This phenomenological study looks at the lived experiences of 12 teachers and deans participating in an intensive weekly observation/feedback model in several charter school academies. In this model, teachers and deans work to grow as educators and to reach their professional development goals. While we know that a major factor in increasing the proficiency rate of our students is improving teacher effectiveness, little is known about how to provide the necessary guidance for teachers’ professional growth and efficacy development. The challenge for leaders is to develop effective systems of supervision that support teachers and administrators as they work to improve instructional quality in schools. Using the constructs of teacher and leadership efficacy, this study examines the impact of weekly observation and feedback sessions on both teacher and leader development. Qualitative data collected through three in-depth interviews with each participant is analyzed to determine recurring categories and themes. Profiles of all participants give information about their lived experiences.

Data analysis reveals 14 themes within four categories: growth, the structure and effectiveness of the model, teacher/dean relationships, and feedback issues. Findings reveal that most teachers acknowledge that working with their dean has resulted in changes in their teaching practices, yet most see their growth more as a result of their own efforts and connections with co-workers. Additionally, teachers and deans reported
that a consistent implementation of this model along with a relationship founded on trust and authentic, genuine connections is critical. For teachers in this study, meaningful feedback impacts their practices, yet most claim they have received minimal meaningful feedback. Many participants shared that they see the model as one where they are checking things off of a list rather than improving instructional practices. Deans reported that focusing on reflective rather than directive feedback results in greater impact in their work with teachers.

Findings led to recommendations for further research and future practices. Current changes to this model are also discussed. This study contributes to research on teacher/leader efficacy, supervision, and feedback, as school systems strive to improve teacher and leader effectiveness.