean (SD)</th>
<th>Instruction Efficacy Mean Range</th>
<th>Student Engagement Efficacy Mean (SD)</th>
<th>Student Engagement Efficacy Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>7.13 (0.90)</td>
<td>6.1-7.8</td>
<td>7.23 (0.15)</td>
<td>7.1-7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>7.21 (0.69)</td>
<td>6.5-7.9</td>
<td>5.83 (1.56)</td>
<td>4.4-7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>7.46 (0.07)</td>
<td>7.4-7.5</td>
<td>6.47 (0.40)</td>
<td>6.1-6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>7.21 (1.13)</td>
<td>6.4-8.5</td>
<td>6.47 (0.64)</td>
<td>6.0-7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>8.13 (N/A)</td>
<td>8.13</td>
<td>6.10 (N/A)</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Scores range from 1-9. 1 being not at all and 9 being a great deal. *(n=13)*

Another change in instruction teachers discussed was regarding preparing students for the state assessments. Teachers either made these changes in order to help students feel more comfortable with the tests or because test preparation was district mandated. When it came to working with special groups of students (English language learners, Special Education, etc.) none of the teachers felt they made changes, but continued working with students in small groups and individually. None of the teachers felt the changes were made to receive a higher VAM score or because VAM scores are public information. However, the C level schools shared some motivation to change teaching based on VAM as seen in Table 4.4. The teachers in the A-level school did not feel they made major changes in their instruction, but all three did share that they focused on including specific aspects during formal observations. The teachers felt these changes were necessary in order to get a highly effective score. “I feel like there are hoops that I need to jump through in order to be highly effective. They’re not natural things that good teachers do most of the time” (Teacher 3-A, 2-19-15). The administrators in School A were only in the classrooms a couple times a year, but the teachers wanted to have administrators in the
Table 4.4

School Means for Teacher Perceptions to Changes Made to Instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>How much has receiving value-added scores changed your instruction in the classroom? (SD)</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>How motivated are you to change your instruction to improve your VAM score? (SD)</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>To prepare students for the state test, how much do you change your instruction? (SD)</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>During your formal observations, how much do you change your instruction? (SD)</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>How much does the value-added model being public impact your motivation to change your instruction? (SD)</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1.67 (0.58)</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>3.00 (0.00)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.00 (2.65)</td>
<td>3-8</td>
<td>3.67 (3.06)</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>1.33 (0.58)</td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>1.33 (0.58)</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>3.33 (2.00)</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>6.00 (1.00)</td>
<td>5-7</td>
<td>3.00 (0.00)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.67 (0.58)</td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>3.67 (4.62)</td>
<td>1-9</td>
<td>1.67 (1.15)</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>4.33 (2.31)</td>
<td>3-7</td>
<td>1.67 (1.15)</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>3.67 (4.62)</td>
<td>1-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>4.33 (2.31)</td>
<td>3-7</td>
<td>6.00 (2.65)</td>
<td>3-8</td>
<td>6.00 (2.65)</td>
<td>3-8</td>
<td>4.67 (1.53)</td>
<td>3-6</td>
<td>5.00 (1.00)</td>
<td>4-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>7.00 (N/A)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.00 (N/A)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.00 (N/A)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.00 (N/A)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.00 (N/A)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Scores range from 1-9. 1 being not at all and 9 being a great deal (n=13)*
room more often because they believed it “would make for more accurate evaluation because there would be more instances, more chances, and more opportunities to earn all the points” (Teacher 3-A, 2-19-15). Teacher 1-A agreed, sharing that administrators have been in her room during a test, which led to a bad evaluation, “I was going over a test one day and doing directions for a test and what she was looking for was not happening in my room at that time because I was going over directions for a test…I still got an evaluation sent to me” (2-22-15).

When it came to changes in teaching for the state assessments, teachers at School A were required by the district to begin using a pacing guide in January for test preparation. The changes in instruction focused on test preparation and to get students familiar with the items they might see on the state assessment. Teacher 2-A described the test preparation as “practice that mimics the test…I’ve had to stop things to just focus on the test preparation.” The teachers did not like the changes they were having to make because it took away from teaching time and didn’t allow for fun activities: “I have to stop the fun things I’ve done in the past to just focus on test preparation” (Teacher 2-A, 2-24-15).

In the B-level schools there were similarities and differences in changes in teaching. Both B level schools had administrators in the classroom on a weekly basis; however, only teachers at B1 felt they were making small changes during formal observations similar to teachers in School A. Teacher 6-B1 shared an example of the minor changes made during a she might do during a formal observation.

There are just a handful of things that I would change about the way that I would teach for the most part everything is the same. I often you know, you are supposed to state your learning goals in the beginning, middle and end of your lesson. Well do I state my learning goals throughout my lesson in what we are talking about that day? Yes I do but during a formal evaluation I am just more consciously aware of doing it and that sort of thing. (2-25-15)

Unlike B1, teachers at B2 did not feel they needed to make changes during their observations. The teachers at B2 shared that their administrator is in their classroom on a weekly basis and that allows their administrator to see all aspects throughout the school year: “He’ll (administrator) just do a walk through, he does a lot of informal observations so I have a really good feeling that he knows what I’m doing in my classroom” (Teacher 9-B2, 1-27-15). Similarly, Teacher 7-B2 also preferred to have an administrator in his classroom often because it allows for an authentic evaluation.
I just feel like when he sits down to evaluate me he knows what I have been doing because he is very random with the times, he is very random with the days, so you know there are plenty of opportunities for him to just walk in and see what’s going on. (1-26-15)

The two B-level schools also differed on the reasons for changing their instruction for test preparation. Just like in school A, the district mandated specific test preparation in instruction for the teachers at B1. This change in instruction included a 90-page test prep booklet as well as mock tests. Teacher 4-B1 described the booklet as “very different” from normal instruction and “aligned with the common core standards.” Along with making district mandated changes, the teachers at B1 shared making changes to prepare students for the state assessments. Other changes Teacher 5-B1 shared included giving practice tests to students and focusing on particular aspects, such as writing, which the students would be asked to do on the state assessments. As the teachers received more information about the new assessments they felt they were able to make more test preparation changes to prepare students for the types of questions they might see on the assessments.

The teachers at B2 were including changes in their instruction in order to help student be prepared for the state standardized tests at the end of the school year. None of the changes at B2 were mandated and focused on integrating testing strategies and practice into regular instruction. Teacher 7-B2 shared this was the case because of the limited knowledge surrounding the new assessments, “no one knows what’s going on, so my grade group we are just teaching like we’ve always taught and whatever happens, happens” (1-26-15). Other changes discussed at B2 included reviewing material as the test date approached, “I stick to the benchmarks and make sure I cover the benchmarks I might go back and pull out material that we covered at the beginning of the year” (Teacher 8-B2, 2-11-15). Out of the three teachers at B2, teacher 9-B2 discussed the most changes in instruction sharing she began implementing test practice, test taking strategies, and building student stamina.

Similar to the B level schools, teachers at the C-level schools reported a mix in the changes made to their instruction. The administrators at C1 had only been in the teachers’ classroom once or twice during the current school year. The impact on changes in instruction due to the rare presence of administrators in the classroom was minimal, but teachers did share changes similar to teachers at School A. Even with the few observations and walkthroughs happening the teachers at C1 still felt in control of their observations. Two teachers (T11-C1 &
T12-C1) specifically reported making changes in order to get something marked off during an observation. These changes were more visible if the teacher knew in advance what specific aspects the administrator was looking for during that particular observation. Teachers are told before the walkthrough or observation the specific aspects the administrator is looking for as shared by Teacher 12-C1, “If she is going to do one she is going to look for a specific thing she will normally let us know remember I am looking for this” (2-5-15). Teacher 11-C1 also shared making minimal changes for observations, but was less happy having to include the Marzano (2007) aspects into her teaching. “I feel like I have to throw in that Marzano crap” (2-18-15).

Even though the teachers felt they were making minimal changes during observations, all three teachers agreed having administrators in the classroom more often would help the evaluation process. Having an administrator would allow teachers to show their true teaching more than just a couple times throughout the school year: “The one time thing coming in here really doesn’t show what I’m capable of” (Teacher 1, 2-19-15). Teacher 12-C1 agreed that having more walkthroughs would allow administrators to see more teaching sharing, “it is nice (having limited walkthroughs), on the other hand if they do walkthrough all the time they know what you’re doing” (2-5-15).

Other changes the teachers at C1 discussed were changes focusing on preparing students for the standardized tests at the end of the school year. However, C1 had one of the highest school means (6, indicating some change) when asked if they changed instruction to improve VAM as well as one of the highest school means for changing instruction to prepare students. All teachers at C1 shared they made changes for the state tests. Some of the changes the teachers discussed focused on formatting questions similar to those on the test, incorporating testing strategies into lessons, and focusing on the new standards in teaching. The teachers at C1 said they made these changes for the students and not to get a higher VAM score. “Oh I am doing it for my students; I don’t care about my evaluations. I know that sounds bad” (Teacher 11-C1, 2-18-15). Teacher 1 had shared similar feelings, stating her goal was to teach students and VAM does not change that, “even before the test scores had an impact on my evaluation I felt that I needed to do my best to make a difference in these children’s lives” (10-2-14).

When it came to the other teacher at a C level school, Teacher 13-C2 had different changes compared to the teachers at C1. The administrator at C2 is in the classroom several times a week doing walkthroughs and observations. Teacher 13-C2 likes having her
administrator in the classroom so often because it allows her to show growth and teaching strategies, especially after having a lower evaluation (needs improvement) the previous school year: “I feel like it gives me an opportunity for growth as well as opportunities for her to see how well I am doing” (2-10-15). Along with allowing administrators to see growth, Teacher 13-C2 is able to felt in control of her observation scores on her evaluation.

To prepare students for the upcoming state assessments, Teacher 13-C2 was similar to teachers from Schools A and B1. Teacher 13-C2 was required by the district to incorporate specific test preparation into her teaching. This test preparation included focusing on tested subjects and practice tests. “We have taken out social studies and science except for the implementation through reading passages in order for them to prepare for the writing or for them for reading comprehension” (2-10-15). Teacher 13-C2 shared the required changes also included minute-by-minute breakdowns of the amount of time each tested subject should be taught on a daily basis. Similar to the teachers at C1, Teacher 13-C2 had one of the highest means for changing instruction to improve VAM, which could explain the opportunity to show growth.

Teachers in this study shared they were making changes, but their motivation to make these changes was not receive a higher VAM score. These changes were made to help students learn or were mandated changes. Depending on the district and school, teachers felt different senses of control over the changes they are making in their instruction. All the teachers from district 1 (Schools A, B1, C2) made test preparation changes because their district mandated these changes. Also all teachers had the Marzano (2007) evaluation system as part of their observation part of their evaluation, which led to changes in instruction during observations. Teachers felt more control if their administrator conducted more observations during the school year thus leading these teachers to change their instruction less. These different levels of control could eventually play a role in teacher motivation especially once more teachers are part of the merit pay system.

**Merit Pay and the School Community**

The only teachers in Florida included in the merit pay system will be non-tenured teachers. Ten of the teachers that participated in this study shared they had tenure and will not be giving it up to be included in the merit pay system. Out of the other three teachers who do not have tenure, two Teachers (5-B1 & 12-C1) were not sure if they were on the merit pay system and had not received any information about merit pay. Teacher 13-C2 was the only teacher who
knew she was part of the merit pay system and that her pay would be based on her final evaluation. Even though a majority of teachers were not on the merit pay system, the teachers shared their perspectives on the potential impact of merit pay on the school community in the interviews and on the survey (See Tables 4.5).

Table 4.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>How much does merit pay impact teacher collaboration within the school community? (SD)</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>How much does merit pay impact your grade level team collaboration? (SD)</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>The prospect of receiving bonus pay for my value-added score motivates me to be a better teacher. (SD)</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.00 (3.21)</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>2.50 (1.53)</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>1.00 (0.00)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>2.00 (1.00)</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>2.00 (1.00)</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>3.00 (1.00)</td>
<td>2-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>3.67 (4.62)</td>
<td>1-9</td>
<td>1.00 (0.00)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.33 (0.58)</td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>5.00 (2.65)</td>
<td>3-8</td>
<td>4.67 (2.08)</td>
<td>3-7</td>
<td>3.00 (0.00)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>9.00 (N/A)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9.00 (N/A)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.00 (N/A)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* a Score-range 1 - 9. 1 = at all; 9 = a great deal. b Score-range 1-5. 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree. (n=13)

All the teachers in the A-level school had tenure and were not willing to give up tenure to be part of the merit pay system. The main reason the teachers did not want to give up tenure was because of the job security that comes with tenure as shared by teacher 2-A, “I didn’t want to give up my job security for any kind of bonus pay” (12-12-14). Teacher 3-A never considered merit pay because “it is stressful every year whether you will get a contract” (12-12-14). Though none of the teachers knew or had heard of other teachers in their school on merit pay, all three did not think merit pay would have a positive impact on the school community. All three teachers felt merit pay would increase competition between teachers, which could lead to less sharing of lessons between teachers. “I think it’s going to take away from the sense of community. It will go from we are in this together to no, you are really not with us. You are in it for you, you want your merit pay” (Teacher 13, 12-12-14). Teacher 1-A also felt it could impact
the types of students teachers want to have in their classroom, with teachers less likely to take exceptional students or students with behavior issues.

I do think that [fewer] teachers will be willing to take the ESE (Exceptional Student Education) and special education children into their classrooms. I think that children with severe behavior issues will not be in the regular classrooms as much because it does distract from the learning of the other students and the ability for the teacher to focus on the whole class because of one kid. (Teacher 1-A; 12-11-14)

Similar to the A school, the teachers at the B-level schools had not seen any influence of merit pay within their school communities. In B1, two of the teachers (4-B1 & 6-B1) were tenured and never considered merit pay because of the risk that comes with being on a merit pay system. “I thought it was too risky, no money has been designated for anything so I would rather just keep my tenure and keep going along like I’m doing” (Teacher 4-B2, 12-3-14). Teacher 5-B1, on the other hand, was not tenured; however, she had not been given information regarding merit pay. To her knowledge her pay will be based off the old pay scale. All three teachers did not believe merit pay would influence the school community this year, but could in the future.

When it came to teacher collaboration, the teachers did not think merit pay would influence their grade level teams because all the teachers worked well with each other. However, Teacher 6-B1 felt merit pay could be positive or negative depending on the individual teachers on the grade level team. “It could create a lot of competition. I could see it creating a lot of negative competition. I could see it making teachers come together and say lets do this, lets help each other” (Teacher 6-B1, 12-12-14). However, Teacher 4-B1 felt one factor, which would impact her decision to stay at her current school if merit pay was involved, would be the school socio-economic status.

I darn sure would want to get out of the school I am currently in if I knew that my salary was going to be connected to my students’ scores and I don’t think anybody would want to stay in a school like mine if you’re pay was going to be attached to the scores… I work at a title 1 school, we’ve got excellent teachers but then when they post the scores in the paper and you see how low our scores are it is very disheartening. (Teacher 4-B1, 12-3-14).

All the teachers at B2 also did not give up tenure to be part of merit pay because of job security. “It just doesn’t seem like a risk I was willing to take considering that the merit-pay was based on test scores and there are too many factors that I don’t have control over” (Teacher 9-B2, 10-20-14). Similar to Schools A and B1, the teachers at B2 did not think merit pay would
influence teacher collaboration on their grade level teams, but could potentially influence other schools and grade level teams.

I would think it would make it very competitive and instead of the way it is now, as soon as we have a good idea, we’ll shoot out an email. I can see how it would turn into, I’m keeping what I’m doing to myself because I want to get the merit-pay. (Teacher 9-B2, 10-20-14)

Both teachers 7-B2 and 8-B2 had not heard of any teachers in the school on the merit pay system so they did not think it would impact the school community.

Unlike the A and B level schools, the teachers at the C level schools had mixed feelings regarding merit pay. In C1 teachers 10-C1 and 11-C1 currently had tenure and had not considered giving it up because of job security. Teacher 12-C1 did not have tenure, but believed she was still on the old salary pay scale. All three teachers at C1 believed merit pay was going to have mixed results in schools and could potentially impact the school community. Teacher 10-C1 could see the positive and negative effects of merit pay by “causing a lot of resentment between teachers and a lot of competition,” but also pushing teachers to “get up off their chair and teach more” (10-2-14). Within their own school the teachers shared mixed views on teacher collaboration, with Teacher 11-C1 stating “it’s a dog eat dog world” (2-18-15) causing less collaboration. While Teacher 12-C1 felt merit pay would not impact his/her specific grade level team, but might impact others.

The only teacher on merit pay was Teacher 13-C2 at school C2. When it came to the influence of merit pay on the school community, Teacher 13-C2 felt it pushed teachers to collaborate more rather than creating competition. “It is (increasing collaboration) because I feel more people are afraid of losing their jobs” (11-17-14). Within C2, Teacher 13-C2 shared her grade level team was always working together and collaborating to develop the best lessons. Teacher 13-C2 shared these same feelings in her survey answers as seen in Tables 4.5 and Table 4.6. Besides increasing collaboration within the school, Teacher 13-C2 did not like merit pay. She believed merit pay had added more stress to teaching, sharing “I don’t think it makes you into a better teacher it actually just adds a level of stress that you can lose your job or you won’t be paid for the hard work that you do” (11-17-14). Teacher 13-C2 also felt merit pay was burning out good teachers because of the stress and workload.

Though a majority of teachers in this study were not on the merit pay system, the teachers were able to share their thoughts on the potential impact of merit pay in the school community.
### Table 4.6

*School Means for Teacher Perceptions of Community*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Affiliation Mean (SD)</th>
<th>Affiliation Range Means</th>
<th>Professional Interest Mean (SD)</th>
<th>Professional Interest Range Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.76 (0.41)</td>
<td>4.29-5.00</td>
<td>4.52 (0.46)</td>
<td>4.00-4.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>4.85 (0.15)</td>
<td>4.71-5.00</td>
<td>4.62 (0.44)</td>
<td>4.14-5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>4.67 (0.16)</td>
<td>4.43-4.71</td>
<td>4.29 (0.15)</td>
<td>4.14-4.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>4.00 (1.00)</td>
<td>3.00-5.00</td>
<td>3.53 (1.08)</td>
<td>2.29-4.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>5.00 (N/A)</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>5.00 (N/A)</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Scores range from 1-5 with 1 being Strongly Disagree and 5 being Strongly Agree. (n=13)

Within this study the teachers who participated also had a high sense of community (See Table 4.6), which could play a role in teacher collaboration. If teachers get along with each other the collaboration may potentially increase; however, it could potentially decrease if teachers become competitive regarding merit pay. Merit pay may also motivate some teachers to become more engaged in the teaching process, but the only teacher on the merit pay system was more stressed than motivated by merit pay.

**Teachers’ Views on Accountability**

VAM and merit pay have been implemented into Florida schools as new forms of accountability. The teachers in this study shared they do not understand VAM and have negative feelings about VAM being included in their evaluations. However, these negative feelings do not mean the teachers do not believe in accountability. Every teacher who participated in this study shared they believe in teacher accountability, but do not think VAM is the correct way to hold teachers accountable. When looking at the views on accountability no major themes across the different schools, but there were some common themes across teachers. One-way teachers wanted to be held accountable included using a pre and post-tests to show gains or progress monitoring throughout the year. The other way some teachers wanted to be held accountable was through observations by administrators, but the teachers did not want to be evaluated using the Marzano (2007) domains.

Eight of the teachers (1-A, 2-A, 5-B1, 6-B1, 8-B2, 9-B2, 10-C1, 12-C1) who participated in this study voiced they would like either a pre and post test or more progress monitoring with testing done throughout the year. The teachers believed having multiple tests throughout the
year would be a more authentic evaluation of the role teachers have on student learning. “There just needs to be something more authentic out there than just the one test score” (Teacher 9-B2, 1-27-15). Teacher 1-A thought giving a pre and post-test would make more sense than a VAM score because it would just focus on the teacher and students in that particular class.

I think that if we wouldn’t give them a — the students a test in September and we give them the same test in April or May, same student, same teacher, same test, and measure the growth that way, I think that’s a truer measure of what the teacher has done all year your teaching the same kids and you’re always comparing these children to themselves and that teacher — then I think you would get a better piece of information about whether or not that teacher has made a difference. (2-25-15)

Teacher 12-C1 also felt a pre and post test would help with accountability because it would not be focused on one day of testing, “something throughout the year that they are held accountable not just one day” (2-5-15). One reason these teachers may want these changes in their evaluations is due to the lack of understanding of VAM. The teachers do not believe that VAM is able to control for student factors due to it only representing one day. The teachers’ felt if their evaluation included more than one test score it will be more accurate of the gains made by students during the current school year compared to just one test; “To me it is not a very good representation, I would rather it be spread out amongst multiple different areas and take in account different parts of the child’s life rather than just one test score” (Teacher 5-B1, 2-17-15).

The other teachers (3-A, 4-B1, 7-B2, 11-C1, 13-C2) in the study shared that they would like to have more observations by administrators. However, the teachers do not want the observations to be based on Marzano (2007) domains. “I think observations are a great thing…but the Marzano tool is insane” (Teacher 3-A, 2-19-15). They felt that the Marzano (2007) domains ask teachers to do too much during a 45-minute formal observation. Teacher 7-B2 felt administrators needed to take a more active role in the evaluation process. Having administrators in the classrooms more will allow them to see if a teacher is effectively instructing students.

Principals should get off their behind and be in the rooms. You can tell if a teacher is teaching or not by walking into their rooms, you can tell if you’re in there often. If you know what’s going on in that room, you know if that persons is teaching or not. (1-26-15).
Teacher 11-C1 feels that education needs to go back to having administrators in control of evaluations because VAM is “putting too much stress on the accountability” (2-18-15).

**Emerging Theoretical Model**

The findings from this study indicate that the teachers had limited knowledge of VAM and had negative feelings about VAM being part of their evaluations. The teachers did not feel that VAM drove their changes in instruction; however, teachers were still modifying instruction. The changes were made either for higher observation scores, increased student learning, or were district mandated. When it came to merit pay, ten of the thirteen teachers did not want to give up tenure for merit pay. The teachers felt there was mixed impact on the school community because of merit pay depending on the sense of community between teachers within the school or grade level team. Lastly, even though the teachers had negative feelings regarding VAM, the teachers were not against teacher accountability.

When analyzing the data I specifically focused on the teachers’ emotions and the impact of the different parts of the evaluation process. These specific aspects were highly influenced by Pekrun’s Control Value Theory (2006). My results suggest teachers want to have control over their evaluations; however, under the current system teachers do not feel in control over all aspects of their evaluation. Figure 4.1 shows the relationships between the different aspects of a teacher’s evaluation and the perceptions of control. I will discuss the emerging theoretical model in detail and connect it to the literature in the discussion chapter.
Figure 4.1 Emerging theoretical model of current study. The findings show the perceptions of control, value, and the outcomes based on teacher perceptions of the different aspects of a teacher’s evaluation. The dotted line suggests possible relationships in the future, which will depend on student scores on state assessments.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

The purpose of this instrumental case study (Stake, 1995) was to explore elementary teachers’ perceptions of the effects of the value-added model (VAM) being implemented in teacher evaluations. This study focused on teachers’ knowledge of VAM in teacher evaluations, the effect VAM and merit pay have on the school community, and the teachers’ perceptions of their behaviors within the classroom due to the implementation of VAM in their teacher evaluations. To achieve this aim, I asked the following research question: What role does VAM play in how teachers view their work in the school and school community? Additionally, the following sub-questions helped address the primary research question:

5) What knowledge do teachers have of VAM?
6) How do teachers feel about having VAM as part of their teacher evaluation?
7) How do teachers perceive VAM influencing their motivation to change their teaching?
8) How do teachers perceive merit pay (based in part on VAM scores) will influence their school community?

In this chapter, I will give a brief overview of my findings, connecting them with my theoretical framework as well as with current literature. I will also address the limitations of this study and provide implications based on the findings.

Overview of Findings

The results of this study suggest how elementary teachers perceive VAM and the role it plays in their teaching and in the school community. A majority of the elementary school teachers in this study had limited knowledge of VAM. The teachers knew VAM scores came from student test scores, but there was confusion about how VAM was calculated and the variables included in VAM. One reason the teachers may have had limited knowledge of VAM was because the teachers had negative feelings about VAM being included in their teaching evaluations. These negative feelings derived from the feeling of VAM being out of teacher control due to student variables (i.e., home life, sleep, motivation, etc.) and the new assessments being used in Florida. The lack of control over VAM may have also led teachers to not value VAM in their teacher evaluations.
As for the influence of VAM on the teachers’ instruction, teachers did not report making changes to their instruction to get higher VAM scores. However, the teachers explained that they did change their teaching for other reasons. Some teachers made changes that they perceived as within their control. These changes included reviewing and practicing for the state assessments during instruction as well as changing instruction during observations. The changes during observations were limited and focused on including specific aspects of the Marzano (2007) domains. Teachers also reported making changes for reasons out of their control, namely conducting district mandated test preparation. These changes included teaching from a test prep workbook as the state test date approached. When it came to the impact of merit pay on the school community, only one teacher in the study knew for a fact she was part of the merit pay system. A majority of the teachers were tenured and never considered giving up tenure for merit pay. A majority of teachers did not think merit pay would impact their specific school or grade level, but it might influence other school communities. Two teachers did share that the educational policies had impacted teacher collaboration with one stating it hurt collaboration, while the one teacher in the merit pay system felt merit pay increased in teacher collaboration. Overall, the teachers in this study reported making changes in order to prepare students for the state standardized tests, and the teachers had mixed feelings regarding the impact of merit pay on collaboration.

The educational policies such as VAM and merit pay are included in the field of education as ways of holding teachers accountable. Even though the teachers in this study had negative feelings about VAM, all 13 teachers wanted to be held accountable. The teachers did not think the current teacher accountability model painted an accurate picture because VAM did not account for variables out of the teacher’s control, and they thought the Marzano (2007) domains were not realistic teaching practices in a short observation time frame. The teachers were split in their ideal view of accountability with some teachers wanting to include student test scores and the other teachers wanting accountability based on observations. The teachers wanting test scores included in evaluations felt the tests needed to include a pre-and post-test during the school year rather than just one day of testing at the end of each school year. The teachers felt that this would be a more accurate portrayal of their impact on student achievement and not include other factors such as summer loss, students having a bad day, etc. The teachers who wanted administrative observations to determine their evaluation scores
wanted administrators in the classroom more often and did not want to be assessed using the Marzano (2007) domains.

Discussion of Findings

The conceptual framework for this study was based on Bandura’s Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986), which focuses on the triadic reciprocal interactions between person, behavior, and environment. The results of this study include all three aspects and the role they play in teacher motivation to change their instruction based on VAM as well as the teachers’ final evaluations. This study was also influenced by control-value theory (Pekrun, 2000, 2006) as it applies to teachers’ emotions and motivation when dealing with their personal VAM scores. The results focused on the different aspects of a teacher’s evaluation (VAM and Observations) and the amount of control and value the teachers’ felt they had over those aspects. Lastly, the conceptual framework included the emerging model from my preliminary study (Pressley, 2014), which describes how, for another sample of teachers, lack of knowledge of their teacher evaluations leads to their dissatisfaction with their teacher evaluation scores. The emerging model from my preliminary study was used to develop the research questions for the current study looking at the role of VAM in teachers’ motivation to change their teaching. The conceptual framework informed the new emerging model for this current study, which emerged during the cross case analysis and axial coding.

When analyzing the data I specifically focused on the teachers’ emotions and the impact of the different parts of the evaluation process. These specific aspects were highly influenced by Pekrun’s Control Value Theory, but the triadic reciprocal interactions determinants (person, behavior, and environment) of Bandura’s Social Cognitive Theory were also found within the findings. Table 5.1 and Figure 4.1 represent the emerging theoretical model depicting the relationships between the variables found in the conceptual framework using Control Value Theory (Pekrun, 2000, 2006). I will go into detail in describing the aspects of the emerging theoretical model, highlight the different Social Cognitive determinants (Bandura, 1986) and explaining how these findings compare to my preliminary study emerging model. In the next sections I will discuss the different perceptions of control the teachers in this study had over the different parts of their teacher evaluations. I will also discuss the value and the control the teachers’ perceived to have for each aspect of their teacher evaluations.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Emotion</th>
<th>Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prospective Outcomes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future VAM Score</td>
<td>Little</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Anxiety/Hopelessness</td>
<td>No motivation to learn about VAM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Observation Score</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium/High</td>
<td>Hope/Joy</td>
<td>Minor changes in instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Overall Evaluation Score</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Hope</td>
<td>Compliance with evaluation process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public VAM</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Hopelessness</td>
<td>Worried about parent perception of teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Retrospective Outcomes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past Positive VAM Score</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Gratitude</td>
<td>No motivation to change because of VAM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past Negative VAM Score</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Aggravated</td>
<td>No motivation to change because of VAM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past Positive Observation Score</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Pride</td>
<td>High teaching efficacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past Negative Observation Score</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Shame</td>
<td>Low teaching efficacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past Positive Overall Evaluation Score</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Pride</td>
<td>High teaching efficacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past Negative Overall Evaluation Score</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>Focus on improving teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scripted Test Preparation</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Frustration</td>
<td>Feelings of lack of autonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of Standards &amp; Test Practice</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Hopeful</td>
<td>Motivated to prepare students for tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marzano (2007) Domains</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Annoyed</td>
<td>Minor changes in teaching, especially if Administrator not in room often</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Perceptions of no control. Teachers in this study did not feel they had control of their past or future VAM scores. One of the reasons teachers did not feel in control was because teachers could not control students on the test day. The state assessments are given one day out of the year and teachers do not know what students are going through on that particular day. Some of the factors teachers did not feel in control of include student motivation on the standardized assessment, student home life, and the amount of sleep the student got the night before the exam. Some of the teachers also attributed (Weiner, 1972) their high VAM scores to luck. All the teachers felt VAM scores based off student test scores were not stable and were attributed to external factors (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Weiner, 1985). The little value and no control over previous and future VAM scores led teachers to feel hopelessness regarding future VAM scores and gratitude for effective previous VAM scores. When thinking about future VAM scores, none of the teachers felt their VAM score would be ineffective even though the teachers believed student test scores would go down due to the new assessments being harder. A possible reason for teachers’ believing is due to the low percentage of teachers previously labeled lower than effective in 2013-2014 (1.4% needed improvement, .7% developing, and .3% as unsatisfactory; FLDOE, 2014).

Another aspect the teachers did not feel in control of was the new assessment being used in Florida. Teachers had limited information about the new assessment and had never seen the assessment. The teachers also felt the new assessment would be harder than previous FCAT tests, which could impact student test scores. Because of these perspectives of lack of control the teachers did not feel VAM was accurate of their teaching ability. Due to the feeling that VAM is not accurate, the teachers in this study did not value their VAM score as important. This led teachers to not be motivated to change their teaching for a higher VAM score. It also led teachers to not be motivated to learn more about VAM, thus they persisted in having limited knowledge of VAM. The one aspect of VAM the teachers did value was the public’s perception of teachers based on VAM scores being public information. A majority of teachers in this study were worried about how the public, especially parents, would interpret VAM scores if they were put in a newspaper.

Along with the perception of no control over the VAM portion of her evaluation, one teacher had negative value of her overall evaluation, was disappointed in her score, and felt the VAM was not in her control. The negative value and lack of control led this teacher to feel anger
regarding her final evaluation score. Overall, the teachers want to have control over the
evaluation process. Knowing more about how their evaluation scores are calculated and the
student variables included in their evaluation might lead teachers to have high value and high
control of their overall evaluations. The lack of control over VAM scores is similar to the
findings in Pressley (2014), which found teachers were dissatisfied with their VAM scores when
the teachers received their scores from administrators. However, the teachers in Pressley (2014)
searched out information because they were dissatisfied with their VAM scores, whereas the
teachers in this study did not search out information regarding VAM. A possible reason the
teachers in the current study did not search out information regarding VAM may be due to their
lack of value of their VAM score.

Disagreement over the use of VAM in teacher evaluations is nothing new as studies have
found teachers questioning the accuracy of VAM as well as teachers having negative feelings
toward VAM (Cocke, 2014; Lee, 2011). One of the reasons for feeling lack of control over
VAM in this study was because teachers did not understand how VAM was calculated
(knowledge is a person determinant; Bandura, 1986). A lack of knowledge of VAM has been a
common theme when it comes to VAM being used in teacher evaluations. Previous studies have
also found that teachers had confusion regarding how student test scores could accurately be
measured with VAM as well as had a lack of knowledge of the variables that are included in

The last aspect the teachers did not feel in control of was the mandated scripted test
preparation. Only the teachers in district one were required to change their instruction, a
behavior determinant (Bandura, 1986), in order to help prepare their students for the state
standardized assessments. These changes focused on test preparation and a decrease in the
amount of time spent on non-tested subjects. Though these teachers made these changes because
they were district mandated, the teachers also made the changes because they valued student
learning. By implementing these test preparation changes the teachers hoped for higher student
scores on the standardized assessments. The teachers saw the value of these changes, but did not
have control over the changes made in their instruction. This led teachers to feel frustration over
the lack of autonomy in their teaching. Teachers changing instruction to prepare students for a
high stakes tests is not new. The pressure teachers’ feel to have students perform well on an
assessment has pushed teachers to focus their instruction around a test (Abrams et al., 2003;

**Perceptions of control.** Though teachers did not feel in control of their VAM, the teachers in this study had a perception of control over the other part of their evaluation, teaching. The teaching aspect of the teachers’ evaluations included observations and walkthroughs done by administrators. A possible reason for teachers feeling more control of their observation scores could be due to the environmental determinant (Bandura, 1986) of the amount of time an administrator is in the room during the year. The teachers who had an administrator in their room on a weekly basis felt their observations were more accurate. The teachers felt this way because their administrator saw their natural teaching many times throughout the year instead of only observing twice throughout the year. Because of the positive value and high control over observations teachers felt hopeful for effective scores on their future observations and joy regarding their previous observation scores. The feelings of control over observation scores may also be due to the teachers having high teaching efficacy based off previous observation evaluations (Bandura, 1986, 1997). All the teachers in this study had at least three years of teaching experience with a majority being labeled as effective or highly effective in the past. This previous success may play a role in the teachers feeling of control over future observations.

It is important that teachers feel in control of their observation scores because, at the time of this study, these scores were used for half of a teacher’s evaluation in Florida. It is also important to note that since my data collection Goldring et al. (2015) explored principals’ perceptions of value added and observation scores for high stakes decisions. Principals’ felt observation scores were more authentic when looking at a teacher’s effectiveness compared to VAM scores. The principals felt the observation scores were more authentic because the scores were based on several observations throughout the school year of actual teaching (Goldring et al., 2015).

Along with feeling control over the observation part of their evaluations, some of the teachers were making changes to their instruction, a behavior determinant (Bandura, 1986), to prepare students for the state assessments. These changes were not mandated by administrators but were done in order to help students prepare for the state assessments. These changes include teaching testing strategies during lessons, reviewing standards, and providing practice problems during instruction. These changes were similar to the mandated changes, but these changes were
not working off a scripted lesson plan for the day. Similar to those making the mandated test preparation changes, the teachers choosing to make these changes were doing so because they valued student learning as well as to help students do their very best on the standardized tests. The reviewing of standards and teaching testing strategies was valued by the teachers, thus leading to the teachers’ feeling hopeful for student success and high test scores. These changes are similar to those found in my preliminary study (Pressley, 2014), which also found that teachers may change their instruction because of high teaching efficacy and goals focusing on student learning. However, the changes found in Pressley (2014) were in response to dissatisfaction with VAM scores.

The other activity the teachers felt control over was including specific Marzano (2007) domains in their teaching during observations. Teachers shared that these changes were limited and were done in order to get higher observation scores. Though the teachers were making these changes, a behavior determinant (Bandura, 1986), they did not value the change, a person determinant, because the teachers did not feel these changes were necessary for an effective teacher to include in every lesson or to include certain aspects multiple times in a lesson, such as stating the lesson objectives. The positive control and low value in Marzano (2007) changes led teachers to be frustrated about having to include these aspects in their teaching. The teachers who had an administrator in their room on a weekly basis, an environment determinant, felt that these changes were limited due to the amount of times administrators saw them teaching throughout the year. Again these changes were similar to the changes teachers made in my preliminary study (Pressley, 2014). The teachers in Pressley (2014) felt including specifics actions were required to get a higher observation score and including these specific actions was unnatural.

**Limitations**

In order to strengthen the findings from this qualitative study I included several aspects to check the construct and external validity of my findings as well as the reliability of my findings (Yin, 2013). The construct validity of this study was checked using multiple sources of data (multiple interviews, and surveys) as well as member checking of transcripts and overall results. One limitation of construct validity (Yin, 2013) was that this study did not specifically look at teacher behaviors within the classroom, so I was unable to confirm if or how the teachers had changed their instruction. In the future, it would be interesting to look at if and how teachers
change for their formal observations or if there is change due to the implementation of new educational policies. This type of research would require collection of longitudinal data.

Because this study is qualitative in nature I would urge readers not to generalize the findings for all schools across Florida; however, I looked to increase the external validity of my study and thus continue to develop a theory from my findings. In order to increase external validity I included multiple schools, from two districts, and included different school grade levels to develop my results. Lastly, I included reliability checks of my themes by two other graduate students, who were familiar with qualitative coding methods, read and recode three different sets of teacher interviews (first and follow-up) to determine the validity of the themes. After discussing and comparing codes, it was determined that we had 100% agreement of codes across all three coders. I also worked with two undergraduate students to check codes found in the first interviews and we had 100% agreement on the initial interview codes.

One limitation of the external validity (Yin, 2013) of this study was I was only able to get one teacher to interview at School C2. Though I was able to get multiple teachers for four of the schools, only getting one teacher from C2 limited the findings from that particular school. In the future it would be important to interview multiple teachers from schools from different districts across the state. It would also be important to interview teachers from more school grade levels (i.e., D and F level schools). Other possible limitations of external validity (Yin, 2013) were that most of the teachers who participated in the study had a lot of teaching experience and were tenured. The teachers’ experience may play a role in the changes made in instruction because of teacher efficacy. Along with their experience, the fact that most teachers were tenured may have impacted their views of merit pay. Tenured teachers may have different views than newer teachers who are not tenured and on the merit pay system. Only one teacher in the study knew she was included in the merit pay system. Previous studies focusing on the impact of merit pay have found mixed results on the effectiveness (Fryer, 2011; Lavy, 2002, 2008; Muralidharan & Sundararaman, 2011; Springer et al., 2011; Springer & Winters, 2009). It will be important for future research to look at the impact of merit pay on teachers, school communities, and student learning.

**Implications**

The findings from this study are important for several different reasons as it addresses teacher perspectives on educational policies that are being implemented in Florida schools. The
current study found that elementary teachers still need information regarding their VAM scores including the variables included for the student, classroom, and school level. Teachers also need to be given information regarding the subject tests included in their VAM scores as well as an explanation of their VAM scores when given their final evaluation score and effectiveness label.

This study also provides insight of the perception of control and value teachers have for the different aspects of their evaluations. This includes the different perceptions of value and control for each aspect of the evaluation and the possible outcomes associated with those perceptions. Teachers’ perceptions of value and control are important because of the possible impact on how teachers approach their current instruction and the evaluation process. Specifically a teacher’s perception of value and control may influence a teacher’s motivation to change their instruction, a teacher’s efficacy or feelings of autonomy within their teaching (See Table 5.1). These potential effects could play a role in how teachers approach their preparation, instruction, or evaluations in the future.

When it came to changes in instruction, the teachers in this study said they were not making changes for VAM, but did make changes for the state assessments. Though the teachers stated that these changes were in order to prepare students for the state assessments these changes (mandated or not) were similar to ones discussed as test prep or teaching to the test in previous literature (Abrams et al., 2003; Barksdale-Ladd et al., 2000; Finnigan & Gross, 2007; Hargrove et al., 2000; Jones & Egley, 2007). Moving forward school districts and teachers should focus on teaching to the standards rather than to the test. This may allow teachers to continue differentiated instruction for students as well as focusing on the content of the exam and not on particular test questions or testing strategies. By focusing on teaching the standards, this may help teachers feel less stress about the new assessments as the assessments were being built off the new standards, which were similar to the previous Next Generation Sunshine State standards (FLDOE, 2014d). Even with these new assessments being built on similar standards the validation of these assessments has been questioned and is still on going even after students have taken the tests in the 2014-2015 school year (Webb, 2015). Because of this ongoing study of the validity of the FSA tests, the exams for the 2014-2015 school year will not be released until after the completion of the validity study (Postal, 2015).

My study also gave teachers a say when it came to teacher accountability policies. Rarely teachers are given a say regarding policies that impact their classroom practices or
possibly their personal lives such as the policies addressed in this study. In this study teachers were given the opportunity to share their perspectives on educational policies that are impacting their evaluations and share the information or lack of information they have received from the state, district, and school administrators. Lastly, these policies may have an impact on teachers choosing to teach in Florida or other states that are implementing similar policies. Changes in educational policies, such as eliminating tenure and switching to merit pay, may push teachers to move to other states that are not implementing such policies.

Similar to my preliminary study (Pressley, 2014), in the current study I found teachers still need information regarding their personal VAM scores. Teachers need to know the variables that go into their VAM scores and how to interpret their personal VAM scores. Some teachers need more details on VAM, such as knowing what subject tests will be used for their VAM score, while other teachers still need to receive their VAM score from a previous year. When it came to getting information about VAM the teachers in this study did not think their administrators had information regarding VAM implementation, which led to teachers continuing to question VAM. In the future, Florida needs to provide more and clearer information to district officials and teachers regarding VAM and the role VAM plays in the teacher evaluation process. Previous literature has also found that educators have questions regarding VAM as Goldring et al. (2015) found that principals still had questions about VAM’s validity and their understanding of VAM. Though some teachers in the current study received professional development on VAM in previous school years, the teachers had not received information recently. Along with providing information to teachers and districts, the state needs to provide information about VAM to the public since teachers’ VAM scores are public information. Not providing information to the public could lead to negative assumptions about teachers by parents and the public due to a misunderstanding of VAM scores. Even with VAM decreasing in weight on a teacher’s evaluation, teachers and administrators still need to know about VAM and merit pay. However, it is important that teachers also make an effort to search out information regarding VAM and not rely just on administrators for information. Only two teachers in this study searched out information regarding VAM on their own time. If teachers and administrators took time to search out information about VAM it may have an impact on how they feel about the use of VAM in evaluations.
The current study also focused on teachers’ perceptions of control and value of their evaluations and the role these play in their motivation and emotions. The teachers in this study did not feel in control of their VAM because of the potential factors that may play a role in how students perform on an assessment. However, teachers felt in control of their observation scores, especially when administrators were in the classroom to see their teaching on a weekly basis. Because of the importance of teacher accountability it is important for administrators to see teachers teach multiple times in order to fairly assess them. Having more multiple, short observations instead of one longer observation is one way to make observation ratings of teachers more reliable. Another way would be to have multiple observers, such as a principal and assistant principal observe teachers throughout the school year (Ho & Kane, 2013). My study found that teachers want administrators in the room especially if new policies are going to be impacting evaluations and pay. In the future, districts can push school administrators to spend more time in classrooms to allow administrators to see how their teachers are teaching. Observations allow for administrators to see authentic teaching by teachers as well as provide feedback to teachers regarding specific areas that need improvement (Goe, Bell, Little, 2008; Goldring et al., 2015).

It is important to note since the collection of the data there have been changes in the current law focusing on teacher evaluations and the use of student data. During the end of the second phase of interview data collection, Florida superintendents pushed to delay implementation of teacher accountability based on the new assessments for the 2014-2015 school year. Superintendents argued that districts were not prepared to administer the new Florida State Assessments (FSA), many of which were required to be given on a computer. The superintendents also did not believe the curricula and resources were aligned with the new standards for all tested grades and subjects (Florida Association of District School Superintendents, 2015). More recently, since completing the analysis, Florida Governor Rick Scott signed a bill (Florida State Senate, 2015) delaying the use of student test scores for school grades, teacher evaluations and promotion of students to fourth grade. This new bill also changed the amount of weight VAM and observation scores would play in teacher evaluations. Previously, both VAM and observation scores accounted for 50% of a teacher’s evaluation. These were the only two pieces included in a teacher’s evaluation. However, the new bill states that VAM will now only determine one-third of a teacher’s overall evaluation, while
observations will also be one-third of a teacher’s evaluation. The last third of a teacher’s evaluation will focus on professional and job responsibilities and will be assessed using peer reviews, student or parent surveys or other valid measurements (Florida State Senate, 2015).

Besides the changes in Florida law, a similar study was published looking at teachers’ perspectives on the new evaluation system being implemented in Chicago since the collection of my data (Jiang, Sporte, & Luppescu, 2015). This study found similar findings when asking teachers their opinion of the evaluation system that included VAM and observations. The teachers shared positive feelings about the observations being included in their evaluations; however, the teachers had concerns about including VAM in evaluations. The findings from Jiang et al. (2015) and the current study should be considered when states and districts are considering or using VAM in teacher evaluations.

The focus on the different aspects of a teacher’s evaluation this study gave teachers a voice about educational policies that impact their evaluations as well as some teachers’ pay. Teachers rarely get a say in the policies that are mandated by the state and the particular policies this study focused on have had a large impact on teachers. VAM and merit pay may potentially play a role in teachers’ instruction, evaluations and student learning. This study showcases teachers’ perspectives on VAM and the impact it has on these particular teachers’ motivation to change their instruction as well as the impact it may have on the school community. Similar to previous literature regarding teachers’ perceptions of merit pay and the community my study found mixed teacher feelings (Forand, 2013; Jacob & Springer, 2008; Springer et al., 2012). It will be important for future research to continue to focus on the impact of merit pay in school communities. Teachers in this study were also able to share their ideal accountability system, which would give them a sense of control and value over their evaluation. This ideal accountability would include either pre- and post-tests during the year to measure student growth or more classroom observations done by administrators. The school districts and the department of education can use the results of this study to guide future implementation of educational policies that may impact teachers.
The Florida State University  
Office of the Vice President For Research  
Human Subjects Committee  
Tallahassee, Florida 32306-2742  
(850) 644-8673, FAX (850) 644-4392

APPROVAL MEMORANDUM

Date: 2/1/2013

To: Timothy Pressley

Address: 3212 Stone Building, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL, 32306  
Dept.: EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY AND LEARNING SYSTEMS

From: Thomas L. Jacobson, Chair

Re: Use of Human Subjects in Research  
Teachers' Reactions to the Value-Added Model

The application that you submitted to this office in regard to the use of human subjects in the proposal referenced above have been reviewed by the Secretary, the Chair, and one member of the Human Subjects Committee. Your project is determined to be Expedited per 45 CFR § 46.110(7) and has been approved by an expedited review process.

The Human Subjects Committee has not evaluated your proposal for scientific merit, except to weigh the risk to the human participants and the aspects of the proposal related to potential risk and benefit. This approval does not replace any departmental or other approvals, which may be required.

If you submitted a proposed consent form with your application, the approved stamped consent form is attached to this approval notice. Only the stamped version of the consent form may be used in recruiting research subjects.

If the project has not been completed by 1/31/2014 you must request a renewal of approval for continuation of the project. As a courtesy, a renewal notice will be sent to you prior to your expiration date; however, it is your responsibility as the Principal Investigator to timely request renewal of your approval from the Committee.

You are advised that any change in protocol for this project must be reviewed and approved by the Committee prior to implementation of the proposed change in the protocol. A protocol change/amendment form is required to be submitted for approval by the Committee. In addition,
federal regulations require that the Principal Investigator promptly report, in writing any unanticipated problems or adverse events involving risks to research subjects or others.

By copy of this memorandum, the Chair of your department and/or your major professor is reminded that he/she is responsible for being informed concerning research projects involving human subjects in the department, and should review protocols as often as needed to insure that the project is being conducted in compliance with our institution and with DHHS regulations.

This institution has an Assurance on file with the Office for Human Research Protection. The Assurance Number is FWA00000168/IRB number IRB00000446.

Cc: Alysia Roehrig, Advisor
HSC No. 2012.9427
The Florida State University
Office of the Vice President For Research
Human Subjects Committee
Tallahassee, Florida 32306-2742
(850) 644-8673, FAX (850) 644-4392

RE-APPROVAL MEMORANDUM

Date: 1/8/2014

To: Timothy Pressley

Address: 3212 Stone Building, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL, 32306
Dept.: EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY AND LEARNING SYSTEMS

From: Thomas L. Jacobson, Chair

Re: Re-approval of Use of Human subjects in Research
Teachers' Reactions to the Value-Added Model

Your request to continue the research project listed above involving human subjects has been approved by the Human Subjects Committee. If your project has not been completed by 1/6/2015, you must request renewed approval by the Committee.

If you submitted a proposed consent form with your renewal request, the approved stamped consent form is attached to this re-approval notice. Only the stamped version of the consent form may be used in recruiting of research subjects. You are reminded that any change in protocol for this project must be reviewed and approved by the Committee prior to implementation of the proposed change in the protocol. A protocol change/amendment form is required to be submitted for approval by the Committee. In addition, federal regulations require that the Principal Investigator promptly report in writing, any unanticipated problems or adverse events involving risks to research subjects or others.

By copy of this memorandum, the Chair of your department and/or your major professor are reminded of their responsibility for being informed concerning research projects involving human subjects in their department. They are advised to review the protocols as often as necessary to insure that the project is being conducted in compliance with our institution and with DHHS regulations.

Cc: Alysia Roehrig, Advisor
HSC No. 2013.11671
RE-APPROVAL MEMORANDUM

Date: 11/13/2014

To: Timothy Pressley

Address: 3212 Stone Building, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL, 32306
Dept.: EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY AND LEARNING SYSTEMS

From: Thomas L. Jacobson, Chair

Re: Re-approval of Use of Human subjects in Research
Teachers' Reactions to the Value-Added Model

Your request to continue the research project listed above involving human subjects has been approved by the Human Subjects Committee. If your project has not been completed by 11/12/2015, you must request renewed approval by the Committee.

If you submitted a proposed consent form with your renewal request, the approved stamped consent form is attached to this re-approval notice. Only the stamped version of the consent form may be used in recruiting of research subjects. You are reminded that any change in protocol for this project must be reviewed and approved by the Committee prior to implementation of the proposed change in the protocol. A protocol change/amendment form is required to be submitted for approval by the Committee. In addition, federal regulations require that the Principal Investigator promptly report in writing, any unanticipated problems or adverse events involving risks to research subjects or others.

By copy of this memorandum, the Chair of your department and/or your major professor are reminded of their responsibility for being informed concerning research projects involving human subjects in their department. They are advised to review the protocols as often as necessary to insure that the project is being conducted in compliance with our institution and with DHHS regulations.

Cc: []
HSC No. 2014.14183
APPENDIX B
PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT QUESTIONNAIRE

My name is Tim Pressley and I am a former elementary school teacher and current PhD student at Florida State University, Educational Psychology: Learning and Cognition. I am currently in the process of recruiting participants for my research study: Teachers’ Reaction to the use of the Value-Added Model in Schools. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a teacher in Florida where the Value-Added model is being implemented. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Background Information:
The purpose of this interview study is to look at teachers’ reaction to the implementation of the Value-added Model (VAM) at the elementary school level.

Procedures:
If you agree to participate in the online questionnaire portion of this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

- Understand the procedure and purpose for the online questionnaire
- Sign a consent form
- Agree to complete questionnaire that include demographics and two short surveys focused on your teaching and the value-added model.
- Total time: The anticipated completion time for this questionnaire is about 15 minutes

Risks and Benefits of being in the study:
There are minimal risks associated with participation in this study, but you may find that you are uncomfortable answering a question. If this happens, you may choose to not answer by saying, “no comment”.

The benefits to participation are the possibility of improving communication between teachers, principals and those who create laws and mandates that you are required to follow. There is still very little research on the implementation of the Value-Added model in schools and on teacher evaluations.

Compensation:
Once you have completed the survey, you will be entered into a raffle to win a $50 visa gift card for your time.

Confidentiality:
The records of this study will be kept private and confidential to the extent permitted by law. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you, the school, or the district where you teach. All reference to personal identifiers will be deidentified. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers working with me
will have access to the records. Recording of the interview will be destroyed after the interview has been transcribed (within two weeks of the date of the interview).

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University, your school, or your school district. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:
If you have any questions, you may contact the researchers, the supervising professor, or the FSU Human Subjects Review Board (all contact information given below).

Who to contact about your rights as a research participant in the study:
Florida State University’s Human Subjects Committee has approved this study. If you have any questions about the study please contact Tim Pressley (contact information below), my supervising professor, or, if you would like to learn more about your rights as a research participant, please contact Florida State University’s IRB Office at (850)644-7900.

Contact Information:

Researcher: Tim Pressley
Educational Psychology: Learning and Cognition
College of Education
3212 Stone Building
Florida State University
Tallahassee, Florida 32306
Phone:
Email:

Supervising Professor: Dr. Alysia Roehrig
Associate Professor
Educational Psychology & Learning Systems
College of Education
3204E Stone Building
Florida State University
Tallahassee, Florida 32306
Phone:
E-Mail Address:

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:
I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. Please check all that apply:

☐ I consent to participate in the questionnaire part of this study.
☐ I DO NOT consent to participate in this study.

_______________________________________  __________ _______
Signature of participant                         Date

_______________________________________  __________ _______
Signature of Researcher    Date
APPENDIX C
PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT INITIAL INTERVIEW

My name is Tim Pressley and I am a former elementary school teacher and current PhD student at Florida State University, Educational Psychology: Learning and Cognition. I am currently in the process of recruiting participants for my research study: Teachers’ Reaction to the use of the Value-Added Model in Schools. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a teacher in Florida where the Value-Added model is being implemented. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Background Information:
The purpose of this interview study is to look at teachers’ reaction to the implementation of the Value-added Model (VAM) at the elementary school level.

Procedures:
If you agree to be interviewed for this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

- Meet at a time agreeable for you and the investigator (in person or on the phone)
- Understand the procedure and purpose for the interview
- Sign a consent form
- Agree to answer questions concerning your reactions to the value-added model
- Agree to have the interview recorded
- Total time: Explanation of study and interview should require about 30 to 45 minutes of your time. Member checking will be done via email and should take less than 30 minutes

Risks and Benefits of being in the study:
There are minimal risks associated with participation in this study, but you may find that you are uncomfortable answering a question. If this happens, you may choose to not answer by saying, “no comment”.

The benefits to participation are the possibility of improving communication between teachers, principals and those who create laws and mandates that you are required to follow. There is still very little research on the implementation of the Value-Added model in schools and on teacher evaluations.

Compensation:
You will receive a $50 visa gift card at the end of the study for your time.

Confidentiality:
The records of this study will be kept private and confidential to the extent permitted by law. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you, the school, or the district where you teach. All reference to personal identifiers will
be deidentified. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers working with me will have access to the records. Recording of the interview will be destroyed after the interview has been transcribed (within two weeks of the date of the interview).

**Voluntary Nature of the Study:**
Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University, your school, or your school district. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

**Contacts and Questions:**
If you have any questions, you may contact the researchers, the supervising professor, or the FSU Human Subjects Review Board (all contact information given below).

**Who to contact about your rights as a research participant in the study:**
Florida State University’s Human Subjects Committee has approved this study. If you have any questions about the study please contact Tim Pressley (contact information below), my supervising professor, or, if you would like to learn more about your rights as a research participant, please contact Florida State University’s IRB Office at (850)644-7900.

Contact Information:

**Researcher:**
Tim Pressley  
Educational Psychology: Learning and Cognition  
College of Education  
3212 Stone Building  
Florida State University  
Tallahassee, Florida 32306  
Phone:  
Email:

**Supervising Professor:**
Dr. Alysia Roehrig  
Associate Professor  
Educational Psychology & Learning Systems  
College of Education  
3204E Stone Building  
Florida State University  
Tallahassee, Florida 32306  
Phone:  
E-Mail Address:

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

**Statement of Consent:**
I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. Please check all that apply:

☐ I consent to participate in the interview part of the study.
☐ I DO NOT consent to participate in this study.

_______________________________________  __________ _______
Signature of participant                         Date

_______________________________________  __________ _______
Signature of Researcher    Date
APPENDIX D
PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW

My name is Tim Pressley and I am a former elementary school teacher and current PhD student at Florida State University, Educational Psychology: Learning and Cognition. I am currently in the process of recruiting participants for my research study: Teachers’ Reaction to the use of the Value-Added Model in Schools. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a teacher in Florida where the Value-Added model is being implemented. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Background Information:
The purpose of this interview study is to look at teachers’ reaction to the implementation of the Value-added Model (VAM) at the elementary school level.

Procedures:
If you agree to be interviewed for this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

- Meet at a time agreeable for you and the investigator (in person or on the phone)
- Understand the procedure and purpose for the interview
- Sign a consent form
- Agree to answer questions concerning your reactions to the value-added model
- Agree to have the interview recorded
- Total time: Explanation of study and interview should require about 30 to 45 minutes of your time. Member checking will be done via email and should take less than 30 minutes

Risks and Benefits of being in the study:
There are minimal risks associated with participation in this study, but you may find that you are uncomfortable answering a question. If this happens, you may choose to not answer by saying, “no comment”.

The benefits to participation are the possibility of improving communication between teachers, principals and those who create laws and mandates that you are required to follow. There is still very little research on the implementation of the Value-Added model in schools and on teacher evaluations.

Compensation:
You will receive a $50 visa gift card at the end of the study for your time.

Confidentiality:
The records of this study will be kept private and confidential to the extent permitted by law. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you, the school, or the district where you teach. All reference to personal identifiers will
be deidentified. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers working with me will have access to the records. Recording of the interview will be destroyed after the interview has been transcribed (within two weeks of the date of the interview).

**Voluntary Nature of the Study:**
Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University, your school, or your school district. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

**Contacts and Questions:**
If you have any questions, you may contact the researchers, the supervising professor, or the FSU Human Subjects Review Board (all contact information given below).

**Who to contact about your rights as a research participant in the study:**
Florida State University’s Human Subjects Committee has approved this study. If you have any questions about the study please contact Tim Pressley (contact information below), my supervising professor, or, if you would like to learn more about your rights as a research participant, please contact Florida State University’s IRB Office at (850)644-7900.

Contact Information:

**Researcher:**
Tim Pressley  
Educational Psychology: Learning and Cognition  
College of Education  
3212 Stone Building  
Florida State University  
Tallahassee, Florida 32306  
Phone:  
Email:

**Supervising Professor:**
Dr. Alysia Roehrig  
Associate Professor  
Educational Psychology & Learning Systems  
College of Education  
3204E Stone Building  
Florida State University  
Tallahassee, Florida 32306  
Phone:  
E-Mail Address:

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

**Statement of Consent:**
I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. Please check all that apply:

☐ I consent to participate in the interview part of the study.
☐ I DO NOT consent to participate in this study.

_______________________________________  __________ _______
Signature of participant                         Date

_______________________________________  __________ _______
Signature of Researcher    Date
APPENDIX E
PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT FOLLOW-UP SURVEY

My name is Tim Pressley and I am a former elementary school teacher and current PhD student at Florida State University, Educational Psychology: Learning and Cognition. I am currently in the process of recruiting participants for my research study: Teachers’ Reaction to the use of the Value-Added Model in Schools. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a teacher in Florida where the Value-Added model is being implemented. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Background Information:
The purpose of this interview study is to look at teachers’ reaction to the implementation of the Value-added Model (VAM) at the elementary school level.

Procedures:
If you agree to participate in the online questionnaire portion of this study, I would ask you to do the following things:
• Understand the procedure and purpose for the online questionnaire
• Sign a consent form
• Agree to complete questionnaire that include demographics and two short surveys focused on your teaching and the value-added model.
• Total time: The anticipated completion time for this questionnaire is about 30 minutes

Risks and Benefits of being in the study:
There are minimal risks associated with participation in this study, but you may find that you are uncomfortable answering a question. If this happens, you may choose to not answer by saying, “no comment”.

The benefits to participation are the possibility of improving communication between teachers, principals and those who create laws and mandates that you are required to follow. There is still very little research on the implementation of the Value-Added model in schools and on teacher evaluations.

Compensation:
You will receive a $50 visa gift card at the end of the study for your time.

Confidentiality:
The records of this study will be kept private and confidential to the extent permitted by law. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you, the school, or the district where you teach. All reference to personal identifiers will be deidentified. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers working with me will have access to the records. Recording of the interview will be destroyed after the interview has been transcribed (within two weeks of the date of the interview).
**Voluntary Nature of the Study:**
Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University, your school, or your school district. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

**Contacts and Questions:**
If you have any questions, you may contact the researchers, the supervising professor, or the FSU Human Subjects Review Board (all contact information given below).

**Who to contact about your rights as a research participant in the study:**
Florida State University’s Human Subjects Committee has approved this study. If you have any questions about the study please contact Tim Pressley (contact information below), my supervising professor, or, if you would like to learn more about your rights as a research participant, please contact Florida State University’s IRB Office at (850)644-7900.

**Contact Information:**

**Researcher:**
Tim Pressley  
Educational Psychology: Learning and Cognition  
College of Education  
3212 Stone Building  
Florida State University  
Tallahassee, Florida 32306  
Phone:  
Email:

**Supervising Professor:**
Dr. Alysia Roehrig  
Associate Professor  
Educational Psychology & Learning Systems  
College of Education  
3204E Stone Building  
Florida State University  
Tallahassee, Florida 32306  
Phone:  
E-Mail Address:

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

**Statement of Consent:**
I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. Please check all that apply:
I consent to participate in the questionnaire part of this study.
☐ I DO NOT consent to participate in this study.

_______________________________________  __________ _______
Signature of participant                         Date

_______________________________________  __________ _______
Signature of Researcher    Date
Dear ________,

My name is Tim Pressley and I am a former elementary school teacher and current PhD student at Florida State University, Educational Psychology: Learning and Cognition. I am currently in the process of recruiting participants for my research study: **Teachers’ Reaction to the use of the Value-Added Model in Schools.** Your school was selected for this study because your district is currently in the process of implementing the Value-Added Model into teacher evaluations. I ask that you read this email and the attached teacher consent letter, and then ask any questions you may have before agreeing to allow your school to be part of this study.

The purpose of this interview study is to look at teachers’ reaction to the implementation of the Value-added Model (VAM) at the elementary school level and the role it plays in their instruction.

If you are interested in allowing teachers in your school to participate, please forward the attached inform consent letter to your teachers or allow me to contact them directly about it. I am willing to work with you in order to find teachers who are willing to participate, including receiving suggestions from you for teachers to contact, sharing my study with your teachers at a staff meeting, or allowing me to email all teachers about the study. I am willing to make participation in this study as easy as possible for all parties.

My study includes two parts: a survey and then interview. Each part is voluntary and teachers do not have to participate in both. Within the survey I will have a question at the end to ask if teachers are willing to participate in two interviews with me (one in the fall and one in the spring).

If you are willing to participate we can discuss the best way to contact teachers in your school. I will send a follow up by phone and email in a week to answer any questions you might have in regards to this study.

Thank you.

Timothy Pressley

Contact Information:

Researcher: Tim Pressley
Educational Psychology: Learning and Cognition
College of Education
3212 Stone Building
Florida State University
Tallahassee, Florida 32306
Phone:
Email:

Supervising Professor:  Dr. Alysia Roehrig
Associate Professor
Educational Psychology & Learning Systems
College of Education
3204E Stone Building
Florida State University
Tallahassee, Florida 32306
Phone:
E-Mail Address:
APPENDIX G
EMAIL TO TEACHERS

Dear ________,
My name is Tim Pressley and I am a former elementary school teacher and current PhD student at Florida State University, Educational Psychology: Learning and Cognition. I am currently in the process of recruiting participants for my research study: Teachers’ Reaction to the use of the Value-Added Model in Schools. Your school was selected for this study because your district is currently in the process of implementing the Value-Added Model into teacher evaluations. I ask that you read this email and the attached teacher consent letter, and then ask any questions you may have before agreeing to allow your school to be part of this study.

The purpose of this interview study is to look at teachers’ reaction to the implementation of the Value-added Model (VAM) at the elementary school level and the role it plays in their instruction. I hope to use this study to give teachers a voice when it comes to educational policy implementation.

My study includes two parts: a survey and then two interviews. Each part is voluntary and teachers do not have to participate in both in order to be in the study. A link to the survey is listed below and within the survey I will have a question at the end to ask if teachers are willing to participate in two interviews with me (one in the fall and one in the spring). If you participate in just the survey part of the study you will be entered into a raffle for a $50 visa gift card. Teachers who agree to participate in the survey and interviews and are selected for an interview will receive a $50 visa gift card for their time.

Attached to this email is the consent forms for the survey and interview portions of the study. These will give you more information about each aspect of my study.

Thank you for your consideration of participating in my study. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Timothy Pressley

Contact Information:

Researcher: Tim Pressley
Educational Psychology: Learning and Cognition
College of Education
3212 Stone Building
Florida State University
Tallahassee, Florida 32306
Phone:
Email:
Supervising Professor: Dr. Alysia Roehrig
Associate Professor
Educational Psychology & Learning Systems
College of Education
3204E Stone Building
Florida State University
Tallahassee, Florida 32306
Phone:
E-Mail Address:
The following questions will be used to get some basic information about your teaching background. Please indicate your answers below for the following questions. None of the information you provide will be used to identify you as a respondent. Your answers are confidential.

1. What is your gender?
   - [ ] Male
   - [ ] Female
   - [ ] Other
   - [ ] Do not wish to answer

2. What is your race or origin? (select all that apply)
   - [ ] White
   - [ ] Black
   - [ ] Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
   - [ ] Asian
   - [ ] American Indian or Alaska Native
   - [ ] Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
   - [ ] Other
   - [ ] Do not wish to answer

1. How many years have you been a teacher? ______
2. How many years have you taught at your current school? ______
3. What grade do you currently teach? ______
4. Have you taught any other grades or subjects? If so which ones? ______
5. What is your highest degree obtained (Bachelors, Masters, Ph.D., Other)? ______
6. What was your major in college? ______
7. What is your current school grade (A, B, C, D, F, Not Available)? ______
8. Do you currently have tenure at your school? [ ] Yes [ ] No
9. Did you previously have tenure and give it up? [ ] Yes [ ] No
10. If you responded yes, why did you give it up? ______
11. Did you receive a Value-added Model (VAM) score (the portion of your teacher evaluation rating based on student assessment data) from the 2012-2013 school year? [ ] Yes [ ] No
   [If yes] How did the score you received compare to the score you expected to receive?
   - [ ] Worse than I expected
   - [ ] What I expected
   - [ ] Better than I expected
Directions: This questionnaire is designed to help me gain a better understanding of your understanding and feelings regarding the Value-Added Model being used in teacher evaluations. Please indicate your opinion about each of the statements below. Your answers are confidential.

12. How satisfied were you with your value-added score?

13. How much do you know about the value-added model? ______

14. How much control do you feel you have over your teacher evaluation score?

15. How well does your VAM score represent your teaching ability? ______

16. How much do you agree that teacher evaluations should be public information? ______

17. How much does the value-added model becoming public information impact your motivation to change your instruction? ______

18. How much do value-added scores becoming public information impact your collaboration with other teachers? ______

19. How much has receiving value-added scores changed your instruction in the classroom? ______

20. During your formal observations, how much do you change your instruction? ______

21. How motivated are you to change your instruction to improve your VAM score? ______

22. To prepare students for the state standardized test, how much do you change your instruction? ______

23. How much are you worried about your VAM score for the current school year? ______

24. How much does VAM impact teacher collaboration within the school community? ______

25. How much does VAM impact your grade level team collaboration? ______
26. How much does merit pay impact teacher collaboration within the school community? 

27. How much does merit pay impact your grade level team collaboration? 

Rate your concern on the following items. The rating scale is:
1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Neutral
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly Agree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28. I am concerned that my performance level, as determined by the FL VAM, will vary over the years based on the kinds of students I have in my class(es).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. I am concerned that the cutpoints for the classification levels of teacher performance will change each year.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. I am concerned that my teacher “value-added” score will be adversely affected by factors over which I have no control.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. I am concerned that the new teacher evaluation system will add to my workload.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. The potential chance that I might get a low value-added score and lose my job distracts me from my teaching duties.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. The prospect of receiving bonus pay for my value-added score motivates me to be a better teacher.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. I worry more about my performance evaluation now than in the past.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. My students’ achievement test scores accurately reflect how well I have taught the academic standards.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. The FL VAM will be a valuable tool in removing ineffective teachers from classrooms.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. Teachers are often unfairly blamed for students’ poor performance on tests.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. The prospect of receiving bonus pay for my value-added score motivates me to be a better teacher.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. I worry more about my performance evaluation now than in the past.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. I am confident that the value-added model adopted by Florida is an accurate measurement of my impact on my students’ learning growth.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. I am confident that the FL VAM correctly classifies my performance level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. I am confident that the FL VAM adequately controls for factors outside of my control that affect my students’ learning.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
43. Would you be willing to talk with the researcher, Tim Pressley, who is a former elementary school teacher, to expand more on your feelings regarding VAM and merit pay?  □ Yes  
□ No
If yes, please provide an email address where I can contact you
________________________

44. If you do not wish you to participate in the interview part of the study, but would like to be entered into a raffle to win a $50 visa gift card please provide an email address I can contact you if you are selected as a winner. You will only be contacted if you are randomly selected to win a gift card.
________________________
APPENDIX I
INITIAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1) How many years have you been a teacher?
2) What grades/ subjects have you taught?
3) Do you currently have tenure? (If yes, have you considered switching to the merit system? Why or why not?)
4) What is your current school’s grade? (How has this changed over the past few years?)
5) As a teacher, what are your goals for the school year?
6) What do you know about the Value-Added Model as it is used in your teacher evaluations?
7) How many Value-Added scores have you received? (Are you comfortable sharing what your teacher evaluation rating was, if yes what was it?) (Do you remember the different scores?)
8) What type of support and information do you get from your administration regarding your teacher evaluations?
9) What type of information do you get about the observation aspect of your teacher evaluation?
10) What type of information do you get about VAM?
11) How did you receive information about VAM?
12) What were your initial feelings when you first learned about Value-Added scores being part of your teacher evaluation?
   A) In what way(s) have your feelings changed or stayed the same since then?
13) How do you feel having the Value-Added Model used as part of your teacher evaluation?
14) How do you feel about having student test scores included in your teacher evaluation?
15) How does having student test scores in your teacher evaluation impact your instruction?
   A) If you have made changes, why have you changed your instruction?
   B) What type of changes have you made to your instruction?
   C) How useful is your value-added score to you as a teacher?
16) How has VAM impacted your instruction for specific groups of students (ELL, SPED, GT)?
17) How does your instruction compare during your observations to your regular teaching?  
   A) If instruction is different, how is your instruction different? 
   B) If instruction is different, why did you change your instruction? 
18) To what extent do you think Value-Added Model scores have changed your thoughts about your ability to be an effective teacher? (How did your thoughts change? How did your thoughts not change?) 
19) To what extent do you think Value-Added scores are a good representation of your teaching ability? 
20) How much control do you have over the teacher evaluation process? 
21) What aspects of your teacher evaluations do you feel in control of? 
22) What is the balance of responsibility between teachers and parents with the student outcome portion of your evaluation? 
23) What are your expectations for your teacher evaluation/VAM score from the previous school year? 
24) What are your expectations for your teacher evaluation this school year? 
25) To what extent will you change any of your teaching this school year in order to receive a higher teacher evaluation? 
26) What do you know about the implementation of merit pay this school year? 
   A) What do you know about ranking or rating of teachers with VAM? 
   B) What teachers will receive merit pay? 
27) Are you part of the merit pay this school year? 
28) How do you think the implementation of merit pay will influence the school community? 
29) How will the implementation of merit pay influence the collaboration of your grade level team? 
30) If you are on the merit pay system, how will merit pay influence your instruction within the classroom? 
   A) What type of changes will you make to your instruction? 
   B) If you are making changes to your instruction, why did you make those changes? 
31) How long do you think these policies (VAM, merit pay, tenure) will be around? 
32) Is there anything else you would like to share with me regarding VAM, teacher evaluations, or merit pay?
APPENDIX J
TEACHER FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1) How has your knowledge of VAM changed since I first interviewed you?
2) How does your overall evaluation score compare to your students’ FCAT scores?
3) Did you feel the need to learn more information about your VAM/teacher evaluation score?
4) How much did you feel you were in-control of your teacher evaluation score?
5) What exactly do you get from admin for your final evaluation?
6) How often does your administrator come into your classroom and is it announced?
7) As we get closer to the end of the school year, are you more focused on a particular aspect of teacher evaluation this year? (If yes, what aspect are you most focused on?)
8) To what extent has VAM being included in your teacher evaluation score change your instruction as you prepare students for the upcoming state tests?
9) To your knowledge, what subject tests will go into your VAM score this year?
10) Do you teach all of those subjects? If not, how do you feel about having subjects you do not teach included in your VAM?
11) What will you do, in particular, in the next month or so to prepare your students for the upcoming state assessments?
   A) Why are you making these changes? Why are you not making changes?
12) How prepared do you feel your students are for the upcoming state tests?
13) How important is getting a high VAM/teacher evaluation score to you?
14) How have other teachers reacted to their VAM score from the previous school year?
15) In what ways do teachers talk about VAM in your school?
16) How motivated have you been to collaborate with other teachers this school year?
17) Now that your VAM scores are public information, how does this impact your instruction?
18) How worried are you about having your VAM score being public information?
19) Are there particular aspects regarding your VAM score being public information that you are more worried about?

20) Do you believe teachers should be held accountable?

21) Ideally, how would you like teachers to be held accountable?

22) How would you describe a successful teacher?

23) How has teaching changed as a profession with the requirements of testing and student test scores being used on teacher evaluations?

24) What words of advice would you tell to a future teacher on how to be successful in education?

25) What information have you been given regarding the new state assessments?

26) How do you feel about the new state standards/new curriculum?

27) How much has your administration talked to you about school grades?

28) How do school grades impact teacher evaluations and your instruction?

29) Do you feel pressure to get high student scores in order to maintain or improve the overall school grade?

30) Do you have any other thoughts you would like to share regarding VAM, merit pay or any aspect of your evaluation?
Dear Tim Pressley,

You have my permission to use the Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale in your research. A copy of both the long and short forms of the instrument as well as scoring instructions can be found at:

http://www.coe.ohio-state.edu/ahoy/researchinstruments.htm

Best wishes in your work,

Anita Woolfolk Hoy, Ph.D.
Professor, Psychological Studies in Education
APPENDIX L
FOLLOW-UP TEACHER SURVEY

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>Scale Statements</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How much can you do to help your students think critically?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. How much can you do to help your students value learning?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. How much can you gauge student comprehension of what you have taught?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. How much can you do to foster student creativity?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. How well can you respond to difficult questions from your students?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. How much can you do to improve the understanding of a student who is failing?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. How much can you do to adjust your lessons to the proper level for individual students?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. How well can you provide appropriate challenges for very capable students?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Directions: This section is designed to help me to gain understanding about the school environment. Please indicate your opinion about each of the statements below. Your answers are confidential.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither Agree nor Disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17. I seldom receive encouragement from colleagues. ______
18. Teachers frequently discuss teaching methods and strategies with each other. ______
19. I feel accepted by other teachers. ______
20. Teachers avoid talking with each other about teaching and learning. ______
21. I am ignored by other teachers. ______
22. Professional matters are seldom discussed during staff meetings. ______
23. I feel that I could rely on my colleagues for assistance if I should need it. ______
24. Many teachers attend in-service and other professional development courses. ______
25. My colleagues seldom take notice of my professional views and opinions. ______
26. Teachers show little interest in what is happening in other schools. ______
27. I feel that I have many friends among my colleagues at this school. ______
28. Teachers are keen to learn from their colleagues. ______
29. I often feel lonely and left out of things in the staff room. ______
30. Teachers show considerable interest in the professional activities of their colleagues. ______
APPENDIX M
MEMBER CHECKING EMAIL

Dear Participant,

Attached is your transcript from our interview/the results from my study. Please read through it and make any changes in either Red or in comment bubbles so I am able to note your changes. I will remind you, as stated during the interview, please feel free to add, edit, or delete any areas that you do not want included. If I do not hear back from you within a week regarding your transcript I will move forward with the current document. Let me know if you have any questions and thank you again for participating in my study!
REFERENCES


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Tim Pressley
Curriculum Vitae

Florida State University
3212 Stone Building
1114 W. Call Street
Tallahassee, FL 32306

EDUCATION

Ph. D.: Educational Psychology: Learning and Cognition
Florida State University          Summer 2015

Dissertation: Teachers’ View of the Role VAM Plays in their Work in the School and School Community

Certificate: Program Evaluation      Fall 2014

Certificate: Program for Instructional Excellence      Fall 2011

M.Ed.: Elementary Education
Texas Christian University           May 2010

Thesis: The Influence of TAKS on Teaching Strategies and Student Motivation to Learn

B.S.: Early Childhood Education
Texas Christian University           May 2009

Certificate: Texas Educator (Generalist; EC-4)      Fall 2009

Certificate: Texas Educator (Special Education, EC-12)      Spring 2010

Certificate: Texas Educator (ESL, EC-12)      Spring 2010

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2013-2015    Instructor: Classroom Assessment (7 semesters), Florida State University

2014-2015    Program for Instructional Excellence Associate, Florida State University
Summer 2014, Spring 2015  Coding assistant for qualitative studies within the department

Spring 2015, Fall 2014, Spring 2014  Guest lecturer: Undergraduate level Courses of Educational Psychology
  • Lectures focusing on Classroom Management and Parenting Styles

Spring 2014  Teaching Assistant: Master’s level Educational Psychology

Fall 2014, Spring 2014, Fall 2013  Guest lecturer: Graduate level Courses of Educational Psychology and Classroom Assessment
  • Lectures focusing on Response to Intervention, Classroom Management, Diversity, and Parenting Styles

Fall 2013  Teaching Assistant: Graduate level Classroom Assessment

Spring 2013  Teaching Assistant: Graduate Level Educational Psychology

2012  Instructor: Educational Psychology (3 semesters), Florida State University

Fall 2011  Course Coordinator: Educational Psychology, Florida State University
  • Developed PowerPoint Slides and Quizzes for Instructors

2010-2011  Teacher: General/Inclusion Education Grade 4, J. A. Hargrave Elementary, Crowley ISD, Crowley, TX

2009  Teacher Assistant, Kinderplatz Preschool, Fort Worth, TX

2009-2010  Research Assistant: Alice Neeley Special Education Research and Service Institute, Texas Christian University

Summer 2008, Summer 2007  Language Arts and Science Summer Teacher Assistant, Benchmark School, Media, PA

**RESEARCH**

**Publications**


Pressley, T., & Roehrig, A. (In Preparation.). Elementary teachers’ perceptions of the value-added model and the impact on teachers’ motivation to change their instruction.


Conference Presentations


Research Interests

Educational policy, in particular teacher evaluation
Teacher motivation and self-efficacy
Effective teaching and pre-service teacher preparation

SERVICE

Article Reviews

Co-review *Teaching and Teacher Education* (2014)
Co-review *Educational Policy Analysis Archives* (2014)
Conference Reviews

American Psychological Association Annual Conference (2015)

Service to the College or Department

2015  Program for Instructional Excellence Department Workshop
  •  Bringing Critical Thinking into your Instruction

2013  Marvalene Hughes Research in Education Conference Volunteer

2013  Educational Psychology & Learning Systems Orientation Volunteer

2012  Marvalene Hughes Research in Education Conference Volunteer

2012  Educational Psychology & Learning Systems Orientation Volunteer

2008-2009  College of Education Senior Mentor, Texas Christian University

Service to the University

2015  Member of the Outstanding Teaching Assistant Committee

2015  Program for Instructional Excellence University Workshop
  •  Communicating with Students

2014  Program for Instructional Excellence University Workshop
  •  Getting Great Course Evaluations

2014-2015  Sigma Phi Epsilon, Chapter Counselor, Florida State University
  •  I mentor the executive board of the Florida Epsilon Chapter

2014  Sigma Phi Epsilon, Alumni Mentor, Texas Christian University
  •  I mentored the Vice President of Academics developing academic plans
  for members on probation and new members.

2013-2015  Sigma Phi Epsilon, Balanced Man Steward, Alumni Mentor, Florida State
University
  •  I mentor the Vice President of Member Development creating member
  development plans and brotherhood events.

2013-2015  Sigma Phi Epsilon, Alumni Volunteer Cooperation Member, Florida State
University
2011-2015  Sigma Phi Epsilon, Alumni Volunteer Cooperation Member, Texas Christian University

2008  Secretary of Academics, Sigma Phi Epsilon Fraternity

Honors/Awards

2015  FSU College of Education Core Travel Award
2014  FSU College of Graduate Students Presentation Grant
2014  Nominated for Sigma Phi Epsilon Volunteer of the Year Award
2013  FSU College of Education Core Travel Award

Professional Organizations

American Educational Research Association (AERA)
American Psychological Association (APA)
Florida Educational Research Association (FERA)
Literacy Research Association (LRA)