

AGENDA

Supporting Educators in Their Practice Early Stage Educator Effective System Development

April 8, 2014

Face-to Face Meeting #1

10:15 – 11:45 a.m.

Facilitator: Bernie Sorenson

Introduction & Logistics (15 minutes)

- Who am I?
- Agreements
- Acknowledgements – Why are We Here
- Outcomes for Session
- Opening Activity- *Comfort Gram*

Vision & Goals - Effective Educator Evaluation Systems: Best Practice (40 min.)

- Vision For Quality Teaching (5 min. silent, 10 group stickies activity min., 5 min. walk about)
- Best Practice Research Block Party – (15min.)
- Alaska State Statutes & Regulations – Supporting Best Practice, But Not Enough (10 min.)

Build Your Own Evaluation 1st Draft - Discussion Protocol (45 min.)

Reflections

Closing - Exit Ticket

 Northwest Comprehensive Center
at Education Northwest



SERRC - Alaska's Educational Resource Center
is celebrating 35 years of service.

Building Consensus & Constructive Dialogue

Although a decision on the many components of a teacher evaluation system will take time, it is still a goal to come to consensus on the topics discussed and the next steps.

The table below gives some clarifications on consensus building.

Building consensus means...	Building consensus does not mean...
* All group members contribute.	* All group members agree.
* Everyone's opinion is heard and encouraged.	* The result is everyone's first choice.
* Differences are viewed as helpful.	* There are no differences in opinion.
* Everyone can paraphrase the pros and cons.	* Everyone possesses a complete understanding.
* Those who disagree agree to give the group's choice a try, at least for a certain period of time.	* Conflict and resistance will be overcome immediately.
* All members share the final decision.	* All members lend their full-fledged support for the decision.
* All members agree to take responsibility for implementing the final decision.	* All members must advocate for the decision.

Source: Adapted from Arbuckle and Murray (1989), as cited in Regional Educational Laboratory Network Program (1995, p. 15-24).

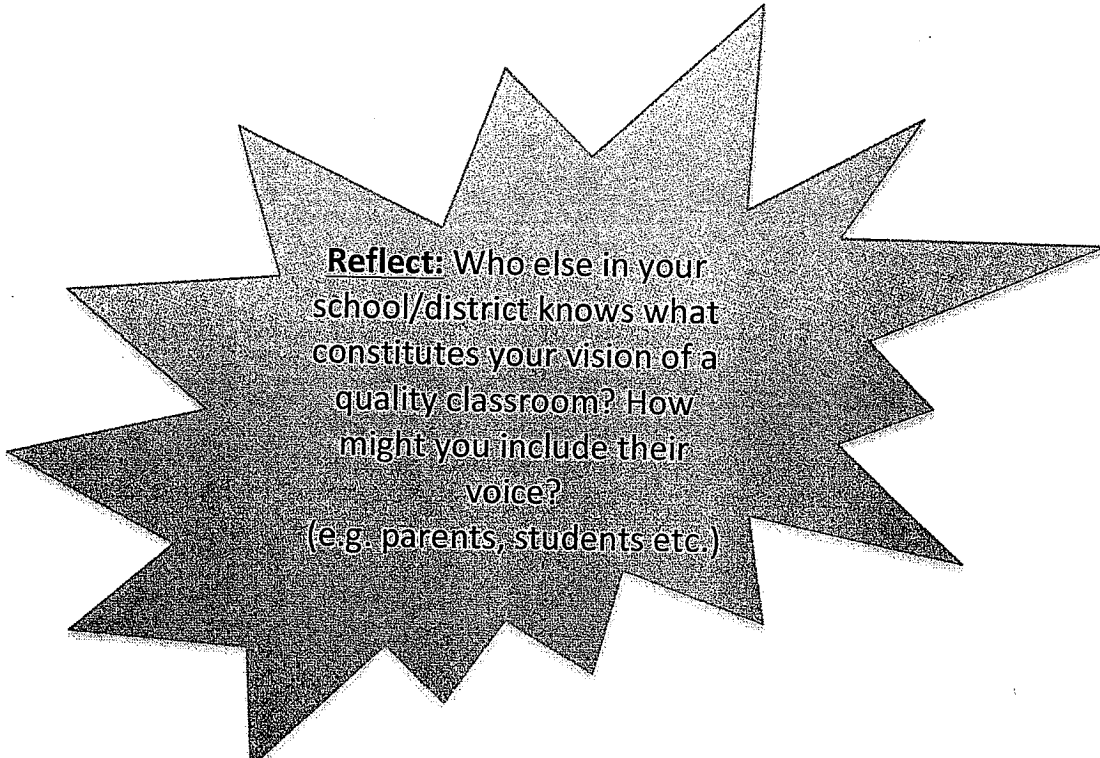
General Strategies for Constructive Dialogue

The following tips are intended to help us avoid common pitfalls that could interfere with building constructive, open dialogue on hot-button issues:

- * Encourage participants to ask questions.
- * Practice using "wait time": Provide three to five seconds of silence after asking a question or starting a discussion.
- * Acknowledge all responses either passively or actively and with a neutral demeanor.
- * Paraphrase each question or discussion topic instead of merely repeating it.
- * Withhold criticism when responding.
- * Note to Facilitator: Share key findings and "learning points" on chart paper to demonstrate the good progress taking place.
- * Make sure to move the conversation forward through healthy discussion; avoid arguing/debating over the same topic for too long.

What Is Your Vision for Teaching?

- ✓ Visualize the type of teacher you want for your students/district – those folks you want to invest time and energy in developing and supporting.
- ✓ What are the characteristics of this “quality teacher,” who is going to promote increased student achievement for all students and who will make us proud to say they are one of our teachers/colleagues?
 - Write a few ideas in each box
- ✓ **Check** those that you would consider baseline – or essential for ALL classrooms
- ✓ **Star** those that you would consider ideal



Reflect: Who else in your school/district knows what constitutes your vision of a quality classroom? How might you include their voice?
(e.g. parents, students etc.)

What Is Your Vision for Teaching?

Physical Set-up & Walls	Student Engagement
Learning Goals	Instructional Strategies
Affective Domain/Classroom Climate	Instructional Materials
Professional Responsibilities	Individual Student Learning Growth
Family/Community Engagement	Local Context/Knowledge (Cultural Standards)

Thiagi on

Learning Theories:

14 Things Thiagi Wants You To Know About Learning

Excerpted from "Who Needs Learning Theory Anyway?" by Ron Zemke, *TRAINING*, September 2002, pages 86-91.

Sivasailam "Thiagi" Thiagarajan reaches even further for his models and theories. "I want my students to know the central ideas from all the great theories," he says. "We even talk about the '14 Laws,' the commonalities that come from this huge body of work. But I remind my students to reach beyond the psychologists and their theories as well. I ask them to look at the practice of magic and improvisational theater and even to stand-up comedy to learn how people hold an audience's attention and make an impact."

Which theory or theories of learning should guide your work? That will depend upon your situation—the people you serve, the nature of the skills they must master and the context in which they are to perform—and, frankly, your comfort with the tenets of and confidence in those theories. But make no mistake, social psychology pioneer Kurt Lewin's reply to the question of why he labored so hard over his theories is as true for us as it was for him: "There is nothing so practical as a good theory."

14 Things Thiagi Wants You To Know About Learning

Cutting through the clutter and getting to the useful stuff in the ever-increasing body of learning theory and research can be, and is, daunting. Sivasailam Thiagarajan, Thiagi to friends and admirers, has distilled from that mass of knowledge, wisdom, obfuscation and speculation 14 pithy "Laws of Learning" that we all would do well to post on the cubical wall and read anew every morning before attempting any act of instruction, facilitation or instructional design.

APPLIES TO ALL LIVING CREATURES:

1. Law of reinforcement: *Learners repeat behaviors that are rewarded.*

APPLIES TO ALL HUMAN BEINGS:

2. Law of individual differences: *Different people learn in different ways.*
3. Law of emotional learning: *Events that are accompanied by intense emotions result in long-lasting learning.*
4. Law of practice and feedback: *Learners cannot master skills without repeated practice and relevant feedback.*
5. Law of active learning: *Active responding produces more effective learning than passive listening or reading.*
6. Law of response level: *Learners master skills and knowledge at the level at which they are required to respond during the learning process.*
7. Law of learning domains: *Different types of learning require different types of strategies.*

APPLIES TO ADULT LEARNERS:

8. Law of previous experience: *New learning should be linked to (and build upon) the experiences of the learner.*
9. Law of relevance: *Effective learning is relevant to the learner's life and work.*
10. Law of self direction: *Most adults are self-directed learners.*
11. Law of expectations: *Learners' reactions to training sessions are shaped by their expectations related to the content area, training format, fellow participants and the trainer.*
12. Law of self image: *Adult learners use a variety of standards to judge their learning.*
13. Law of multiple criteria: *Adult learners use a variety of standards to judge their learning experiences and accomplishments.*
14. Law of alignment: *Adult learners require the training objectives, content, activities, and assessment techniques to be aligned to each other.*

Keeping Improvement in Mind

Paul Mielke and Tony Frontier

Comprehensive teaching frameworks can help schools empower teachers, not just judge them.

A familiar scenario plays out in schools across the United States each year. It is the final day of standardized testing. Students dutifully fill in the bubbles and respond to a few open-ended questions. Later that day, the tests are collected and sent away to be evaluated. By the end of the school year, a document will arrive in each student's mailbox containing a judgment on his or her competence in several domains.

Although teachers and administrators understand the need for accountability, they often question the benefits of such large-scale standardized student assessments. After all, accountability testing takes time away from student learning; the results provide little information that students can use directly to improve; and the process forces students to passively accept a decontextualized judgment that is handed down from an outside source on the basis of a small sample of their performance.

Unfortunately, we are in danger of duplicating this process, with all its flaws, in our current push for more rigorous teacher evaluation. Like high-stakes student assessment, high-stakes teacher evaluation threatens to be an occasional event that is disconnected from day-to-day teaching and learning, producing results that do not help teachers improve their performance and placing teachers in a passive role as recipients of external judgment.

Using Teaching Frameworks to Empower Teachers

For several years, we've worked with teams of teachers, helping them develop their capacity for self-assessment using two prominent, comprehensive frameworks for effective practice: Robert Marzano's Art and Science of Teaching model (2007) and Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching (2007). Both of these models systematically describe various components of research-based effective classroom practices. Through this work, we've come to understand that as valuable as such comprehensive frameworks can be, it's not enough to simply put them in place as rubrics that supervisors use to rate teachers' effectiveness. Just as students need to be actively involved and empowered as partners in classroom assessment (Stiggins, 2004), teachers need to be actively involved and empowered as leaders in the formative use of the tools that will be the basis for their own summative evaluation.

The most effective supervision and evaluation systems empower teachers to accurately assess their own practice and self-diagnose areas for growth. In such systems, teachers use comprehensive frameworks throughout the school year to collect data related to their teaching, reflect on their practice, and identify specific instructional strategies they can work on to improve their repertoire of skills.

The school culture in such systems supports teachers by recognizing the need for improvement as an asset rather than a liability. Here are some of the beliefs that are central to such supervision and evaluation systems.

Comprehensive teaching frameworks are not just for evaluation.

In the classroom, effective teachers use rubrics not just as summative tools to determine students' grades, but also as exemplars that they apply across entire units to guide students' efforts to improve. The language of the rubrics becomes the language of the curriculum.

In the same way, both supervisors and teachers need to use comprehensive teaching frameworks not just for summative teacher evaluation, but rather to guide improvement throughout the school year. Used in this way, these frameworks can create a common language for practice, focusing teachers' collaborative efforts to identify and implement specific research-based instructional strategies and behaviors.

We need to transcend the common practice of making administrators the primary users of comprehensive teaching frameworks. At a minimum, teachers can use comprehensive frameworks to guide their daily practice—for example, to assist in lesson planning, prioritize strategies for whole-group instruction, or select alternative strategies for students who require more challenge or support.

In several schools and districts where we have worked, teachers have used the framework as the starting point of a comprehensive self-assessment process; they identify specific skills for improvement and obtain feedback through such activities as peer observation, video analysis, peer discussion, and student surveys. The opportunity to self-reflect and engage in professional discussions with peers helps teachers clarify how they should invest their efforts to grow in the profession.

Expertise only emerges through deliberate practice.

Becoming an expert in a complex field like teaching is difficult and elusive. We believe that developing expertise is *the* central goal of a quality supervisory and evaluation system.

Anders Ericsson, widely credited as the world's foremost expert on expertise, describes how people develop expertise through deliberate practice—concentrating on carefully selected, specific aspects of performance and refining them through repetition and response to feedback (Ericsson, Charness, Feltovich, & Hoffman, 2006). For a musician, this could mean focusing on a specific passage of music for an extended time. For a teacher, this could mean focusing on a specific skill, such as asking higher-level questions or increasing wait time.

Like a veteran concert violinist who is still expanding his or her repertoire, a teacher can engage in deliberate practice throughout his or her career and still have areas to improve. There is no shame in a violinist acknowledging the need to practice for dozens of hours and hundreds of repetitions to learn to play a new piece of music. Why, then, are we reluctant to acknowledge that a teacher may take dozens of hours to learn a new instructional strategy? As a profession, we need to transcend the idea that only teachers who are struggling need an improvement plan. If the school views the need for improvement as a liability, why would teachers ever acknowledge their need for deliberate practice?

In working with schools on supervision and self-assessment, we've found it is essential to begin with an introduction to the research on expertise. This ensures that supervisors and teachers see terms like *practice, growth, improvement, learning, and effort* as assets to embrace rather than as liabilities to avoid. In this frame, we understand that becoming an expert teacher is not a gift bestowed on a chosen few but a journey through a challenging, thorny pathway that requires constant pruning. As one teacher wrote after engaging in a self-assessment process,

You see movies like *Freedom Writers* and you get this idea that there are magical teachers who come in and do this amazing job, and all the kids are enraptured with learning. Then you think, "Oh, I don't have the gift." You know what? I just need to keep working at it. ... It's really about my own commitment to growing as a professional and continuing that process indefinitely.

Supervisors are not the only source of data and feedback.

A recent study titled *The Widget Effect* (Weisberg, Sexton, Mulhern, & Keeling, 2009) identifies a lack of feedback as the primary problem with teacher supervision and evaluation systems. The authors found that "nearly three of four teachers went through the evaluation process but received no specific feedback about how to improve their practice" (p. 14). Even when supervisors do provide feedback, it is often too infrequent to improve performance.

We've frequently heard teachers express frustration when their supervisor implies there are *no* areas they need to improve. One teacher said that she felt cheated after being told for years by her supervisor that everything was fine. After engaging in a year of self-assessment that included analyzing videos of her own

teaching, she realized she had many opportunities to improve; she felt empowered by the realization that she no longer had to passively "wait for the principal to come in" and hope for meaningful feedback. Creating a system that helps teachers themselves generate continual, accurate feedback can enable them to improve. Once a school has established a shared understanding of a model of effective teaching, individual teachers can use a wide range of approaches to generate and receive feedback without the involvement of a supervisor (Marzano, Frontier, & Livingston, 2011). These approaches include student surveys that ask students about the frequency of effective teaching behaviors, self-directed video analyses of specific components of one's own teaching, collegial dialogues, and instructional rounds that enable teachers to reflect on visits to other teachers' classrooms.

Honoring adults as self-directed learners encourages them to tackle more rigorous improvement goals.

Of course, teachers cannot direct all components of a supervision and evaluation system. But allowing teachers to generate data about their own teaching, identify their own areas of focus, and establish their own improvement goals can increase teacher motivation and engagement. When teachers participate in these self-assessment protocols, they are remarkably adept at identifying specific areas of need and pathways to improvement (Mielke, 2012).

Observation and evaluation by a supervisor may take place three times a year or even less frequently. In contrast, self-directed improvement becomes a habit of mind that guides teachers' instructional decisions every day. After engaging in a variety of self-assessment strategies, one teacher wrote, "I think any of those things individually might have had a minor impact on my teaching, but the peer observation, combined with the video observation, combined with the group discussion ... together provided a really powerful experience in terms of being able to say, 'There are some really specific things I can do right now, and some things I can do down the road.'"

For most teachers who engage in these processes, this awareness results in a set of specific—and ambitious—improvement goals. When adult learners are empowered to objectively analyze and understand their own practice and have a clear vision of where they can improve, they are intrinsically motivated to embark on a pathway that leads to expertise.

Beyond High-Stakes Evaluation

If we use a research-based teaching framework for summative teacher evaluation but fail to use it to support teacher's efforts to become reflective practitioners on a pathway toward expertise, we are trying to obtain ideal results by using only half of the equation. Three days of high-stakes testing does not improve student learning, and three days of high-stakes evaluation does not improve teacher performance. Only by empowering teachers as the central users of comprehensive teaching frameworks can we ensure that the evaluation system improves teacher effectiveness, rather than merely measuring it.

References

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Build Your Own Evaluation - Take #1

Based on work from: Everyone at the Table

It's your turn to collectively build the ideal evaluation system. In the following table, which components would you select as part of the ideal evaluation? Is anything missing? Which are required by state statute and regulations?

Component	Essential to Have	Important But Not Essential	Not Important	Bad Idea
<i>Formal Observations</i>				
Teacher/Peer observations				
External evaluator observations				
Impromptu walk-through observations				
<i>Student, parent, community surveys</i>				
Teacher portfolios				
<i>Professional growth plans</i>				
Video recording of classes				
<i>Student Learning Measures</i>				
<i>A four-point evaluation scale (Distinguished, Proficient, Needs Improvement, Unsatisfactory)</i>				
Performance bonuses				
<i>Targeted professional development</i>				
<i>Useful, critical feedback</i>				
Public praise				
Denial of tenure for new teachers with poor evaluations				
Counseling out of the profession for teachers with poor evaluations over multiple years				

Build Your Own Evaluation - Take #1

Now that you have considered what should be included in your evaluation system, discuss how they should be included in the final summative evaluation of the educator.

Teacher Evaluation Component	Key Thoughts
Principal observations	
Teacher observations	
External evaluator observations	
Impromptu walk-through observations	
Student surveys	
Teacher portfolios	
Professional growth plans	
Video recording of classes	
Student test score growth	
Teacher attendance and contributions to school community	

Build Your Own Evaluation --

Key Decisions	What Teachers Think	Action Needed
<p>How will we define educator effectiveness?</p>	<p>How should teachers, principals and others be involved?</p> <p>How do we communicate this back to our community - who should this be communicated with?</p> <p>What are some key considerations that must be included?</p>	
<p>What are the primary goals of the teacher evaluation system?</p>	<p>How should teachers, principals and others be involved?</p> <p>What are some key considerations that must be included?</p>	
<p>How will we communicate about policy changes and incorporate feedback on an ongoing basis?</p>	<p>Who should decide this?</p> <p>How should teachers, principals and others be involved?</p> <p>What are some key considerations that must be included?</p>	
<p>As we implement the new system, what are our data infrastructure needs?</p>	<p>Who should decide this?</p> <p>How should teachers, principals and others be involved?</p> <p>What are some key considerations that must be included?</p>	
<p>What policy/contractual changes are required by the new system?</p>	<p>Who should decide this?</p> <p>How should teachers,</p>	

Build Your Own Evaluation --

	principals and others be involved? What are some key considerations that must be included?	
Is the system aligned with state, federal, or professional requirements?	Who should decide this? How should teachers, principals and others be involved? What are some key considerations that must be included?	