



Course check in: 1pm-3pm
Course begins: 4pm
Course concludes: 1pm on the final day
Schedule your travel appropriately.

SUPERVISION TOOLS

For International School Teacher Leaders

London 10-14 July 2017

BRING

PLEASE BRING A HARD COPY OR HAVE ELECTRONIC ACCESS TO:

- Standards or criteria used for evaluating teachers at your school
- The entire instrument including any written explanation of the evaluation process, timelines, criteria used, plus all forms used in the process by either the teacher or the evaluator. These documents will be used as part of a learning activity and, thus will be shared with other participants in your course.
- Any specific tools used for recording observations of teachers
- Any job description or guidelines describing the role of the department head or grade level leader
- A curriculum unit plan
- One copy of a written lesson you would use in your classroom. (We will use this for an important activity!)

READ

READ:

Please read the following articles:

- [It's All About Learning](#), from *Teacher Self-Supervision*, William and Ochan Powell, 2015
- [Seven Strong Claims About Successful Leadership](#), Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris, & Hopkins (this is a website only article), 2006.
- [It's Time to Rethink Teacher Supervision and Evaluation](#), Kim Marshall, PDK, June 2005

As you read the Marshall article, jot down some bullet points about how the role of teacher leader as supervisor might solve some of the supervision and evaluation problems Kim Marshall identifies.

PREPARE

BRING A LAPTOP (REQUIRED)

Your course materials are digital. Hard copies of the materials will not be available on site. Bring a laptop computer with appropriate adapters and wireless internet capability. [Click here](#) for more information about iPads and tablets. Chromebook users can use the free [Kami extension](#) to annotate.

- If you don't have one already, please open a [Twitter Account](#). Our course hashtag is #TTCsupTools.
- Download [Adobe Acrobat Reader DC](#) now in order to be able to access your materials properly.

WATCH

... a [short video](#) to prepare for your course.

VOLUNTEER

...for a short demonstration lesson. As part of the learning experience, it is important that participants have the opportunity to observe a lesson and provide supervision feedback. Volunteers to present a 15-minute lesson on a topic of their choice and to contact Nancy at: nsquicciarini@islux.lu by **1 June**.

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I look forward to seeing you this summer!

Nancy Lhoest-Squicciarini



It's Time to Rethink Teacher Supervision and Evaluation

Kim Marshall. Phi Delta Kappan Bloomington:Jun 2005. Vol. 86, Iss. 10, p. 727-735 (9 pp.)

The process by which most teachers are supervised and evaluated is inefficient, ineffective, and a poor use of principals' time, argues Mr. Marshall. It needs to be drastically streamlined and linked to a broader strategy for improving teaching and learning.

A PRINCIPAL boasts that he spends two hours a day in classrooms. And it's true - he really does visit his school's 17 teachers daily, chatting with students and occasionally chiming in on a lesson. But when teachers are asked what kind of feedback they get, they say the principal rarely talks to them about what he sees when he strolls through their classes.

A principal gets complaints from several parents about a history teacher's problems with discipline but is so overwhelmed that she rarely visits his classroom. When she does her required observation of his class, she sees a carefully planned lesson featuring an elaborate PowerPoint presentation and well behaved students. The principal feels she has no choice but to do a positive write-up of this lesson and give the teacher a satisfactory rating.

A principal spends four entire weekends in April and May completing teacher evaluations just before the deadline. He puts the evaluations into teachers' mailboxes with a cover note attached that reads, "Please let me know if you have any concerns and would like to talk. Otherwise, sign and return by tomorrow." All the teachers sign, nobody requests a meeting, and there is no further discussion.

A well-regarded veteran teacher hasn't been evaluated in five years and rarely sees the principal in her classroom. She takes this as a compliment - her teaching must be "okay." And yet she feels lonely and isolated with her students and wishes the principal would pay an occasional visit and tell her what he thinks.

A sixth-grade teacher has good classroom management and is well liked by students and parents, but his students do poorly on standardized tests. A new principal mentions the disappointing scores, and the teacher launches into a litany of complaints: he always gets the "bad class," most of his students come from dysfunctional families, and he's tired of being asked to "teach to the test." Later that day, the union representative officiously tells the principal that she can't mention test results in a teacher's evaluation.

A principal observes an elaborate hands-on math lesson in a veteran teacher's classroom and notices that the teacher is confusing the terms mean, median, and mode. The principal notes this error in his mostly positive evaluation, and, in the post-observation conference, the teacher suddenly begins to cry. Ten years later, at his retirement party, the principal asks the teacher what lesson she took away from this incident. "Never to take a risk," she replies.

The theory of action behind supervision and evaluation is that they will improve teachers' effectiveness and therefore boost student achievement. **1** This assumption seems logical. But the vignettes above raise a troubling question: what if the theory is wrong? This article takes a close look at this possibility and explores an alternative theory of action.

WHY DO SUPERVISION AND EVALUATION OFTEN MISS THE MARK?

I believe there are 10 reasons why the conventional supervision and evaluation process is not an effective strategy for improving teaching and learning.

1. Principals evaluate only a tiny amount of teaching. If a teacher has five classes a day, that's 900 periods each school year. A principal who formally evaluates a teacher for one full class period a year (a fairly typical scenario) sees this proportion of the teacher's lessons:

In this case, the principal evaluated 0.1% of the teacher's instruction. The other 99.9% of the time, the teacher was working with students unobserved. Even if the principal made three full-class evaluation visits a year, as required by some districts, that would still leave the teacher alone with students 99.7% of the time. No matter how observant and well trained the principal is, no matter how comprehensive the evaluation criteria are, and no matter how detailed the feedback is afterwards, this is ridiculously thin supervision of the school's most important employees. Principals who spend this little evaluative time in classrooms are basically bluffing, hoping that teachers will think they know more than they really do. Without expensive increases in administrative staffing - politically impossible in most districts - the amount of time principals spend formally observing each teacher is not going to change. Let's face it: teachers are on their own most of the time, and our schools depend heavily on their competence and professionalism.

2. Micro-evaluations of individual lessons don't carry much weight. Many school districts try to compensate for how little time principals spend in individual classrooms by requiring extremely thorough evaluations of lessons that are formally observed. Administrators are asked to script everything the teacher says and write a detailed account of exactly what happened in the class. A perceptive and well-trained principal can see a lot in a single lesson and give the teacher copious feedback on classroom management, student engagement, "accountable talk," clarity, momentum, wait time, bulletin boards, and so forth. But these elaborate write-ups don't mean a lot to most teachers; they know how little the principal sees of their day-to-day struggles, curriculum planning, grading, work with colleagues, parent outreach, professional growth, and routine duties. Even if the evaluation is complimentary, it usually gets filed in a nanosecond. Except in extreme (and quite rare) cases when a principal gives an unsatisfactory rating, evaluation is a pro forma process that has very little influence on what teachers do on a daily basis.

3. The lessons that principals evaluate are often atypical. The only way that micro-evaluating lessons can give an accurate picture of a teacher's overall classroom performance is if the observed lessons are truly representative. But this is often not the case. When teachers have advance notice of an evaluation, they can present a glamorized lesson for the principal's benefit. Even if they don't, the presence of a top-level authority figure in the classroom usually reduces discipline problems and results in a more orderly lesson than students generally experience. These two factors can work in teachers' favor, giving the principal an unrealistically positive view of their teaching. You'd think that principals would be wise to these dynamics, but they are often so stressed and overwhelmed that they play along, treating clearly atypical teaching as typical. When this happens, teachers get an unfortunate message: it's okay to do "special" teaching when the principal visits and "ordinary" teaching for students the rest of the time.

Evaluation visits can also distort reality in a negative way: some teachers get so nervous when the principal arrives that they go to pieces. This is every teacher's nightmare - one screwed-up lesson and the other 99.9% of the year will be painted with the same evaluative brush.

Surely the principal has other sources of information to correct egregiously off-target observations, including informal visits, quick impressions of teachers interacting with students, parent comments, colleagues' impressions, and gossip. But these time-honored sources of information, even when accurate, aren't "admissible" in official evaluations. Principals have little choice but to go by the book and use the information from formal evaluation visits, even when it's bogus.

4. Isolated lessons give an incomplete picture of instruction. Although the lesson is the fundamental building block of teaching, it's only a small part of a teacher's effort to inspire students and convey knowledge and skills. To grasp the bigger picture, a principal needs to know more: What curriculum unit is this lesson part of? What are the unit's "big ideas" and "essential questions"? How does this unit align with state standards? How will students be assessed? Principals may try to ferret out these missing pieces by asking for lesson plans and conducting pre- and post-evaluation conferences with the teacher, but evaluations are still tied to the lesson that was observed.

This is a shame, because it's impossible to teach most state standards in a single lesson; it's a huge leap from big-picture goals like "understanding number sense" to planning a single lesson. Unit plans, which describe a teacher's game plan for teaching skills and concepts over a three- to five-week period, tell far more about whether instruction is coherent and aligned. But principals rarely see unit plans or the assessments that teachers give at the end of their units.

5. Evaluation almost never focuses on student learning. In virtually all school districts, teacher unions have been successful in preventing their members from being evaluated on whether students actually learn what's being taught. Unions are right to object to accountability on norm-referenced tests, since these assessments are not designed to be "instructionally sensitive." **2** Before-and-after, "value-added" assessments are better, but even their most fervent advocates don't think it's fair to use them to evaluate a teacher after only a year of instruction.

Does this mean that principals have no way of evaluating teachers on whether students are learning? Surely a principal can get a sense of how much students are picking up by walking around classrooms, looking over their shoulders, and asking them probing questions. But this approach has three problems. First, many principals are required to produce detailed narratives after each evaluation visit and can't walk around and write furiously at the same time. Second, even if principals manage to check in with a few students during classroom visits, it's hard to tell whether the whole class understands the lesson that day - let alone a few weeks later. To really know if teachers have been successful, principals need to see students' scores on good unit assessments - which they almost never do. Third, even if principals can get their hands on interim assessment results, such evidence is not admissible in evaluations.

So principals have little choice but to focus on teaching performances versus learning results, on chalkboard razzle-dazzle versus deep understanding, on beautiful bulletin boards versus demonstrated proficiency. Constrained by the supervision/evaluation process, principals over-manage the occasional lesson and under-manage the bigger picture of whether teachers are truly making a difference in student learning.

6. High-stakes evaluation tends to shut down adult learning. Even though many teachers don't respect the evaluation process, it still makes them nervous. Their collective bargaining agreements may provide good protection, but teachers harbor irrational fears that every time the principal walks into their classrooms, clipboard in hand, their jobs are on the line. Formal evaluations raise the level of tension and anxiety and make it more difficult to admit errors, listen, and talk openly about areas that need improvement. Any time evaluative comments are put in writing, the parties involved tighten up: the principal is less likely to tell the whole story for fear of facing a grievance, and the teacher is less likely to talk about how things are really going. In all too many evaluative interactions, teachers put on their game face and get through the process with as little authentic interaction as possible. The principal owns the feedback, not them.

This kind of process destroys a golden opportunity for professional growth. The real challenge of supervision and evaluation is to activate (or amplify) a supervisory voice inside teachers' heads that will guide them in their work with students. Conventional supervision and evaluation seldom accomplish this goal. In fact, the exact opposite may occur, with teachers waiting nervously for their principal to judge them and putting up a wall of resistance to any criticism. Where do teachers go for helpful feedback on their teaching? Usually they turn to a colleague, a spouse, a family member, students, parents - or nobody.

An unintended consequence of this whole dynamic is the growth of a certain emptiness in the professional relationship between teachers and school leaders. If principals are rarely in classrooms, it's hard to have meaningful professional conversations with teachers. And if principals aren't setting the tone, it's less likely that assistant principals, team leaders, department heads, and colleagues will have serious conversations about teaching and learning. This kind of instructional vacuum can result in faculty lounge conversation dominated by topics outside of the school, gossip, and funny - and not-so-funny - stories about kids. **3**

7. Supervision and evaluation reinforce teacher isolation. One of the American principal's toughest challenges is counteracting two tendencies prevalent in our schools: teachers not working with their colleagues and the "educator's egocentric fallacy" - I taught it, therefore they learned it. **4** In far too many schools, teachers who teach the same subjects at the same grade level don't work together, missing out on the synergy of collaboration and wasting precious time reinventing the wheel. Because principals evaluate teachers in private meetings and confidential documents, evaluation reinforces this isolation and is rarely a vehicle for getting teachers to talk to one another, which detracts from teachers' sense of responsibility to their grade-level or department team.

Evaluation is also an ineffective tool for countering our natural tendency to assume that if something is taught (i.e., explained or demonstrated), it is automatically learned. **5** Because the supervision and evaluation process doesn't focus on team curriculum planning, assessment, and student learning, it doesn't prod teachers to

emerge from their isolation and reflect with their colleagues on what they need to change in order for more students to succeed. Without this impetus, teachers gravitate toward the default setting: self-contained, activity-centered lessons or marching through the textbook.

8. Evaluation instruments often get in the way. Good teaching is extremely complex and challenging, and research tells us there is more than one way to get students to learn. It takes experience and savvy for a principal to grasp the subtleties of a classroom; it's even more demanding for a principal to capture them in writing; and it's really challenging to criticize a teacher's performance in a way that is heard. Some principals are good at all three - observation, write-ups, and "difficult conversations." Unfortunately, many principals are not, and the training needed to bring them up to speed is woefully lacking. The legendary klutziness of school administrators has motivated unions to work overtime to negotiate "principal-proof" evaluation formats and procedures to protect their members from unfair evaluations. Districts, on the other hand, push for evaluation tools that make it possible to build a case to dismiss incompetent teachers. The resultant evaluation tools are rarely conducive to fostering an honest, open, and pedagogically sophisticated dialogue between principals and teachers.

9. Evaluations often fail to give teachers "judgmental" feedback. This seems like an odd statement, since all evaluations judge teachers. But many evaluation instruments allow principals to fudge teachers' general status with an overall "satisfactory" rating and a lot of verbiage. These evaluations don't tell teachers where they stand on clearly articulated performance standards, don't give clear direction on the ways in which teachers can improve their performance, and don't answer the question teachers really care about (and often dread): How am I doing? This kind of evaluation is unlikely to motivate a mediocre teacher to improve - or spur a good teacher on to excellence.

10. Most principals are too busy to do a good job on supervision and evaluation. Discipline and operational duties are so insistently demanding that teacher evaluation often disappears from principals' calendars until contractual deadlines force them to get serious. **6** When evaluation crunch time arrives, principals fall in to three types - saints, cynics, and sinners. The saints go by the book, and evaluation consumes their lives for weeks at a time. I know a principal who routinely spends eight to 10 hours on each teacher evaluation: pre-observation conference, lesson observation, write-up (like a little term paper every Saturday, she says), and post-observation conference. Principals who choose to commit this amount of time (or are required to do so by their superiors) have no alternative but to shut themselves in their offices for days at a time - or spend evenings, weekends, and vacations at their desks at home. Ironically, this reduces the amount of time the saints spend in classrooms doing low-key supervision - coaching, encouraging, and gentle correction.

The second type of principal heaves a sigh, sits down at the computer, and bangs out the required evaluations as quickly as possible. Administrators in this category have grown cynical about the evaluation process and don't believe their write-ups will produce better teaching and learning, but they feel they have no choice but to do them.

The third, more daring, group of principals simply don't do evaluations (or evaluate only the occasional egregiously ineffective teacher). These sinners ignore contractual requirements and dare the system to catch them. Since evaluation is in the same category as a trip to the dentist for many teachers, they tend not to complain if their principal "forgets" year after year. And principals' superiors are often none the wiser - or choose to wink at these omissions.

So here's the question: are the saints, who spend hours on each evaluation, more effective at improving teaching and learning in their schools than the cynics and the sinners? Shocking as it may seem, the answer in many cases is no. This is because the conventional supervision and evaluation process is not the best way to truly change what happens in classrooms. Principals need a better way to observe, support, and judge teachers - a way that is more accurate and time efficient and more closely linked to an effective strategy for improving teaching and learning.

LINKING SUPERVISION AND EVALUATION TO HIGH STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

I've argued that the theory of action behind supervision and evaluation is flawed and that the conventional process rarely changes what teachers do in their classrooms. Here is an alternative theory: The engine that drives high student achievement is teacher teams working collaboratively toward common curriculum expectations and using interim assessments to continuously improve teaching and attend to students who are not successful. Richard DuFour, Mike Schmoker, Robert Marzano, Douglas Reeves, Jeffrey Howard, Grant Wiggins, Jay McTighe, and others believe that this approach is a critical element in high achievement. I agree, but with a proviso: if a school adopts this theory, it must change the way teachers are supervised and evaluated. If it doesn't, the principal won't have the time, energy, and insight to get the engine started and monitor it during each school year.

Why are the principal's time and focus so crucial? Because teacher collaboration is countercultural in most American schools and rarely happens without impetus and support from outside the classroom. Principals are in the best position to provide the support, and rigorous state standards and high-stakes tests can provide the impetus. Standards and tests present a common challenge (a common enemy, some would say) that makes it easier for principals to get teacher teams to buy into working toward ambitious, measurable learning for students.

Of course principals still need to evaluate teachers every year or two, as required by most states, and they also need to give honest and timely feedback to ineffective teachers and have the guts to fire them if they don't improve. But the essence of what I'm recommending is a shift away from a process owned by the principal, in which most of the energy goes into evaluating individual lessons, to a more dynamic, informal process owned by teacher teams. To make this happen, we need to shift:

- from periodically evaluating teaching to continuously analyzing learning;
- from inspecting teachers one by one to energizing the work of teacher teams;
- from evaluating individual lessons to supervising curriculum units;
- from occasional announced classroom visits to frequent unannounced visits;
- from detailed scripting of single lessons to quick sampling of multiple lessons;
- from faking it with distorted data to conducting authentic conversations based on real data;
- from year-end judgments to continuous suggestions and redirection;
- from comprehensive, written evaluations to focused, face-to-face feedback;
- from guarded, inauthentic conversations to candid give-and-take;
- from teachers saying, "Let me do it my way" to everyone asking, "Is it working?";
- from employing rigid evaluation criteria to continuously looking at new ideas and practices;
- from focusing mainly on bad teachers to improving teaching in every classroom;
- from cumbersome, time-consuming evaluations to stream-lined rubrics; and
- from being mired in paperwork to orchestrating school-wide improvement.

TWELVE STEPS TO LINKING SUPERVISION AND EVALUATION TO HIGH SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT

These shifts will not happen by themselves. To recover from ineffective practices and to address widening achievement gaps, principals might try the following 12-step program.

1. Make sure the basics are in place. These include time scheduled for teacher teams (grade-level teams in elementary schools and subject-area teams in secondary schools) to meet on a weekly basis, preferably in uninterrupted 90-minute blocks; crystal-clear, end-of-year expectations for learning that are aligned with state standards; common assessments, which can be written by teacher teams or purchased, to measure learning and diagnose needs at the end of each year and at intervals during the year; common rubrics for consistently scoring student writing and open-ended responses; and exemplars of student work at the advanced, proficient, basic, and below-basic levels.

2. Decide on the irreducible elements of good teaching. For principals and teachers to communicate well about what's happening in classrooms, there must be a common language regarding the basics of effective teaching. Most evaluation checklists are way too long to remember. A handy acronym for the five elements that every classroom should have is SOTEL: safety- students feel physically and psychologically protected; objectives - the goals of the curriculum unit are evident; teaching - learning experiences are skillfully orchestrated; engagement- students are leaning forward, involved in the learning process; and learning - there is evidence, either during the lesson or on follow-up assessments, that students have learned what was taught.

3. Systematically visit all classrooms on a regular basis. Principals need to be in classrooms frequently for a reality check on how things are going. But how frequent is "frequently," and how much time does a principal need to be in a classroom to see how things are going? The answers to these two questions are crucial because there's a direct relationship between the length of each visit, the number of classrooms a principal can see each day, and the quality of information that is gathered. Shorter visits mean the principal can cover more classrooms, but visits that are too short yield superficial data.

Most principals make four types of classroom visits: 1) very brief, "showing the flag" appearances; 2) "walkthroughs" lasting a few minutes, with particular attention to student work on bulletin boards; 3) five- to 15-minute mini-observations focused intently on teaching and learning; and 4) full-period, formal observations with detailed note taking. All four types of visits are useful, but as I have argued previously,⁷ the third type is optimal for teachers whose basic competence is not in question. Mini-observations allow the principal to fit as many as five substantive visits into a busy day, and, if the visits are unannounced and the principal is focused and perceptive, they yield the most accurate data on how well teachers are performing.

A principal who is self-disciplined about making three to five mini-observations a day can get into all the classrooms in a medium-sized school every two weeks, systematically sampling the quality of teaching in chunks of time that can be fitted into a busy day. Using this approach, a principal can take 12 to 15 "snapshots" of every teacher's performance in the course of the year and compile a "photo album" of each one's overall performance. The total time the principal spends in each teacher's classroom is not much longer than that spent in the conventional evaluation model described earlier, but the accuracy of the information gained is far superior.

There's an additional bonus for peripatetic principals: they get to know students better and pick up information that can be useful in understanding learning problems, resolving discipline situations, and talking with parents.⁸ Frequent classroom visits also convey an unmistakable message to teachers: "You never know when I'll drop in, and I expect good teaching to be going on whenever I do." If the principal sees something of concern (for example, a student being publicly humiliated), it's time to shift gears to a formal reprimand or a traditional full-lesson evaluation.

4. Give teachers prompt, face-to-face feedback after every classroom visit. Teachers should not be left in the dark about what the principal thinks, and personal feedback is far preferable to sending e-mails or leaving notes in teachers' mailboxes. In an informal, low-threat, private conversation, teachers are more likely to relax and engage in honest give-and take about how things are going. These conversations go best when the principal's feedback focuses on one or two specific points - e.g., an appreciative comment about the way the teacher drew a shy student into the discussion, or a critical comment about the fact that the hands-on activities weren't focused on the unit objectives. Follow-up talks are most effective when they happen within 24 hours: "Better 120 seconds of feedback the same day than a five-page essay delivered a month later," says Douglas Reeves.⁹

In each of these follow-up conversations, principals should make a point of asking about student learning: "How is the Egypt unit coming?" "What Fountas-Pinnell levels have your lowest reading groups reached?" "How did the algebra test go?" If a principal has established a trusting climate, a teacher should be able to say, "My team just spent two weeks teaching the concept of borrowing, and the kids bombed on our quiz. Can you help us figure out what happened?" Teachers should know that their boss is keenly interested in results and should be comfortable reaching out for support.

5. Require teacher teams to develop common unit plans and assessments. The best way to ensure that teaching is done right the first time (versus having to provide corrective instruction for substantial numbers of students after the fact) is to have teachers work in teams to plan each curriculum unit with the end in sight.¹⁰ Before they dive into teaching, teacher teams should work backwards from the state standards to identify clear learning objectives, decide on the big ideas and essential questions of the unit, draft assessments they will use to determine whether students have learned what was taught, create a game plan and calendar for instruction, and run the plan by the principal for feedback.

The three- to six-week curriculum unit is an ideal chunk of instruction for principals to supervise - far better than an individual lesson. A principal who has reviewed a unit plan can check out alignment in classrooms, look at how kids are responding, suggest midcourse corrections, and ask about student learning. Are

examining unit plans and following up with teachers time-consuming? Yes. Are these activities a better use of a principal's time than lesson write-ups that are ignored by teachers? Absolutely!

By far the hardest part of implementing this approach is getting teachers to plan together in the first place. Teachers in the U.S. are accustomed to autonomy, and it takes a tenacious principal to foster this kind of collaboration. It's essential, though, because teams plan better than teachers working solo, and teams generate stronger ideas, provide better support, and increase the likelihood that the supervisory voice will be in each teacher's head as the unit unfolds.

6. Require teams to give common interim assessments. If formative assessments are of high quality - not just clones of multiple-choice end-of-the-year tests - they can give teachers valuable insights into what students are learning and not learning.¹¹ It's vital for teams to meet after each unit or quarterly assessment to look at the results and collectively answer these three questions: What percentage of students scored at the advanced, proficient, basic, or below-basic levels? In which areas did students do best, and where were they confused and unsuccessful? What is our strategy for addressing the weakest areas and helping students who are struggling?¹² A powerful enhancement to interim assessments is for teams to set SMART goals - Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Results-oriented, and Time-bound (for example, 85% of our first-graders will be reading at Level I on the Fountas-Pinnell scale by June) - at the beginning of the year and to track progress each quarter.

Teacher ownership of this process is vital; it's better for a teacher to chair team meetings, ideally on a rotating basis, even if the principal has the time. Teachers need to have a clear mission for their meetings (experimentation, continuous improvement, and results), contractual time to score assessments, common planning time during or after the school day to analyze and discuss data, an outside facilitator (unless there is unusually strong leadership within the team), and occasional drop-in visits by the principal to give support and contribute ideas.

7. Have teams report on student learning after each unit or quarter. Lots of schools suffer from data overload and insufficient analysis and follow-through. The principal can help teams crystallize their thinking by asking for a brief, informal report on the three questions above and on one additional question: How can I help? It's crucial that these reports, which can be submitted either in person or in writing, are low-stakes, non-threatening, and non-bureaucratic. Teams shouldn't be bogged down in paperwork and must feel they can be creative, try new things, admit mistakes, and engage in an informal give-and-take about what's working and what needs to be improved.

To summarize, let's contrast how a principal evaluates a teacher using the conventional model with the process that would be followed under the proposed model:

8. Arrange for high-quality feedback on lessons for teachers. Once a principal has made the shift to short, frequent classroom visits followed by face-to-face feedback and is looking at unit plans and successfully orchestrating teacher teams to focus on student results, who will give teachers feedback on full-period lessons? The principal won't have time but might arrange for instructional coaches or other teachers to do longer observations and follow-ups on lessons. Colleagues and coaches can give valuable feedback to teachers, especially when their input is part of a "lesson study" process. But there's a potential problem with peers observing one another - the culture of nice. It's hard to give critical feedback to people you eat lunch with every day. Videotape is a better medium for taking an unsparing look at a lesson. There's no better way to see the flaws in one's teaching (and appreciate the strengths) than to watch a videotape with a critical friend. Videotaping also requires much less skill than writing up a lesson observation.

The goal of all supervision, whether it comes from the principal's short visits or from a more lengthy peer or video observation, is to foster a real openness to feedback, install the supervisory voice in teachers' heads, and breed an acute consciousness of student learning results. We want individual teachers and teacher teams to be thinking constantly about whether students are learning and what can be done to get better results.

9. Create a professional learning culture in the school. Teachers and principals need preparation and support to improve their skills at observing classrooms; giving frank and honest feedback; and assessing unit plans, tests, and data on student learning. The principal needs to be the "chief learner" in this regard, reaching out to the knowledge base and orchestrating study groups, article and book groups, peer observations, and lesson

videotapes. The goal is to create a culture in which non-defensive analysis of student learning is "the way we do things around here."

The nine steps above could be carried out within most collective bargaining agreements. The last three would probably require waivers or contract changes.

10. Use short observation visits to write teachers' final evaluations. Dispensing with elaborate, announced evaluations is a huge time-saver, and once a trusting climate has been established, it's the ideal scenario. When I was principal of the Mather School in Boston, teachers became so comfortable with my short visits and personal feedback that virtually all of them agreed (via individual sign-offs with the assent of the union representative) to allow me to skip formal observation visits entirely and use my 12 or so short classroom visits-with-feedback to write their final evaluations. (For teachers who were in danger of getting overall unsatisfactory ratings, I went by the book.) The Littleton Public Schools in Massachusetts are in their second year of a negotiated agreement that gives tenured teachers the choice of being evaluated using the traditional approach or using evaluations based on at least 10 short visits."

11. Include measures of student learning gains in teachers' evaluations. Teachers could be asked to submit evidence of changes in student learning from the beginning to the end of the year, using before-and-after assessment results or an analysis of portfolios and student work.

12. Use a rubric to evaluate teachers. Scoring guides are being used successfully to evaluate student writing and other open-ended work, and a few school districts, including Alexandria, Virginia, and the Aspire Charter Schools in California, have begun to use them for teacher evaluation. Rubrics have several advantages over conventional evaluation instruments: they are more clearly "judgmental," forcing the principal to give the teacher clear feedback with respect to a standard; they are more informative, telling teachers where they stand on a 4-3-2-1 scale with a detailed description of what performance looks like at each level of proficiency; they counteract "grade inflation," if it's clear that very few teachers will be at the advanced level; and they take much less time.

CONCLUSION

Let's return to the vignette of the teacher who wept after being told that she had mis-taught an important math concept. It's a true story; I was the principal. Looking back, I've done a lot of thinking about what went wrong in that situation. The teacher was clearly putting on a special lesson for my announced visit. Her nervousness about the biennial evaluation may have thrown her off her game, and the high-stakes nature of our conference undoubtedly contributed to her feeling of devastation when, in her view, I played "gotcha." She had been working in isolation from other teachers at her grade level and was probably more focused on impressing me than on bringing her students to proficiency on a fair assessment. The lesson she drew from my criticism - to "never take a risk" - seems like the wrong one, but given the supervision and evaluation process that we were using, it was understandable.

Had this teacher been working in the kind of professional learning community I have advocated in this article, things might have gone differently. She and her teammates would have planned the math unit together, caught the error early on, and figured out a classroom strategy for teaching the concepts. The teachers would have been less concerned about what I thought, if I happened to drop in on a lesson, than on whether the kids were getting it and how they would do on their interim assessments and on the rigorous Massachusetts math test. If I did catch a teaching error during a classroom visit, I would have corrected it in an informal conversation. When their students did well on the end-of-unit assessment, the team teachers would have reported the results to me and their colleagues with real pride - even, perhaps, with tears of a different kind.

If this scenario is to occur, some changes need to be made. We need to streamline supervision and evaluation so that principals can spend their time doing what will make the most difference: quickly and efficiently keeping tabs on what is really happening in classrooms, giving teachers constant feedback, making fair judgments about teacher performance, and getting teams invested in improving student learning and focused on results. Principals need to be able to shape a creative, low-stakes, professional learning community so that teacher teams can continuously improve their students' chances of succeeding in a high-stakes world.

Principals are ideally situated to start this team-driven "engine of improvement" and keep it humming month after month. A few maverick school leaders are already doing this kind of work on their own. Others need permission from their superiors before they take the leap of faith, let go of the current model of supervision

and evaluation, and launch a more powerful learning dynamic. I would argue that liberating principals to do the right kind of work is one of the most important steps a school district can take if it wants to close the achievement gap and get all students achieving at high levels.

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Chapter 1

It's all about learning

From *Teacher Self-Supervision* by William and Ochan Powell

Over the course of the last 30 years, the authors of this book have worked with a large number of teachers and school leaders in over 50 countries worldwide and the refrain has been virtually unanimous: traditional teacher evaluation is a failed system. It doesn't improve student learning; it is immensely time and energy consuming; and it destroys the culture of trust in schools. Try a rough-and-ready thought experiment: stand in front of a group of 1000 teachers and ask how many of them are becoming more professional, effective or fulfilled through the use of the present system of teacher evaluation. Our hunch is that virtually no one will say "yes". We have a failed system that isn't working and we need to change it.

Schools are places of learning, and therefore they should be places of high collective intelligence. However, frequently they are not. Arguably the single greatest folly and waste of time in schools is the perpetuation of the failed system of teacher evaluation.

Assuming the mantle of the profession

Historically, teaching has been one of four *professions*; that is, an occupation that required the individual entering it to *profess*, take an oath or tacitly affirm a belief system. The other professions were medicine, the clergy and law. Each profession was traditionally garbed in a gown that signified the mantle of responsibility that the individual had assumed. Each profession had its own values and beliefs and the individual was expected to embrace and adhere to them. It is time that teaching reclaimed the status of a profession. We do that by recognizing, developing and relentlessly insisting upon individual teacher self-directed learning.

We believe that all behavior, including teacher pedagogical behavior in the classroom, is a product of thought and perception (Costa & Garmston, 2002). Adult professional learning engages increasingly complex thought and explores alternative perceptions and as a result influences decision-making and behavior. The learning is even more powerful when it is self-directed; that is, when it is the product of the learner's own drive and motivation, rather than something he or she is compelled into by external forces.

Those who facilitate student learning need to be learners themselves and, as adults, they need to be self-directed. This is nothing less than a reasonable expectation.

Reasonable and unreasonable expectations

The title of this section includes the phrase 'a reasonable expectation', so it is perhaps worthwhile to spend a moment exploring what constitutes an expectation and how we determine whether one is reasonable or not.

Bill is reminded of a time when he was Headmaster of the International School of Kuala Lumpur and a middle school student had been caught cheating on a test. When questioned about his behavior, the young man denied any dishonesty until confronted with irrefutable evidence to the contrary. Bill took the decision that the student needed to spend a couple of days at home to reflect on not only his academic honesty but also how he had repeatedly lied about his behavior to his teacher, the principal and then to Bill.

The following day the student's irate father appeared in Bill's office. He did not deny that his son had cheated on the test, but he felt the consequences were too severe. Bill attempted to explain that the young man had not only cheated but had lied about it. The father's response: "What do you expect? You haul the boy into your office and accuse him of cheating. He's scared out of his mind. So he lies. What do you really expect?"

The father probably intended the final remark as a rhetorical question that would not require an answer. Bill, however, chose to address it directly.

"I expect your son and every other student in this school to tell the truth. Would you really want to send your child to a school where the Headmaster, the principal and teachers expected children to lie?"

A similar question can be framed about teachers: would we really want to send our children to a school in which we expected teachers to be other than self-directed learners?

Expectations are funny things. We don't usually spend a great deal of conscious time developing or refining them and yet they are immensely powerful in determining how we and others may act and behave. The classic study on teacher expectations was undertaken by Harvard researchers Rosenthal and Jacobson (1992) in the 1970s – the so-called Pygmalion Study, out of which came the idea of the self-fulfilling prophecy.

Rosenthal and Jacobson demonstrated that teacher expectations can and do have a profound influence on student achievement. We also know this to be the case with adults. The expectations of school leaders have a powerful influence on teacher behavior and decision-making.

Recent research in neuroscience suggests that when we make accurate predictions we are rewarded with a hit of dopamine – the so-called happy neurotransmitter (Willis, 2014). This makes evolutionary sense. When our ancestors predicted accurately where the edible roots and tubers were located or where the game might congregate, these hunters and gatherers were rewarded not just with food but also with a mild sense of euphoria courtesy of dopamine.

Expectations are a form of prediction. A teacher who expects a student to do well on a high stakes test feels elated when the student does so. Dopamine is at work. That's the good news. Unfortunately there may also be bad news. We suspect that the opposite may also be true. When a teacher has low expectations and the student 'lives down' to them, the teacher may also encounter a hit of dopamine. "See, I told you Eddy wasn't capable of higher level physics."

The traditional teacher evaluation system is riddled with negative expectations about teachers and what motivates them (*eg* looking for what's wrong, seeking minimum competencies). Taken together these assumptions form a pernicious cloud of counterproductive expectations that many teachers will 'live down to'. When they do so, politicians and some school leaders will feel vindicated. Their predications have come true and their dopamine receptors may fire. What may not be immediately apparent is the effect that their low expectations have had. Inadvertently, we may have created a vicious cycle of what Laura Lipton and Bruce Wellman (2012) refer to as 'self-sealing logic'.

Perhaps the most ironic aspect of this cluster of demeaning and counterproductive assumptions is that for the most part both management and teacher labor unions accept it as though it were an indisputable external reality.

So what constitutes a *reasonable* expectation? More often than not, the word 'reasonable' in this context is used to mean 'manageable' or 'do-able'. While we do equate a reasonable expectation with not biting off more than we can chew, we also suggest that in the circumstances of teacher evaluation, a more appropriate definition for the word 'reasonable' may be 'feasible' or 'suitable'. In other words, we need to ask if the expectations we hold are congruent with our desired outcomes. Given what we know about the influence of our expectations, does it make sense to have low and demeaning expectations of teachers and then assume that they will take the initiative and be pro-active in terms of improved instructional performance?

We are reminded of Goethe's adage: 'Treat a man as he is and he will remain as he is. Treat a man as he can and should be and he will become as he can and should be.'

The failure of teacher evaluation systems

Let's take a close look at what many schools have in place. In traditional systems of teacher evaluation the leadership of the school develops or imports a series of published standards or expectations for high quality teaching and the supervisor then determines whether the individual teacher exceeds, meets or does not meet the standards.

The supervisor may employ classroom observations, review of lesson plans, conferencing, analysis of standardized test scores and acceptable yearly progress in order to reach a judgment on the teacher's craft. Teacher evaluations tend to be summative in the sense that they come at intervals at the end of a prescribed period of time and the external judgments are often coupled with rewards (*eg* oral and or written praise, promotion, and, in some cases, merit pay) or punishments (*eg* oral or written criticism, castigation, threats, withholding of incentive pay, and in some cases contract non-renewal or even dismissal).

Some assumptions about teacher evaluation

Evaluation systems such as the one described in the previous paragraph are present in most schools around the world. These systems are predicated on a number of assumptions and expectations.

Assumptions are important because we all have them and they exert a powerful influence on our behavior and decision-making. However, many – perhaps even most – of our assumptions reside beneath the surface of consciousness and are notoriously resistant to rigorous analysis and exploration.

Let's look at some of the assumptions (we will argue – *faulty* assumptions) that underlie the traditional practices of teacher evaluation.

Assumption 1: External evaluation provides constructive feedback that teachers use to improve the quality of their instruction and therefore enhance student learning.

Comment: The opposite would actually appear to be the case. Research and our own experience suggest that improved pedagogy results from shifts in thinking that are internal to the individual teacher rather than imposed from external sources.

The distressing truth is that no one can compel learning in another person. The teacher cannot force a student to learn any more than a gardener can compel a seed to germinate. The gardener can create the conditions under which the seed is likely to grow. The teacher can create the conditions under which classroom learning is likely just as a principal can develop the environment in which adult learning is likely.

But 'the gates of learning are only opened from within and that motivation to learn or change can not be externally coerced' (Costa, Garmston, & Zimmerman p. xvi, 2014). In chapter three, we will explore ways in which we can support the self-directed learning of our colleagues. We will share research that clearly indicates that external evaluative feedback actually inhibits self-assessment, creates dependency relationships and infantilizes teachers.

School people, teachers and administrators alike, have been conditioned to believe that they are not doing their job unless they are constantly providing external judgments, advice, recommendations and inferential suggestions. Many of us have learned how to disguise these evaluations in leading questions. We, as a profession, have come to associate our identity with that of an evaluator or consultant. This is a very difficult mental model to break. It is often much easier to learn something brand new than it is to unlearn unproductive patterns of interaction.

Perhaps one of the most pervasive faulty assumptions in education (or in any organization for that matter) is the notion that because we have addressed something, we have dealt with it in an effective manner. This often involves confusion between the implementation of strategies and the achievement of goals. For example, in one school that Bill and Ochan visited there was a notable absence of curriculum articulation. When this was broached with the leadership team, the response was that this was indeed something that had been discussed a number of times at senior management meetings. The assumption was that the discussion of the issues (the *implementation of a strategy*) was the same or equivalent to the achievement of a goal.

For administrators, teacher evaluation is often seen as a goal (something that needs to be accomplished – an end unto itself) when in fact it is only the implementation of a strategy. The goal is not teacher evaluation: the goal is enhanced student and teacher learning. There is a shallow and often faulty syllogism at work:

Feedback improves performance.

I have given feedback.

Therefore I have improved performance.

Assumption 2: Student learning can be reduced to a behavioral formula that can be implemented mechanically by the teacher in the classroom. There is one best way to teach and we can evaluate performance accordingly.

Comment: We will argue that the *one thing* that merits the greatest skepticism in education is dogma. In medicine, there may be one best way to undertake a procedure; doctors operate on one patient at a time, success indicators are usually clear, monolithic and simple (the patient gets well), and most subjects are anesthetized.

A classroom of students represents a much more complex and demanding situation. Here we find a multitude of cultures, socio-economic backgrounds, intelligence preferences, personalities and talents. It is folly to think that such diversity could be well served by one best way to teach.

There have been numerous misguided attempts to reduce teaching and learning to a simplistic formula. Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon (2003) write:

Effective teaching has been misunderstood and misapplied as a set and sequence of certain teaching behaviors (review previous day's objectives, present objectives, explain, demonstrate, guided practice, check for understanding, etc). This explanation of effectiveness is simply untrue (p. 72).

People who think teaching can be reduced to a mechanistic recipe have never facilitated learning in a classroom.

Assumption 3: The methods of industry will work in education. Universal education by definition must be mass-produced and students are the raw material of an educational assembly line.

Comment: The ‘factory model’ of education is still very much a reality in many schools. The student is perceived as the ‘raw material’ and the teacher as the assembly line worker. Grouping is age graded and the day is punctuated by rigid schedules that are announced by cacophonous bells. The end product of this mass production is standardized test scores. Most enlightened corporations have abandoned the ‘factory model’ of thinking. Schools need to follow suit.

Assumption 4: Trusting relationships are nice, but are not essential to high quality learning.

Comment: We will argue that all truly meaningful learning, what we refer to as *transformational learning*, takes place within relationships. Adults, like children, choose from whom they will learn. Most of us will choose to learn from people we have come to trust. Therefore, in our experience trust is a fundamental, non-negotiable element both within the classroom and within the broader school environment.

David Rock (2009) provides insight about how the human brain operates in social circumstances. He has developed the acronym: SCARF to represent the social needs of the brain – Status, Certainty, Autonomy, Relatedness, and Fairness.

Traditional forms of teacher supervision are based upon hierarchical status. More powerful and more influential individuals evaluate the less powerful. Feedback that provides advice and solutions creates what Rock refers to as ‘status threats’ because it enhances the status of the person providing the feedback and diminishes the status of the recipient. Teacher evaluation systems also serve to undermine teacher autonomy and any sense of social relatedness.

Humans are wired to be social (Rock, 2009, Lieberman, 2013). We have a basic and profound need to feel a sense of relatedness and belonging. Our social needs are just as basic as food, water, and shelter. Without psychological safety (not the same as psychological comfort) our health is threatened and our learning impaired. Trust is critical for high quality learning (Bryk & Schneider, 2002, Tschannen-Moran, 2014).

The brain is highly sensitive to status threat. When status is threatened, social connections are reduced and cortisol is produced increasing stress and *decreasing frontal lobe activity*. The frontal lobes are the venue for deep thinking and learning. Traditional teacher evaluation damages trust and creates the conditions under which meaningful teacher learning is unlikely.

Assumption 5: Teachers will not become better at their craft unless externally coerced to do so by the use of extrinsic rewards and punishments.

Comment: The implication here is that teachers are for the most part complacent and apathetic individuals who are not motivated by internal values and beliefs. In order to achieve the extra mile or value-added, they need to be compelled, forced or manipulated into improvement. This is not the authors’ impression of the teaching profession. If it were, we certainly would have homeschooled our own children.

Assumption 6: Teachers need a constant barrage of appreciation and validation.

Comment: This is an unfortunately common and often unexamined assumption in schools – many times perpetuated by teachers themselves and well-meaning administrators. Teachers, like everyone else, need encouragement. But encouragement is not the same as praise. Encouragement is a self-renewing resource. Instead of having less of it when we use it wisely, we actually have more.

Encouragement reminds us of the Hydra – not the venomous multiple headed serpent that Heracles kills in his Second Labor – but rather the simple microscopic fresh water creature that lives in ponds and weedy lakes. Like encouragement, the Hydra has mastered remarkable self-regenerating ability and does not appear to show the ravages of time, doesn’t atrophy and does not die of old age.

Praise can be only an illusion of encouragement and its inflation in schools, whether directed at students or teachers, can be insidious and be injurious to future learning. In a classic study, Mary Budd Rowe (1974) found that elementary students who were frequently praised by their teachers exhibited less perseverance than their peers.

Along with encouragement, teachers need fairness. Actually fairness is one of our most profound social needs (Rock, 2009). The importance of fairness is frequently underestimated and undervalued in schools. Fairness or its absence is perceived as reward or threat. When a teacher believes that s/he has received unfair treatment, there is a strong, negative limbic reaction.

One study showed that physical pain was not re-experienced when remembered, but social pain (being the victim of unfair treatment) can be re-experienced over and over again. On the other hand, when there is a sense of fairness, there is an increase in oxytocin, dopamine and serotonin that support thinking and learning in the prefrontal cortex (Rock, 2009).

Assumption 7: Supervisors know more about high quality teaching and learning than teachers do.

Comment: In our experience, this has not necessarily been the case.

Assumption 8: It is reasonable to expect one principal to supervise 40 or 50 teachers.

Comment: In no other work environment that we know of does the supervision ratio run as high as it does in schools. In most organizations, a supervisor has five to eight direct reports. To expect a principal to meaningfully supervise 40 teachers is folly.

Assumption 9: Accountability trumps responsibility.

Comment: While it may seem *plausible* to hold teachers accountable and require adherence to external standards, plausibility has been called the 'opiate of the intellect'. It often stands in the way of deeper thinking. Accountability can be defined as compliance seeking and is counterproductive to learning. Costa, Garmston and Zimmerman (2014) write that these

very acts corrupt the system. The overemphasis on compliance consumes valuable time, turns teachers into conforming consumers, and shifts the assessment paradigm further from meaningful authentic measures. (2014 p. 91)

Stiggins and Duke (1988) agree that with all the rhetoric aside, conventional teacher evaluation systems tend to focus on accountability to the virtual exclusion of professional growth.

Accountability is external to self. We are accountable to others, usually individuals or boards of directors that have greater authority than we do. Traditional teacher evaluation systems are based upon the idea of status disparity. The greater authority performs the evaluation upon the lesser authority. Even well-meaning advice can reinforce the perception of superior and inferior status. Rock (2008) writes:

In most people, the question 'can I offer you some feedback' generates a similar response to hearing fast footsteps behind you at night. Performance reviews often generate status threats, explaining why they are often ineffective in stimulating behavioral change. (p.4)

External emphasis on accountability can lend itself to coercive cultures in which rewards and threats are the primary means of staff and student motivation.

To counter the current obsession with accountability, some of the teacher unions, particularly in the United States, are calling for greater teacher autonomy. The perception appears to be that accountability and autonomy are diametrically opposed. In other words, they are mutually exclusive. The more accountability you have, the less autonomy and *vice versa*. This is a false dichotomy. There is nothing mutually exclusive about accountability and autonomy. The fact is schools must have both.

Accountability and autonomy represent interdependent polarities that must be managed. School leaders must set a non-negotiable expectation that teachers will be actively engaged in their own professional learning. Teachers need to be able to address questions such as: from your observations of colleagues in the classroom, what are some insights that you have had that have influenced your teaching? Or: from your recent professional reading, what are you taking away that has impacted your craft as a teacher?

These are accountability dialogues in which the teacher has an opportunity to explore and reflect on how their autonomous learning is affecting their craft. When accountability and autonomy are managed well the result is a culture of professional responsibility.

Professional responsibility is internal. It is all about being true to our values and beliefs. Responsibility is an essential element in self-direction. We will share research on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and argue that schools, which are healthy human work communities, actively support the development of an internal sense of responsibility.

Assumptions 10: If you can't measure and quantify something, it doesn't exist – or if it does exist, it's not very important.

Comment: Here is a most unfortunate legacy from the dark ages of behaviorism: if something isn't observable and measurable it doesn't exist. The world according to B F Skinner is a rather simple, grim, manipulative place that is largely inhabited by self-deluded individuals.

In the corporate sector there is an old adage: if you can't measure it, you can't manage it. This assumption has nefariously slipped into education. The most important outcomes in education are manageable and observable, but are extremely difficult, nigh impossible to measure: integrity; perseverance in the face of adversity; courage of convictions; compassion; citizenship;

empathy; honesty; enthusiasm for learning *etc.* As usual, Einstein got it right when he said: ‘Education is what remains after one has forgotten all that has been learned.’

Assumption 11: Only ineffective teachers need improvement plans.

Comment: The idea here is that if a teacher has reached an acceptable standard of professional performance, there is no need for improvement: the attainment of competency heralds the teacher as a ‘finished product’. This implies that all new and future classroom-learning challenges can be met through the understanding and mastery of a fixed educational canon. In other words, the field of education is static and we can expect nothing worthy, useful or valuable to come out of contemporary or future research and study. How would we respond to this attitude in a medical doctor?

The field of education is changing with lightning speed; schools are changing at a snail’s pace. Caine and Caine (2001) capture the irony of the present situation:

Unfortunately, many countries and cultures are employing a late 20th century political process in an attempt to perfect an early 20th century model of schools, based on 17th century beliefs about how people learn, in order to prepare children for the 21st century. (p.iv)

Schools will not improve by external mandate just as teachers will not improve by external evaluation. The answer to the quandary of improving learning for students lies squarely in improving learning for teachers. As a result, teachers have a sacred obligation to become architects of their own, on-going professional growth.

Throughout this book, we will set out to explode these pervasive myths and suggest in their place some positive and constructive assumptions and congruent practices that in our experience have led to teacher self-directed learning, enhanced teaching and improved student learning.

But first we need to look into the roots of our present thinking. We need to examine where these assumptions have come from – which brings us to Frederick Winslow Taylor’s recurrent nightmare.

Frederick W Taylor’s recurrent nightmare

Frederick Taylor was an American mechanical engineer who, in the late 19th century, became fascinated, some might say obsessed, with the principles of scientific management and authored a now classic book by the same title. His influence in the early 20th century can hardly be exaggerated. Taylorism, as it became known, had as its primary goal industrial efficiency and increased productivity. Taylor believed that ‘work’ could be carefully and rigorously analyzed and from that analysis would emerge the *one best way* to do something.

His stopwatch studies at Bethlehem Steel, combined with Frank Gilbreth’s work, became known as ‘time and motion studies’. The goal was the greatest possible efficiency in production. There was an attractive Newtonian simplicity to Taylor’s ideas and he gained a huge following both in the United States and overseas.

However, Taylor’s management theories were autocratic, patrician, and ultimately dehumanizing. He believed in a clear separation between mental activity (the domain of management) and action (the job of the factory worker). The worker was to be trained in the *one best way* to undertake his labor and then he was to be obedient, conforming and compliant.

Franklin Bobbitt (1912) introduced Taylor’s ideas into education and they have been there ever since – much to the detriment of student and teacher learning. We see the factory influence in schools: the hierarchical structure of authority; the fragmentation of knowledge into subjects; departments; and the division of the day into arbitrary blocks of time.

For the sake of argument, let us concede to Taylor that there may be one best way to undertake a physical task such as shoveling pig iron, but there is certainly not one best way to teach Johnny or Sabrina to read or to nurture critical thinking in Samer or Nishat. What works for Ahmed may be a total failure for Veronica. Student learning is far too complex for such simplistic reductionism.

In fact, we would go further and state that we should be profoundly skeptical of any educational notion that there is *one* right way to do things. We are reminded of the ridiculous, false dichotomy of the Whole Language vs Phonemic Awareness debate or the nonsense of pitting conceptual understanding against factual automaticity in primary school mathematics. Journeys into such dogmatic blind alleys waste an enormous amount of time and do considerable damage.

Actually, today’s education is in the midst of a renaissance. We have learned more about how the human brain learns in the last two decades than in all the rest of human history put together. Renaissances are exciting and confusing times; new knowledge

rapidly becomes available and old paradigms and authorities are challenged. Many have a vested interest in the *status quo* – even when it is not working and producing undesirable results.

Ironically Frederick Winslow Taylor, arguably the father of the ‘industrial school’, was plagued by a frequently recurring nightmare. He dreamed that he was desperately trying to escape from inside a giant machine (Breitbart, 1981). Taylor’s nightmare has become that of the modern school – our desperate need to escape from the assumptions that have kept us bound to the machine model of schooling.

Another faulty assumption emerges from the factory model of schooling: the so-called ‘Widget Effect’ (Weisberg, Sexton, Mulhern & Keeling, 2009). The Widget Effect describes the tendency of school districts and leaders to assume classroom effectiveness is the same from teacher to teacher. This notion nurtures an environment in which teachers cease to be understood as individual practitioners, but rather are thought of as interchangeable parts or human resources.

In its denial of teacher individuality (strengths, deficits, passions, knowledge base, emotional intelligence and other idiosyncrasies) it is deeply disrespectful to teachers and in its indifference to instructional effectiveness, it gambles with the lives of students. (p.4)

Based upon Taylorism and the factory model of schools, traditional methods of teacher evaluation are a failed system. They are fragmented, incoherent, counterproductive and ineffective, and yet we persist in expending huge amounts of time, money, labor and energy in trying to make them work. We currently have a coercive system that operates on the belief that teachers will only improve if they are being supervised, manipulated and externally evaluated. We reject this belief because it is self-defeating. It infantilizes teachers and creates dependency relationships. And, most importantly, it damages and ultimately destroys trust.

Emotional engagement in our work

In spring 2014, Gallup released the results of a huge survey of teachers, administrators and schools in the United States entitled *The State of America’s Schools*. Unlike some previous studies, the Gallup survey focused on the ‘human elements’ of teaching and learning, specifically on emotional engagement, relationships, collaboration, hope and trust.

The Gallup report contains the disturbing findings that almost 70% of the American teachers surveyed were not emotionally connected to their workplace and are unlikely to devote much discretionary effort to their work. Emotional connection to our work involves values, mission, identity, a sense of efficacy, optimism and empowerment; in short, purposeful self-direction. The suggestion that over two thirds of American teachers lack it should be a clarion call for a major revision in our thinking about teachers and professional learning.

Self-direction is part of the fabric of being an effective facilitator of learning and we believe that most teachers, irrespective of gender, race or ethnicity, cultural background, previous training or experience will, over time, naturally gravitate towards a self-directed, emotional connection to their work *unless* the system sets up obstacles and barriers that inhibit such growth.

The Gallup study reported two factors that may correlate with the low levels of teacher emotional engagement in the United States. The first is that compared to 14 other occupations, teachers were at the very bottom in saying that their supervisors always create an environment that is trusting and open. We suspect that this may be related to failed and coercive systems of teacher evaluation.

The second factor that may correlate with low levels of teacher emotional engagement in the United States is that teachers were last in comparison to 12 other occupations when it comes to feeling that their opinions counted at work.

The Gallup report also highlights that 40-50% of teachers in the US leave the profession within the first five years. The report attributes this in part to a counter-productive system that actually inhibits teacher development:

Most young teachers didn’t go into the classroom expecting to be highly paid, but neither did they expect that they would be denied the autonomy needed to effectively use their talents. They may also have under-estimated the rarity of opportunities to collaborate with other teachers and administrators. (p.23)

An alternative approach

Rather than teacher evaluation or appraisal (we will use the terms interchangeably) we should be focused on adult learning: professional learning that is self-directed. We believe that the more dynamic and stimulating the adult learning, the more dynamic and stimulating the student learning will be.

In our collective experience in schools, the authors of this book have seen a powerful correlation between adult learning and student learning. We have witnessed first hand the paradigm shift from a culture of control to a culture that actively enables both student and adult learning.

Roland Barth (1990, 2006), retired Harvard professor of education, argues persuasively that the most important ingredient in improving student learning is developing the positive and constructive adult-to-adult learning relationships. He is not merely referring to pleasant conviviality, but rather to rigorous collegiality in which we learn from each other, scrutinize each other's ideas and expect our own ideas to be subject to similar inspection, share leadership, and deliberately build capacity in others and self. The coercive nature of teacher evaluation makes such collegiality extremely unlikely.

From our perspective the outcome of any system of teacher supervision must be teacher self-direction. This is what we claim to want for students: independent critical thinkers who are enthusiastic life-long learners with the capacity for healthy and accurate self-assessment and self-modification. If these are desirable outcomes for students, why would we not want them for teachers as well? By self-direction we mean that the teacher is engaged in self-supervision – self-assessing, setting challenging goals, monitoring progress and reflecting.

The baby and the bathwater

At this point, some readers will be wondering about the thickness of the authors' rose-colored glasses. What ideal and imaginary world have they been living in? The changes they are suggesting fly directly in that face of what most schools are actually practicing.

An assumption here is that *common* practice is *best* practice. There may be a degree of comfort in doing what everyone else is doing, but that in no way insures that it is enlightened, thoughtful or effective.

In order to avoid any misunderstanding, we want to be very clear that ineffective teachers need to be identified as quickly as possible and removed from the classroom. Increasingly, research is highlighting the powerful influence the teacher has on student learning (Haycock, 1998). The research from United States is clear: a child who has an ineffective teacher two years in a row is subject to irreparable educational harm (Carey, 2004; Sanders & Rivers, 1996).

The stakes are simply too high to tolerate marginal performance in the classroom. Getting rid of teacher evaluation is NOT about lowering standards – or protecting mediocrity from serious and timely scrutiny. We will always need a process for removing teachers from the classroom – most of whom should never have been in the profession in the first place. However, these are a tiny minority of the vast population of committed, intelligent, sensitive and hard working teachers in schools. Why would we design a system for 2% or 3% of the population and impose it on the overwhelming majority?

Professional relationships and adult learning

There tend to be two kinds of challenges that individuals and organizations face: technical and adaptive challenges (Powell & Kusuma-Powell, 2013).

Technical challenges can be resolved by informational learning. An example might be the desire to learn how to use a new piece of technology for classroom instruction. I can read the instruction manual or engage in an online tutorial or ask a colleague for assistance. Once I have acquired the new information and have practiced it, I will have resolved the technical challenge.

Informational learning targets changes in behavior and capabilities (capabilities are clusters of behaviors that have a common intention or outcome). Addressing technical challenges in this fashion is energy and time efficient. We can engage in informational learning from any source – inanimate or animate.

While the source of informational learning needs to have a degree of credibility, we do not need to feel personal trust. We can learn content in a huge university lecture course from a virtually anonymous professor. Accordingly, informational learning does not usually involve a great deal of psychological risk taking. Whenever we are faced with a technical challenge we should apply an informational solution.

However, many of the challenges we face are not technical in nature (Powell & Kusuma-Powell, 2013). This is particularly true in the complex field of teaching and learning. We can and often do come face-to-face with adaptive challenges. These are situations that require us to rethink and refine our assumptions, beliefs, values, mental models and even our identity and sense of mission.

Adaptive challenges are complex and require transformational learning. When we address the truly important outcomes of education – those that are impossible to quantify (compassion, enthusiasm for learning, courage, generosity of spirit, etc) – we are entering the realm of transformational learning whether we are dealing with students or colleagues.

Transformational learning takes place in a social setting, almost always with a person or persons who we perceive as trustworthy. It requires psychological safety, but not comfort. Very often our deepest learning emerges from a period of cognitive or emotional discomfort or disequilibrium.

However, psychological safety is a prerequisite for such learning and this often emerges in the catalyst of trusting relationships. Unfortunately traditional teacher evaluation systems destroy the very trust necessary for such transformational learning to take place. In chapters three and four we will further explore how trust is deeply connected to professional learning that has a profound impact on classroom instruction.

When we attempt to address adaptive challenges with technical solutions we often encounter massive resistance, what Harvard psychologist Robert Kegan (Kegan & Lahey, 2009) refers to as 'immunity to change'.

Teacher evaluation undermines classroom effectiveness

The Gallup organization (2014) has studied the characteristics of exceptional teachers for over 40 years and they have identified three common attributes. Exceptionally effective teachers demonstrate:

1. *Internal achievement motivation.* These are teachers who are driven to reach higher levels of mastery and learning. They enjoy setting challenging goals for themselves, monitoring their progress and taking ownership of student achievement.
2. *Orchestration of classroom structure and flexibility.* These are teachers who balance innovation with discipline. They are structured and deliberately organized without sacrificing creativity and playfulness. They are risk-takers who view failure as an opportunity to learn. These teachers are constantly thinking about new ways to present content and to engage students in learning and discovery.
3. *Strong relationships with students, colleagues and parents.* Highly effective teachers understand that deep and meaningful learning takes place in a social setting characterized by respect and trust. These teachers deliberately set out to build strong learning relationships with their students and colleagues. They do so by supporting others to feel more efficacious and empowered as learners both independently and as a member of a community.

Each of these characteristics depends upon the teacher developing self-direction. They are stifled by traditional systems of teacher evaluation.

A new approach

Sometimes it is easier to change the entire system than it is to tinker and tweak the fringes of an existing system. Given that traditional teacher evaluation has so little to recommend it, we are putting forth a simple (but not simplistic), coherent, common sense alternative that has its roots in what we know about student and adult learning.

We advocate for an approach to teacher professional learning that capitalizes on teacher strengths. We know that we can enhance student learning by focusing on their strengths rather than grinding on their weaknesses. We can do exactly the same with adults. Teachers know their strengths and weaknesses better than anyone else.

However, they are often reluctant to acknowledge the latter because they believe – especially in a climate of external high stakes teacher evaluation – that it will result in others, the supervisors or colleagues, questioning their competency.

Nevertheless in school cultures of openness, mutual support and trust, we can not only capitalize on teacher strengths but also use them to improve what they may not be so good at.

As a profession we need to work on the search for goodness. As a general rule, teachers are not skilled at deconstructing and analyzing exemplary teaching and learning. And we have seen researchers and politicians focused primarily on what *isn't* working in education. Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) perceive that this

general propensity is magnified in the research on education and schooling, where investigators have been much more vigilant in documenting failure than they have been in describing examples of success. (p. 8)

The relentless scrutiny of failure has four unfortunate and misleading outcomes:

1. We come to view the field (education) solely in terms of what is wrong with it and this myopic perspective can blind us to its promise and potential.
2. A focus on failure (on what isn't going well) can often nurture cynicism, apathy and inaction.

3. Mono-dimensional attention to the negative often results in blaming the victim. 'Rather than a complicated analysis of strengths and vulnerabilities (usually evident in any person, institution, or society), the locus of blame tends to rest on the shoulders of those most victimized and least powerful in defining their identity or shaping their fate.' (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 9)

The defensiveness that so often accompanies a relentless focus on failure often short cuts the data to wisdom continuum (Powell & Kusuma-Powell, 2013) (See also chapter five) and results in facile and superficial inquiry.

Alex Pentland (2014) would seem to agree. Pentland is director of MIT's Human Dynamics Laboratory and approaches the topic of effective social learning through the analysis of Big Data and through so-called Reality Mining. He writes:

Mathematical models of learning in complex environments suggest that the best strategy for learning is to spend 90% of our efforts on exploration, *ie* finding and *copying others who appear to be doing well*. The remaining 10 % should be spent on individual experimentation and thinking things through. (p. 54)

However, when school people do witness exemplary teaching and learning, we often tend to respond with immediate adulation and subsequent dismissal. We will address this in greater depth in chapter three. We must learn to 'look for goodness', deconstruct it and most importantly learn from it.

This book is based on eight premises that will feature prominently in each of the chapters.

Premise 1: It's all about learning (conceptual understanding, competency building and character development). Learning is scalable. Once we have determined that improving professional practice is all about learning, we need to pay close attention to learning theory. What works in the classroom for students can work effectively for adults.

Think of a fractal (here we borrow a metaphor from our friends at Common Ground Collaborative) – the humble cauliflower. Each pattern is repeated in increasing complexity; the single floret resembles the whole cauliflower. The initial pattern is embedded in the more complicated iterations. This, we believe, is a powerful metaphor for teacher professional learning.

Most approaches to education are linear, input/output models (the industrial school). These models fail to recognize that transformational learning often follows a non-linear path and engages dynamical systems. One promising approach that does understand that learning and leadership are scalable is the Common Ground Collaborative (CGC) currently being developed by Kevin Bartlett and Gordon Eldridge at the International School of Brussels.

When we say that 'learning and leadership' are scalable, we mean that what actually works well for children works equally well for adults. There are common guiding principles that are manifest in high quality learning for children and adults.

For example, current research supports constructivist practices as most brain compatible for children. Accordingly, we have seen classrooms becoming more child centered as the identity of the teachers shifts from the 'sage on the stage' to the 'guide by the side'. Dolcemascolo and Hayes (2015) are correct when they write:

If educational systems do not align adult learning with best practices for children, it is unlikely that teachers will use those practices in classrooms. (p. 56)

Premise 2: It's all about self-direction. Transformational learning, the kind that really improves teacher practice in the classroom, can't be imposed from the outside. Profound learning happens when individuals own the experience. They become the examiners of their assumptions, beliefs and values and therefore the architects of their professional identity. Motivation comes from within, as does professional fulfillment.

Premise 3: It's all about trust. Trust is one of those concepts that we rarely talk about, except when it is damaged or absent. However, it is a critical feature in any organization that claims to engage in communal learning. Vygotsky (1978) tells us that all learning takes place in a social setting. That social setting is comprised of a series of interlocking and interdependent relationships and it is within those relationships that learning takes place. We will examine both informational and transformational learning and attempt to identify the conditions under which each is likely to occur.

Premise 4: It's all about de-privatized practice. We need to de-privatize and de-compartmentalize our professional practice. We need to negotiate right-to-trespass agreements, to cross frontiers and boundaries, de-mystify our practice and build on classroom success in a systemic manner. We need to capture what teachers do to become self-directed learners and apply this systematically and coherently in our schools.

We also need to examine the role of feedback – the breakfast of champions and losers – in adult professional learning. When handled effectively, feedback can produce remarkably enhanced performance. However, feedback is often casual and lacking in intentionality. The result can be very injurious to relationships and future learning.

Premise 5: It's all about the conversation. Conversation is our primary meaning-making tool. We engage in it regularly, but rarely deconstruct and analyze what makes a 'conversation that truly matters'. In chapter five, we will share some research and observations from our personal experience about transformational conversations and why school leaders need to become more skilled at facilitating them.

Premise 6: It's all about coherence. There is a great deal in education that has become insanely complicated – take curriculum development for example. What teachers want, need and deserve is a simple (but not simplistic) system that is explicitly connected with everything else having at the heart of the pattern a clear definition of learning (Bartlett, 2013).

Premise 7: It's all about differentiation. As we have said before, in learning, one size can never fit all. Differentiation or personalized learning (we will use the terms interchangeably) is the norm in high quality and improving schools. We need to determine the readiness level of the student in the classroom, what Vygotsky (1978) called the 'zone of proximal development (ZPD)', and then pitch the challenge just right. However, when we deal with adult differentiation, the locus of control and responsibility for identifying the ZPD shifts with respect to the level of self-direction the teacher has developed. This will be explored in some depth in chapter seven.

Premise 8: It's all about reclaiming our profession. Somewhere along the line, the teaching profession has permitted its core identity to be hijacked. In many parts of the Western world, teaching is not a respected profession. We have allowed a steady barrage of criticism and mockery to undermine our collective self-confidence and we have become reactive as opposed to proactive. We have allowed politicians (well meaning and otherwise), the media, and community leaders to dictate our values and beliefs and, to a large extent hold us accountable for decisions that are not our own.

It is not enough to bemoan this present state of affairs. We have allowed it to happen and so are part of the problem. We need now to become part of the solution; our children are at stake. We need to reclaim our profession, one teacher at a time.

Time for a change

There is no question in our minds that many, perhaps most schools, are not nearly reaching their potential to be places of collective learning. We also believe that one of the greatest impediments to realizing this vision is the deleterious effects of traditional systems of teacher evaluation.

Rather than infantilizing teachers, we need to empower them. Costa, Garmston and Zimmerman (2014) write,

The ultimate purpose of any supervision system must be to support teachers in becoming self-supervising, self-evaluating and self-modifying. (p. xii)

It is indeed time for a change...

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