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A Study Comparing Teacher Evaluation Methods at Selected Suburban Chicago High Schools: Traditional Versus Alternative

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

**A STUDY COMPARING TEACHER EVALUATION METHODS
AT SELECTED SUBURBAN CHICAGO HIGH SCHOOLS:
TRADITIONAL VERSUS ALTERNATIVE**

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND POLICY STUDIES

BY

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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

MAY, 1998

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Loyola University Chicago

A STUDY COMPARING TEACHER EVALUATION METHODS

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A total of 40 teachers and administrators were interviewed from five selected suburban Chicago high schools. The data gathered from the interviews were analyzed within each school and between

schools. Background information was collected on the evaluation methods through school documents.

Based upon the data obtained, a conclusion of the study was that in general, teachers and administrators believe that professional development is most likely to occur under the alternative forms of evaluation when the teacher is involved in the development of the process.

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ABSTRACT

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The system of regular teacher evaluation by school administrators has been modified in some schools to incorporate new theories of teaching and learning through professional growth. Still, many schools have kept the traditional evaluation methods based primarily on clinical observations and conducted by administrators. Whether announced in advance or conducted without notice, teacher evaluations are an annual ritual in schools. For the most part, administrators consider evaluating a chore. Teachers are not enthusiastic about evaluations either. Most report that they dread seeing their principal come into their classroom carrying a clipboard.¹

Teacher evaluation is defined in the literature as either a process to improve faculty performance or a process that assists in making personnel decisions.² Disagreement in the literature centers

¹Susan Black, "How Teachers are Reshaping Evaluation Procedures," *Educational Leadership* 51, no. 2 (1993): 38.

²Thomas McGreal, *Successful Teacher Evaluation* (Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1983), 2.

on whether one evaluation program can serve both to improve performance and to help personnel decisions. This illustrates the need for clarifying the purpose of evaluation, especially for the participants in the process. Studies have found that most faculty members perceive evaluation differently from administrators.³ Faculty see evaluation as primarily in the service of making personnel decisions while most administrators consider evaluation primarily a faculty-development process. Yet the teaching profession overall considers evaluation an integral part of professional growth, and the administration looks to evaluation data as evidence in accountability debates.⁴ Such a lack of clarity about the purpose of evaluation often results in problems with communication and cooperation between the teacher and the administrator.

Currently, teachers are being urged to move from explicit instruction models to more constructivist teaching, with students actively involved and with more complex outcomes. Teachers are being pressed to develop alternative sources of assessment to get

³John Neal, "Faculty Evaluation: Its Purposes and Effectiveness," (ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education, Washington, D.C. Reproduction Service No. ED 308 800).

⁴Joan Barrett, "The Evaluation of Teachers," ERIC Digest 12. (ERIC Clearinghouse on Teacher Education, Washington, D.C., Reproduction Service

richer pictures of students' performance. Yet administrators continue to evaluate tenured "successful" teachers in the same method as twenty years ago.⁵ Teacher evaluation methods used in the past do not fit the way schools are now and the way teachers are conducting their classes.⁶

Dr. Tom McGreal describes new methods in teacher evaluations that are considered "professional growth tracks" for tenured, experienced teachers. One track is based on the recognition that it is absolutely essential for people to set their own goals. In this track, teachers create professional development plans which are long-term projects developed and carried out by those teachers. A second track is to put a team together and devise a professional development plan for the team. Once administrators agree to either plan, they tend to become facilitators, coaches, and resource providers. The third track is the assistance track. This is for the teacher who may be having trouble. If the administrator feels there is a problem, he has the right to talk with the teacher and set up a classroom visit. This track is an effort to show that the people in the district care about the

No. ED 278 657).

⁵Ron Brandt, "On a New Direction for Teacher Evaluation: A Conversation with Tom McGreal," *Educational Leadership* 53, no. 6 (1996): 30-33.

⁶Ibid.

teacher and want to help before any kind of legal action is even considered regarding employment.⁷

The evaluation programs of teachers can result in strong professional development programs and continued improvement by teachers. The process needs to evolve in the same manner as instruction and assessment of students has evolved. For teachers, becoming the main focus in the evaluation process leads to enhanced skills in observation, reflection, and communication. The administrator becomes a coach and facilitator of the teacher's growth rather than strictly a decision-maker of personnel.

Linking evaluation and professional development is a difficult task for teachers and evaluators. Although there are few easy answers, evaluation has been used to work with teachers to set specific, achievable goals, provide constructive criticism and suggestions to improve weak areas and amplify strengths, and expand the number of people involved in the evaluation process. The evaluation process need not be a dead end, but can result in a professional development plan that will promote growth for the teacher, administrator, and students.

⁷Ibid.

Purpose of the Research

The primary purpose of this study was to compare traditional teacher evaluation methods and alternative teacher evaluation methods as used by selected suburban Chicago high schools. A secondary purpose of the study was to assess teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the effectiveness of the evaluation methods used in promoting professional growth.

The following questions guided the research:

- 1. What are the structures, purposes and activities of traditional teacher evaluation methods?**
- 2. What are the structures, purposes, and activities of alternative teacher evaluation methods?**
- 3. How do the perceptions of the effectiveness of traditional evaluation methods used to promote professional growth compare to the perceptions of the effectiveness of alternative evaluation methods used to promote professional growth?**

Sample

The sample population utilized was five suburban Chicago secondary schools which had evaluation plans in place that offered an alternative process in addition to the traditional process of

evaluation. Each school was represented in the study by two administrators and at least six tenured teachers. The teachers were chosen from the alternative track and from the traditional track.

Procedures for the Study

This study investigated the connection between traditional and alternative teacher evaluation methods and professional growth. The connection was studied through the application of qualitative measures developed after an analysis of the written, formal evaluation plans of selected suburban Chicago high schools. The connection was further studied through interviews with administrators and teachers selected from the secondary schools.

The following steps were used in gathering the data necessary for the completion of the study:

1. Initial requests were made to each school to participate in the study. Upon each school's approval, a copy of the school's evaluation tool was obtained. The tool was reviewed in an effort to compile data before the interview.

2. An interview lasting one to two hours per subject was conducted with each participant. During the interview, several general questions were asked of all the participants. Additional questions asked were related more specifically to the participant's

own evaluation plan. The use of an audio tape was requested. All subjects agreed to be taped. Data collection was done through the audio taping and notes taken by the investigator. The interviews were completed between October, 1996 and February, 1997.

3. Following the interview, data were transcribed and analyzed. A coding process followed, used to corroborate interview data with the evaluation plan and to cross-analyze responses made by the subjects. Follow-up phone interviews took place to clarify information and gather additional data.

The developed interview guide helped the investigator obtain the answers to questions which assisted in analyzing the connection between the evaluation process and professional growth (Appendix A). The process of data analysis proceeded in the following sequence. Interview tapes were reviewed and transcripts made from them. The transcripts were coded to identify themes, patterns, comparisons, and contrasts. A matrix containing the data was established to better identify the emergence of a pattern. Upon completion of the data analysis, a narrative was developed reflecting the connections among the interview data, the evaluation plan data, and the theoretical framework described in the reviewed literature.

Limitations of the Study

This dissertation recognized the following limitations to the study:

1. The study was limited by the selection process of the public secondary schools included. The sample was limited to public secondary schools which offer alternative evaluation plans to teachers.
2. Some administrators, as well as teachers, may have been reluctant to be completely open to an outside observer about their evaluation processes. Their responses may not fully reflect their school practices.
3. The teachers interviewed for the research were chosen by the administrators. Their perceptions may not reflect the overall perceptions of the majority of the teachers in the school.

Glossary of Terms

1. **Traditional model of evaluation** - The traditional or standard model of evaluation, used primarily for accountability purposes. It is a formal and structured process that is designed to measure minimum competencies.⁸

⁸D.L. Haefele, "Evaluating Teachers: A Call for Change," *Journal of Personnel*

2. **Alternative model of evaluation** - A model for evaluation based on a goal-setting process that encourages reflective practices and professional growth and development.
3. **Professional growth** - The transformation of knowledge into the development of the individual; a movement to a new level of understanding;⁹ performing at the boundaries of one's abilities in ways that test and push back personal limits.¹⁰
4. **Formative evaluation** - An evaluation process designed to improve teacher performance by providing opportunities for growth and feedback on progress.
5. **Summative evaluation** - An evaluation process designed to collect data to assist in making personnel decisions on hiring, firing, and tenure.
6. **Clinical observation** - A structured evaluation method consisting of a pre-conference, observation, and post-conference between the teacher and the evaluator.

Evaluation in Education 7, no. 1 (1993): 21-31.

⁹Daniel L. Duke, "Removing Barriers to Professional Growth," *Phi Delta Kappan* 74, no. 9 (1993): 702.

¹⁰National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk*, (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1983), 6.

7. **Explicit instruction** - Instruction in which content is explained or told to the students and in which the students are strictly receivers of the information.
8. **Constructive instruction** - Instruction in which content is delivered using inference. The teacher leads the students through the content by having the students use discovery methods.
9. **Professional growth tracks** - A series of options from which the teacher can choose in lieu of the traditional model of evaluation. The tracks are more formative in nature, promoting the professional growth of the teacher.

Organization of the Study

This study is divided into four chapters.

Chapter One provides an introduction to the purpose of the study including the methodology of qualitative research used in the study.

A review of the related literature and research is addressed in Chapter Two and includes information about teacher evaluation methods and professional growth of teachers.

Chapter Three details the presentation and the analysis of the data gathered through interviews with the teachers and

administrators. Analysis and comparisons within and between the two groups are addressed.

The conclusions of the study and recommendations for further research are presented in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND RESEARCH

Introduction

Teachers have always been informally evaluated. The pupils of Socrates most likely had opinions about his teaching skills. Most parents today know what their children think about their teachers. Teacher evaluation is part of the profession just as assessing students is a part of the learning process. Research suggests that during the time students are in school, learning quality is affected more by the efforts of the certified and classified staff than any other variable.¹¹ In his discussion of the impact of evaluation on overall school quality and individual growth, Richard Stiggins emphasized the importance of focusing on growth-oriented systems:

Accountability systems strive to affect school quality by protecting students from incompetent staff. However, because nearly all staff are at least minimally competent, the accountability system directly affects only a very few staff who are not competent. Growth-oriented systems, on the other hand, have the potential of affecting all staff, not just those

¹¹D. Berliner, "Simple views of effective teaching and a simple theory of classroom instruction," in *Talk to Teachers* (New York: Random House, 1987).

few who are having problems.¹²

History and Purpose of Teacher Evaluation

The first coordinated attempt to formally assess teachers and reward them accordingly occurred in England during the late Victorian era. The evaluation method was referred to as payment by results. If pupils successfully performed the standards set, the teacher's income was increased. The process was monitored by Her Majesty's Inspectors until 1902 when parliament brought the practice to an end.¹³

In 1925 a National Education Association report stated that 75 percent of school systems in large cities in the United States were using various forms of teacher efficiency ratings. High among the criteria used to evaluate teachers were instructional techniques, professional attitude, and maintenance of discipline records. Structure and efficiency were the emphasis of the evaluations. The teacher ratings movement paralleled the scientific approach to

¹²R. Stiggins, "Teacher Evaluation: Accountability and Growth, Different Purposes," *NASSP Bulletin* 70, (1986): 51-58.

¹³Anthony J. Shinkfield and Daniel L. Stufflebeam, *Teacher Evaluation: Guide to Effective Practice* (Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1995), 11.

management used in industry at the time. Structure and efficiency were also the emphasis of company owners to develop a quality product. During the 1930s the famous Hawthorne studies conducted by Mayo introduced the human relations era. Conforming to standardized expectations and plans of an organization gave way to interpersonal relationships and the concept that increased productivity stemmed from this source. In education more emphasis was put on the professional growth of the teacher to enhance instruction of the students. It may be possible to draw a historic parallel between the scientific and human relations dichotomy in management and the teacher evaluation approaches in education. One of the major problems that exists today with the purpose of teacher evaluations is whether to decide if the outcomes lead to conformation with organizational standards or to teacher professional development based on effective interactions with students. The former gives emphasis to organizational growth while the latter increases student learning as a result of teacher development.¹⁴

During the 1960s and 1970s teacher evaluation grew in importance. Partially due to public demand for accountability in

¹⁴Ibid., 13.

education, interest in competency-based teacher education and evaluation resulted in a shift of emphasis from continuing professional growth, a result of the human relations era, to the quality of classroom teaching and student learning. Evaluating skilled teachers on the same set of basic teaching techniques became the chief focus of attention in determining the competency of teachers. Emphasis was placed on teacher accountability. In 1970, C.R. Ingils analyzed samples of teacher appraisal programs from 70 school districts in 38 states. He discovered the following commonality of procedure and purpose: to improve quality of instruction, to assist the teacher in areas that need improvement, and to protect the competent teacher and eliminate the incompetent teacher.¹⁵

Educators in the 1980s recognized that professional growth had ceased to be a main concern in the teaching profession. Accountability and competence were the foci of the evaluation methods used by school districts. The most significant educational document to confront educators and the general public during this

¹⁵C.R. Ingils, "Let's do away with Teacher Evaluation," in *Teacher Evaluation: Guide to Effective Practice*, ed. Anthony J. Shinkfield and Daniel L. Stufflebeam (Boston, 1995), 15.

period was *A Nation At Risk*, published by the National Commission on Excellence in Education in 1983. This publication gave the American public a heightened awareness that reform in education was essential. Much of *A Nation At Risk* centered on the need to improve teacher performance, qualifications of those entering the profession, and retention of the best teachers. By 1983, 98 percent of school districts had some form of teacher evaluation model in use.¹⁶ By 1984, 46 states had a law or administrative regulation mandating the evaluations of teachers. The predominant number of these states included professional development of teachers as a purpose of evaluation.¹⁷ The 1990s have brought major efforts to revise teacher evaluation policies in many states.¹⁸ Professional growth has again become a focus in teacher evaluation.

Teacher evaluation can be successful with a clear sense of the goal or purpose for the evaluation. Most teacher evaluation systems intend to reach two goals. One is the support of personnel decisions. In this sense, evaluations serve the purpose of accountability.

¹⁶Ibid., 23.

¹⁷Ibid., 29.

¹⁸Daniel L. Duke, *Barriers to Professional Growth*, 702-703.

Teachers are accountable for demonstrating minimum levels of competency in their jobs. Districts are accountable for protecting the due process rights of the teachers and for conveying to the public the image of rigorous personnel management.¹⁹ It is a summative process that assists in making personnel decisions.

A second goal for teacher evaluation is the improvement of instruction by promoting professional development of teachers. In this sense, observations and evaluations of teacher performance are conducted to (a) stimulate the professional growth of individual teachers and (b) promote overall school improvement through the collective development of teachers as a group.²⁰ It is a formative process designed to improve faculty performance.

Both goals are equally important. State laws and collective bargaining agreements require evaluation for personnel management purposes. It also makes good sense to identify teachers who are not doing the job and encourage them to improve or ask them to leave. However, too often the accountability-oriented system focuses solely on those who are least competent and, as a result, others who wish to

¹⁹Daniel L. Duke and Richard J. Stiggins, *Teacher Evaluation: Five Keys to Growth* (Washington D.C.: National Education Association, 1986),14.

²⁰Ibid., 15.

continue professional development are short-changed.²¹ The conflict between the two goals of accountability and professional growth has existed throughout the development of the teacher evaluation process.

Disagreement in the literature centers on whether one evaluation program can serve both to improve performance and to help in making personnel decisions. Traditionally, local school systems have emphasized accountability of teachers and the summative function of teacher evaluation. The Illinois School Code states the purpose of teacher evaluation as follows:

...to improve the educational services of the elementary and secondary public schools of Illinois by requiring that all certified school district employees be evaluated on a periodic basis and that the evaluations result in remedial action being taken when deemed necessary.²²

Accountability is the focus of that purpose. Yet the traditional view of accountability has increasingly come into conflict with the professional growth view. The professional growth view has been encouraged by such factors as the expanded number of tenured teachers, the increased professionalism of teacher-administrator

²¹Ibid.

²²Illinois Association of School Boards, *1996 Illinois School Code* (Minnesota, West Publishing Co., 1996).

groups, and the increased visibility of growth-oriented supervisory models of evaluation.²³ Also, research has shown that, among the participants in the evaluation process, there is a lack of clarity as to the purpose of teacher evaluation. Nearly all the current works on evaluation indicate that teachers and administrators believe the prime purpose of evaluation should be the improvement of the teaching/learning process.²⁴ A Texas study found 62 percent of the principals surveyed said that instructional improvement was the actual purpose. In the same study more than 65 percent of Texas teachers saw the renewal or cancellation of contracts as the real purpose.²⁵ This discrepancy over the purpose of evaluation has caused problems in communication and cooperation between teachers and administration. E. S. Hickcox wrote:

If this is agreed on (evaluation being the improvement of the teaching/learning process), then the whole process of evaluation should be directed in a particular way. I want to give a warning in this regard, to point out a real dilemma. Instruction and learning occur in the interaction between teacher and student. Anything else becomes irrelevant and cannot be included in the evaluative process. What happens

²³McGreal, 2.

²⁴ William Shreeve, "Evaluating Teacher Evaluation: Who is Responsible for Teacher Probation?," *NASSP Bulletin* 77, no. 551 (1993): 11.

²⁵Ibid.

then, if the teacher is not a good school citizen, is in conflict with administrators, does not turn in reports on time, is careless about attending meetings? From the administrative point of view, behaviors in these non-instructional areas are important for the life of the school, even though they are not directly related to teaching. I believe this issue must be discussed, and either the interpretation of what is meant by the improvement of instruction broadened, or else the purpose itself must go beyond the improvement of instruction.²⁶

The cornerstone of any evaluation must be its purpose. The purpose of evaluation shapes the questions asked, the sources of data utilized, the depth of analysis, and the dissemination of findings.²⁷ Evaluation should also be an ongoing process. A continuous process can provide information on the following: how well the philosophy and goals of the program are being achieved; the effectiveness of each person on the staff; knowledge of methods and materials; personal attributes, enthusiasm, poise, and ability to adjust to frustrations and cooperate with colleagues.²⁸

²⁶E. S. Hickcox, "Dilemmas in Teacher Evaluation." *Resources in Education* (1982). ERIC Document Reproduction Services No. ED 224 105, quoted in William Shreeve, "Evaluating Teacher Evaluation: Who is Responsible for Teacher Probation?", *NASSP Bulletin* 77, no. 551 (1993): 11-12.

²⁷John E. Neal, "Faculty Evaluation: Its Purposes and Effectiveness," *ERIC DIGEST* (1988). ERIC Document Reproduction Service No ED308800.

²⁸Peggy G. Perkins and Jeffrey I. Gelfer, "Portfolio Assessment of Teachers," *The Clearing House* 66, no. 4 (1993): 235.

Descriptions of Evaluation Methods

The traditional methods of evaluation of teachers in most cases follow a common law model cycle. The model is a process of overseeing and managing all of the important work responsibilities of employees. In the case of teachers, this includes their instructional activities as well as their out-of-class responsibilities.

The *Illinois School Code* states:

The evaluation of teachers...shall include at least the following components: (a) personal observation of the teacher in the classroom by a district administrator, qualified under Section 24A-3, unless the teacher has no classroom duties. (b) consideration of the teacher's attendance, planning and instructional methods, classroom management, where relevant, and competency in the subject matter taught, where relevant. (c) rating of the teacher's performance as excellent, satisfactory, or unsatisfactory. (d) specification as to the teacher's strengths and weaknesses, with supporting reasons for the comments made. (e) inclusion of a copy of the evaluation in the teacher's personnel file and provision of a copy to the teacher.²⁹

Though school codes may vary among states, most evaluation methods include these "common laws." The emphasis is on minimal competency and accountability of the teacher, with little or no mention of professional growth. The traditional method of teacher

²⁹Illinois Association of School Boards, 302.

evaluation is a summative process. The tools used to collect data are structured. A few examples are the checklist, frequency charts, short shots, script taping, and anecdotal records. The data collected are analyzed by the evaluator to determine whether minimum performance standards are met and used to weed out incompetent teachers. The need for accurate documentation is important for the teacher's rating and/or dismissal.

The traditional method is usually set up by using the pre-conference, formal observation, and post-conference cycle. During the pre-conference, teachers are told what behaviors will be observed. Data are collected at the formal observation. The data are then shared and discussed with the teacher during the post-conference. The evaluator also gives the teacher the areas of improvement. This process is the same for all teachers at every level of experience including tenured and non-tenured teachers. It is also a process that occurs on a yearly basis for non-tenured teachers and every two years for tenured teachers, with very little carry-over from year to year. The standard characteristics of the common law or traditional models are the following: high supervisor-low teacher involvement, evaluation seen as synonymous with observation,

similar procedures for tenured and non-tenured teachers, major emphasis on summative evaluation, existence of standardized criteria, and comparative judgments made between and among teachers.³⁰

Many traditional methods of evaluation have tried to incorporate a formative component by using a clinical supervision model. Clinical supervision is based on the concepts developed from the initial work of Cogan and Goldhammer. Cogan defines clinical supervision as follows:

Clinical supervision may be defined as the rationale and practice designed to improve the teacher's classroom performance. It takes the principal data from the events of the classroom. The analysis of these data and the relationships between teacher and supervisor form the basis of the program, procedures, and strategies designed to improve the students' learning by improving the teacher's classroom behavior.³¹

Goldhammer offers the following definition:

Given close observation, detailed observational data, face-to-face interaction between the supervisor and the teacher, and the intensity of focus that binds the two together in an intimate professional relationship, the meaning of "clinical" is pretty well filled out.³²

³⁰Thomas L. McGreal, 9-14.

³¹McGreal, 25.

³²Ibid.

Both of these definitions stress the importance of a close and intense relationship between the teacher and the supervisor. This relationship puts a heavy emphasis on a collegial rather than an authoritarian orientation. The focus is expected to be on teacher motivation and improvement rather than on quality control.³³ Pre-conferences are used to come to a common understanding between the teacher and the evaluator about what will occur and be observed during the classroom visit. The evaluator gathers data about classroom practice during this time. He then shares it with the teacher so that both parties can analyze the teaching techniques and behaviors. The goal of observation is to collect data for feedback which is given in the post-conference. The goal of feedback leads to improvement of instruction.³⁴ This process is still used as an accountability tool to decide on personnel issues.

Formative teacher evaluation has more recently been recognized as an important component of teaching improvement and teachers' professional growth. The state-mandated programs of the

³³McGreal., 25-26.

³⁴Illinois Administrators' Academy, *Teacher Observation* (Springfield, Illinois: Illinois State Board of Education, 1994), 49.

1980s eliminated many formative efforts of evaluations. The 1990s have seen an emergence of alternative and creative modes of instructional supervision that provide support and assistance for teacher development.³⁵ Recent research discusses new processes to teacher evaluations that are considered alternative methods or professional growth tracks. Evaluations place more emphasis on the professional growth of the teacher so that the students are given the most effective experiences possible and less emphasis on the accountability factors of the traditional models. When teachers participate in a growth-oriented process, they are assured that they will not be adversely affected by tackling challenging goals. Failure to achieve such goals cannot lead to negative action. Only teachers judged to be competent are permitted to participate in growth-oriented evaluation. Teachers are encouraged more by administrators to take risks. The process also frees teachers to concentrate on multi-year growth goals and allows administrators to play a more constructive role in the growth process.³⁶

³⁵Martha N. Ovando and Ben M. Harris, "Teachers' Perceptions of the Post-Observation Conference: Implications for Formative Evaluation," *Journal of Personnel Evaluation* 7, (1993): 301-310.

³⁶Duke, "Barriers to Professional Growth," 704.

Most alternative plans that are offered in a school are a part of a multi-tracked evaluation system. The non-tenured teacher follows the traditional method of clinical observation and feedback. Principals and teacher-advisors observe and meet with a non-tenured teacher to dialogue and offer feedback. Primary focus is put on the summative recommendations of the evaluator. The tenured teachers have an option of the evaluation method they would like to use. They may remain with the traditional method or choose from the options offered at their school. Some of the options are described below.

Collegial Partnership - The collegial partnership is a collaborative process that requires that "people with diverse expertise work jointly with equal status and shared commitment to achieve mutually agreed upon instructional goals".³⁷ Such a partnership includes at least ten process characteristics: mutual respect, tolerance, acceptance, commitment, courage, sharing, adhering, respecting, differentiation, and teaming.³⁸ The collegial partnership component consists of two or more teachers working

³⁷Ovando and Harris, 302.

³⁸Ibid.

together to better understand teaching and learning. Activities may include classroom observations, reviews of literature, and open discussion of various facets of their profession.³⁹ Some examples of this process are peer coaching and team projects.

Mentorship - The mentorship component is chosen by a teacher who wants to advise, support, observe, and confer with a newer teacher toward a plan of improvement.⁴⁰ Studies have documented the positive effects of mentoring on the mentors themselves.

D.F. Warring reported that mentors in one program refined their own teaching styles and strategies as a result of their involvement in a mentoring relationship.⁴¹ S.J. Odell found that mentors perceived that their experience as support persons increased their confidence, broadened their perspectives concerning the school district, helped them gain knowledge about teaching and learning, and improved their communication skills.⁴² In a preliminary analysis of a mentor

³⁹Mark A. Edwards, "Growth is the Name of the Game," *Educational Leadership* 52, no. 6 (1995): 73.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹D.F. Warring, "A Collaborative Mentor-Mentee Program Based on the Bloomington, Minnesota, Public Schools." Paper presented at the Meeting of the Association of Teacher Educators, St. Louis. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 305 328).

⁴²S.J. Odell, "A Collaborative Approach to Teacher Induction that Works," *The*

program, mentors reported that they experienced professional growth both through reflecting on their own teaching and through mentoring inexperienced teachers.⁴³

Individual Growth Plan - In this plan a teacher develops a personalized plan for continuous growth. Elements might include completing a college course, conducting action research, or implementing a new instructional program.⁴⁴

Intensive Support Component - This plan is initiated by the principal (but can be requested by a teacher) based upon written, specific reasons documenting serious problems with a teacher's performance. A clearly developed improvement plan identifies goals, available support, and time lines. The teacher has the option of requesting a support team made up of one professional selected by the teacher and one by the principal. The team offers specific mentoring and directive support. A teacher's failure to respond to the intensive support will affect his or her continued employment.⁴⁵

Journal of Staff Development 9, no. 4 (1990): 16-20.

⁴³Stephen P. Gordon, *How to Help Beginning Teachers Succeed* (Alexandria, Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1991), 29.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Ibid.

Teacher Portfolio - Portfolios have commonly been used by professionals such as writers, actors, artists, and university educators. They have provided these artists with new insights, organizational skills, and valuable analysis of their growth and development. Similarly, the teacher portfolio can include samples of an individual faculty member's work, documenting his performance and professional growth over a period of time. The teacher can choose materials that document efficacy in areas such as knowledge of content and curriculum, provision of appropriate learning experiences for students, appropriate planning, management of the environment and students' behaviors, human relationship and communication skills, recording and evaluating students' progress, use of available resources, or fulfillment of professional responsibilities. The teacher would select the best representations of his work and productivity. The teacher should be able to meet the competencies required by the principal and reflect upon his growth and progress, as well as his students' growth and progress at the end of the school year.⁴⁶

⁴⁶Perkins and Gelfer, 235-237.

Goal-Setting Model - Most practices of goal-setting are a variation of three steps: setting goals in terms of expected results, working towards these goals, and reviewing progress toward the goals. The steps taken are as follows: 1. Teacher conducts self-evaluation and identifies areas for improvement; 2. Teacher develops draft of goal-setting "contract"; 3. Teacher and evaluator confer to discuss the teacher self-evaluation information, the draft contracts, and the evaluator's perception of areas in which improvement is needed in an effort to reach agreement of the specifics of the contract; 4. Teacher and evaluator confer periodically to monitor progress toward the goals; 5. Teacher and evaluator confer near the end of the evaluation cycle to assess the extent to which the goals have been accomplished. The strengths of this model are that it promotes professional growth through correcting weaknesses and enhancing strengths, fosters a positive working relationship between teacher and evaluator, and focuses on the unique professional growth needs of each teacher. The weaknesses are that it cannot be used to rank teachers, it places too much emphasis on the attainment of measurable objectives, it is not

realistic in terms of time and resources available in most school settings, and it requires too much paper work.⁴⁷

In seeking to create a professional approach to teacher evaluation, the active involvement of teachers is very important. When teachers become an integral part of the evaluation process - by identifying needs, analyzing data, choosing their instructional strategies, and reflecting upon their work - they benefit from evaluation.

Review of Research

Nearly all the current works on evaluation indicate that teachers and administrators believe that the prime purpose of evaluation should be the improvement of instruction.⁴⁸ One way in which to support the improvement of instruction is to enhance teacher performance through professional growth. Yet studies have shown that teachers feel that the evaluation process has a purpose of either canceling or renewing contracts. Although many districts state in their contracts that for their school the primary purpose of

⁴⁷McGreal, 14-18.

⁴⁸Shreeve, 11.

evaluation is the improvement of instruction, they then establish procedures and build instruments that promote high-supervisor, low-teacher involvement, encourage or condone infrequent and unfocused observations, and force supervisors to make comparisons between teachers on rating scales based on some standardized criteria. While all of these conditions are supportive of accountability of the teacher, they do little to increase attempts at improving teacher performance.⁴⁹

Danville Public Schools Professional Growth Plan - Danville Public Schools in Virginia decided to replace their traditional teacher evaluation system with a Performance Growth Plan. This action was taken because many of their teachers stated that the traditional method of evaluation did little or nothing to improve teaching and subsequently student learning. The school developed four key principles to guide their effort. First, growth and development are best achieved in an environment marked by mutual respect and trust. Second, teachers are professional and will make responsible decisions about their growth and development. Third, teachers will provide a caring classroom environment for all students in an

⁴⁹Thomas McGreal, 8.

atmosphere that facilitates learning. Fourth, reflection and analysis are essential for the professional growth of teachers.⁵⁰ After one year of implementing their growth plan, the administrators and teachers felt they were moving in the right direction. They observed several examples of teacher improvement. For example, the high school special education department joined in a collegial partnership to improve communication with parents. An elementary teacher developed an individual growth plan which involved soliciting input from former students over a three-year period. A first-year teacher teamed with a veteran to learn more about improving classroom management. A teacher assigned to intensive support made great strides in improving her classroom management and instructional delivery despite being unwilling to participate initially. Danville believed that if they respected their teachers and allowed them to make professional choices about their growth, their students would reap the benefits and the teachers would grow.⁵¹

A Study of Evaluation Plans in Suburbia Illinois - In response to Illinois legislation, teacher evaluation plans of five school districts

⁵⁰Mark A. Edwards, 74.

⁵¹Ibid.

were studied. District plans had to be submitted to the State Board of Education for approval. Four out of the five plans stated the purpose of evaluation was the improvement of instruction. All of the plans submitted to the state followed the traditional model of evaluation. Also, all of the districts used components of the clinical supervision model in their evaluations of teachers. Focus was on teacher competencies and subject matter expertise. One district also provided a differentiated model of evaluation in which teachers had the opportunity to participate in goal-setting/self-evaluation models or peer coaching. Post conferences were conducted with each teacher; some districts required the use of a pre-conference.

Three common themes about the teacher evaluation were obvious from the districts studied. First, the time to complete an evaluation that gave an accurate and complete picture of a teacher's abilities was a concern for both administrators and teachers. Most administrators admitted to saving time in completing evaluations by minimizing the time spent in pre-observation conferencing or not even conducting a conference. Teachers chose not to participate in alternative evaluation processes such as peer coaching when made available because of the time commitment involved. The second

common concern was the dislike of the checklists. This concern was expressed most often by evaluators. They felt checklists were harsh and their exclusive use did not allow for any explanation of the markings. The final concern was the state-required rating of teachers. Both groups referred to the rating process as causing anxiety and paranoia.⁵²

North Carolina Teacher Performance Appraisal System - As part of its Quality Assurance Program, the North Carolina General Assembly enacted a bill requiring annual performance evaluation of educators in the state. In 1982, the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) was employed to identify "research-based" evaluation criteria. The skills identified were divided into five general teaching functions: management of instructional time, management of student behavior, instructional presentation, instructional monitoring, and instructional feedback. Having identified the target skills of teachers, group members conducted field tests in three school districts and developed and tested protocols for data collection, analysis, and reporting. The summative aspect of the evaluation system developed was intended to allow organizational decisions to be made

⁵²Mahaffey, Lois E. , *Case Studies of Secondary School Teacher Evaluation Since*

on the basis of observed conditions of practice. Each teacher was given a series of numbers representing his rating for a particular function. The formative aspect of the evaluation cycle occurred when judgments in the form of narratives were reported to teachers during the course of conferences scheduled within a few days of classroom observations.

In July of 1985, DPI implemented a pilot test of the evaluation system in twenty-four school districts. At the end of the pilot period in July of 1986, DPI conducted a program evaluation to determine how well the performance appraisal system had been implemented.⁵³ The results of the study indicated widespread acceptance of the criteria among both teachers and evaluators, a belief that the rating system could be used to distinguish incompetent from competent teachers, and the general perception that the system was of value for summative appraisal purposes. The study also showed that most people did not value the improvement aspects of the evaluation system, either because people lacked time to implement the

Illinois Public Law 24-A, dissertation, May 1992.

⁵³Holdzkom, D., Kuligowski, B., and Stacy, D. (1990). *Better Teaching For Better Learning: Student Achievement Results in a 4-year Pilot of the North Carolina Career Development Plan*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Boston, MA. (ERIC Documentation Reproduction Service No. ED 333 022).(Daniel Dukes book below).

formative procedures and the necessary follow-up training or because of a lack of confidence in the prescriptions resulting from the observations. ⁵⁴

Tennessee Teacher Evaluation Study - A study done during the 1994-95 school year which looked at the use of the Professional Teacher Evaluation Model in Johnson City School District. A total of 52 teachers participated by completing a survey and interview. The analysis revealed attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions of those involved in the implementation of a growth-oriented approach to teacher evaluation. Conclusions from the study included the following: the culture of the school has a great impact on the effectiveness of a growth-oriented approach to evaluation; the administrator plays an important role as facilitator/coach and resource provider in the evaluation process; the greatest amounts of teacher growth and motivation are experienced by teachers who have frequent interactions with the principal and are supported and encouraged by the principal; both principals and teachers can contribute to a school culture that supports professional development

⁵⁴Duke, Daniel L., *Teacher Evaluation Policy: From Accountability to Professional Development*, State University of New York Press, pp.45-50.(edited by Daniel Duke--Holdzkom and Brandt).

by working together collaboratively to build trusting relationships that encourage risk-taking and creativity; teachers should be involved in the development of the evaluation process under which they would be evaluated; teachers consider the structure of the evaluation program and the guidance and support of the principal as key attributes for a successful evaluation program that promotes professional growth; the evaluation process can enhance professional growth by being individualized and allowing teachers to choose areas of interest to work on. The study concluded that making a clear link between evaluation and professional development creates meaningful learning opportunities for principals and teachers.⁵⁵

Pacific Northwest School Districts - Case studies of four Pacific Northwest school districts added to the understanding of the environment of the evaluation program. Administrators and teachers were interviewed. Results showed that the evaluation procedures of all four districts were very similar. They all consisted of a pre-conference, observations, and post-conference. Recommendations from teachers were as follows: provide an

⁵⁵Wagner, Nancy Calloway, Linking Teacher Evaluation, Professional Growth, and Motivation: A Multiple-Site Case Study, UMI Dissertation Services, A Bell & Howell Company, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1995.

opportunity for peer and self-evaluation through goal-setting and videotaping; give teachers more knowledge about what constitutes effective teaching; provide quality staff development to improve skills; give more frequent, specific feedback -- constructive criticism, not vague generalizations.⁵⁶

Impact on Professional Growth

Why does professional growth seem to come naturally to some teachers and be a hindrance for other teachers? Possibly because there is not an understanding of what professional growth entails. Professional growth for teachers is not staff development, though it may be stimulated by staff development. Professional growth involves learning. While learning may represent the acquisition of new knowledge, growth implies the transformation of knowledge into the development of the individual. Growth is a qualitative change, a movement to a new level of understanding, and the realization of a sense of efficacy not previously enjoyed.⁵⁷ Adults have opportunity to learn all the time. As teachers gain experience, they may perceive less need to grow. New knowledge is increasingly

⁵⁶Stiggins, R.J., & Bridgeford, N.J. (1985). Performance assessment for teacher development. Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 7(1), 85-97.

⁵⁷Daniel L. Duke, "Barriers to Professional Growth," 75.

filtered through well-formed cognitive structures. Only knowledge that confirms prior beliefs and assumptions tends to be absorbed. Due to vast amounts of new information presented to a person, this selective processing is functional. Yet if taken to the extremes, the tendency to screen out conflicting information can lead to resistance to useful new ideas. Daniel Duke feels that it may be possible that aspects of the organizational structure of school systems may contribute to this factor that inhibits professional growth. He feels the policies governing teacher evaluation seem to be one of these structures.⁵⁸

The teachers who benefit most from evaluation are often those who are open to change. There may be a variety of reasons why these individuals remain open to opportunities: expectation of success if they try something new, need for success, amount of commitment, perceived presence of support during the change process, and reservoir of ideas about how to change. There are at least two stages necessary for improvement: recognition of potential areas of growth through a process of reflection and motivation to change or engage in learning activities. Reflection is a necessary first

⁵⁸Tbid.

step in professional growth and improvement. If expert feedback is provided to a teacher in a climate of trust and face-to-face communication, teachers are given the chance to stand back from the daily routine and examine both the short-term and long-term effects of their actions for their students. But reflection in the absence of action fosters little improvement. Action depends on individual willingness to change. A study done by Milbrey McLaughlin and Scott Pfeifer on teacher perceptions of evaluation, the data highlighted the fact that powerful internal motivation to learn or change can be stimulated by the external pressures associated with teacher evaluation.⁵⁹ A veteran elementary-school teacher from the study commented:

Evaluation has an important purpose for everyone, I think it helps keep you on your toes as a teacher. I think I might sit back on my laurels without it. After all, I've been teaching for thirty-two years. At this stage, it would be easy for me to relax. Just like the kids when pressure is taken off, adults can tend to coast too. So I think the pressures of evaluation and the expectations it places on you are good.⁶⁰

⁵⁹Milbrey Wallin McLaughlin and R. Scott Pfeifer, *Teacher Evaluation: Improvement, Accountability, and Effective Learning* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1988), 71.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 71.

By identifying specific areas for improvement and professional growth, evaluation moves teachers beyond reflection into problem-solving and concrete action.

Motivation can be increased by teachers becoming actively involved in the evaluation process. The teachers should feel more capable in carrying out their professional responsibilities and perceive themselves as being more effective in helping their students. As a result, teacher efficacy is strengthened, and learning environments can be developed that will improve student efficacy.⁶¹

Most traditional methods of evaluation are based on a common set of performance standards. They are useful guides for new teachers and veteran teachers having deficiencies. Most experienced teachers easily meet and surpass what are considered acceptable levels of performance. The traditional evaluation method simply becomes a routine that must be completed. Moreover, being evaluated according to the same criteria as every one of their colleagues is no incentive for growth. According to Duke, standardization is not why experienced teachers continue to teach.

⁶¹Jerry J. Bellon, Elnor C. Bellon, and Mary Ann Blank, *Teaching from a Research Knowledge Base* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992), 458-459.

They continue to teach in many cases because they feel they possess certain unique talents and because they wish to grow professionally.⁶²

Conducting yearly evaluations of competent teachers for purposes of accountability conveys distrust.⁶³ Many administrators feel that they do not do justice to all annual evaluations of teachers. Administrators typically conduct so many routine evaluations of competent teachers that they lack sufficient time to concentrate on the few teachers who need assistance.⁶⁴ Even if administrators are competent evaluators, conventional systems make it too difficult for teachers to determine when administrators are functioning as helpers and when they are functioning as bosses. This confusion of roles is inherent in evaluation systems that try to serve both accountability and growth.

Multi-growth tracks is one method that clears up the confusion of the purpose of the evaluation system. In Washington State, two out of three years can be devoted to evaluation for the purpose of

⁶²Daniel L. Duke, "Barriers to Professional Growth," 703.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Ibid.

growth. The third year is reserved for summative evaluations of basic teacher competencies. When the teachers participate in the growth-oriented process, they are assured that they will not be adversely affected by attempting challenging goals. The result has been that the relationships between teachers and administrators have become less adversarial, administrators focus more effectively on a smaller number of teachers, and competent teachers are setting multi-year growth goals.⁶⁵

Still, some teachers do not opt for the alternative methods of evaluation. Many times it is not because of the organizational barriers or the process but because of the barriers the teachers create for themselves. Research in adult theory and development reveals a number of factors that can serve to inhibit individual change. Some of these factors are lack of awareness, disillusionment, distrust, pessimism, high comfort level with current practice, preoccupation with other concerns, stress, fear of failure, impatience, and poor time management. Teachers who resist growth-oriented evaluation often believe that they have mastered the skills of teaching. When they are presented with evidence to the contrary,

⁶⁵Ibid.

such as low student achievement, they provide a number of seemingly reasonable excuses. These teachers may have reached a "comfort zone" where their lives feel in balance and where they therefore feel no need to change professionally.⁶⁶

Adult learning theory is based on four assumptions: 1) adults tend to prefer self-direction, 2) adults' experiences are a rich resource for learning that ought to be tapped through experimental learning processes, 3) adults' learning needs are often generated by real-life events, and 4) adults desire things that they can apply to their immediate circumstances.⁶⁷ Teacher improvement requires the input, support, and effort of all involved in teacher evaluation. It depends on a clear model for change. Training for faculty involves not only the presentation of theory and research but also opportunities for practice, modeling, feedback, coaching, and on-site technical assistance.⁶⁸ Teacher evaluation must be a continuous, ongoing process of individual growth toward practices that foster the improvement of instruction. The classroom must be a laboratory.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Ron Zemke and Susan Zemke, "An Update on Adult Learning Theory," *The Developer*, no.2 (1996): 5.

⁶⁸Janice K. Johnson, "Performance-based Teacher Evaluations: A Necessary Component for Effective Schools," *Contemporary Education* 63, no. 2 (1992):

The teachers and principal must be collaborative partners in the process. The teacher must also want to continue developing because teaching is an ongoing growth process, not an end that can be looked at each year.⁶⁹ The teacher must be able to see the applicability of the area of growth in order to desire it to occur.

Summary

Professional development is defined as the process or processes by which teachers achieve higher levels of professional competence and expand their understanding of self, role, context and career. Three justifications for professional development can be identified. First, many teachers want to grow professionally. Second, many states have begun to encourage or mandate continuing professional development for teachers. For example, Washington and Connecticut have requested that school districts propose new teacher evaluation systems with the intent that innovative systems for ongoing growth will emerge. The Texas Teacher Appraisal System assumes that each teacher is capable of improving regardless of the level of expertise or years of experience. Oregon and North Carolina mandate that

142.

⁶⁹Shreeve, 13.

teachers annually offer evidence of continuing professional development. California's Stull Bill requires that teachers biennially establish professional development goals. The third reason that professional growth is important concerns the very nature of the profession. Because new research causes bodies of knowledge to change over time, it is expected that members of a profession will remain abreast of new developments.⁷⁰ The growth-oriented evaluation methods allow a teacher to continually push himself forward throughout his career. The traditional methods are appropriate for accountability, but do not overall help to promote growth among teachers.

There are a variety of perceptions about the purpose of teacher evaluation. These perceptions range from the accountability of the classroom teacher to the promotion of teacher growth. If we think only one set of evaluation procedures can be applied rigidly to all teachers and if we allow strict legal constraints to dictate those procedures, we eliminate from our repertoire many of the best tools available to influence and support teacher growth. We should move

⁷⁰Linda Darling-Hammond and Jason Millman, *The New Handbook of Teacher Evaluation: Assessing Elementary and Secondary School Teachers* (Newbury Park, California: SAGE Publications, 1990), 117-118.

toward the negotiation of multiple evaluation procedures which uphold the law, protect teachers' and districts' rights, ensure accountability, and promote teacher growth.⁷¹ The challenge to the art of evaluation is to define and assess more closely each teacher's responsibilities so that teacher evaluations become more fair to the individual and useful for school improvement.⁷²

⁷¹Daniel L. Duke, *Teacher Evaluation Policy* , 31.

⁷²*Ibid.*, 30.

CHAPTER THREE

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The purpose of this study was to compare traditional teacher evaluation methods and alternative teacher evaluation methods as used by selected suburban Chicago secondary schools. A secondary purpose of the study was to assess teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the effectiveness of the evaluation methods used in promoting professional growth.

In this chapter, the presentation of the data includes a demographic description of each of the participating schools, the structures of the evaluation process, the purposes of evaluation, the activities that occur as a result of evaluation, and the subject's perceptions on professional growth. Seven to nine subjects were interviewed at each site. The subjects responded to open-ended questions concerning the structure, purpose, activities, and professional growth of teacher evaluation. Data were

collected through the interviews, hard copy descriptions of the evaluation methods, and school district report cards.

The questions used to guide the research were:

1. What are the structures, purposes, and activities of traditional teacher evaluation methods?
2. What are the structures, purposes, and activities of alternative teacher evaluation methods?
3. How do the perceptions of the effectiveness of the traditional evaluation methods used to promote professional growth compare to the perceptions of the effectiveness of the alternative evaluation methods used to promote professional growth?

Each section includes an analysis of the data. Chapter Three concludes with a cross-analysis of the responses by the subjects representing the five schools.

Case Study-School One

This section consists of the demographics of School One, structure of the evaluation process, purpose, activities and professional growth. An analysis on the data concludes the section.

Demographics

School One serves approximately 1760 students from five communities. The professional staff consists of a principal, two assistant principals, two deans of students, counselors and 95 teachers. Just over 56% of the teachers have earned a Masters degree or above. The faculty have been described as "student focused" and "energetic." In addition to a strong commitment to professional development, School One was fortunate to employ staff members who were authors of textbooks, who had made presentations at local, state, national, and international conventions, and who had won state and national awards for teaching and research.⁷³

The researcher interviewed nine educators at School One. The experience level ranged from one to twenty-five years in education. The two administrators interviewed were the principal and a department chairperson. The seven teachers interviewed represented the math, English, social science, foreign language, and bilingual departments.

⁷³Illinois State Board of Education, (1996). School One Report Card (p. 2).

Structure of the Teacher Evaluation Process

The evaluation program at School One was called the Professional Development Program. The word "evaluation" was not mentioned in the formal document given to teachers. The principal started the formal evaluation 13 years ago. The plan was traditional, and the principal wanted to continue the development of the evaluation plan by introducing alternative strands to the evaluation. Unfortunately, that development was interrupted by a controversy between teachers and the administration stemming from actions taken under the traditional plan. Two tenured teachers had been released under the plan and the effects on the staff lasted over five years. Within the last five years, however, the principal thought the climate of the school had improved, so a team of teachers was formed to develop the alternative strands. The principal stated the whole process had been an evolution.

There are two main goals of the program: to engage in conversations about teaching and learning with colleagues, and to reinforce, improve and internalize effective practices through ongoing experimentation and feedback. Upon employment at School One all teachers received a booklet entitled the Professional

Employee Development Plan. The booklet contained a brief history of the development of the plan, identified persons designated as evaluators, described the strands of evaluation, job descriptions/duties, responsibilities, observation reports and summative evaluation reports, and defined the performance ratings and steps to be taken when an unsatisfactory evaluation occurred. The program consisted of four strands: traditional strand, collaborative clinical strand, collaborative coaching strand, and collaborative research strand.

Traditional Strand - The traditional strand was required of all non-tenured teachers as well as tenured teachers rated as unsatisfactory. The method involved the principal, the department chairperson and the teacher. It occurred every other year for the tenured teacher and every year for the non-tenured teacher. The process entailed unannounced visits by the principal and department chairperson, a pre-conference set before the announced observation, a mini-post conference, an observation report, and a post-conference. A summative report that contained a rating was to be completed by June 1st of the school year. The method of recording data was done through scripttaping. The additional goals of the traditional strand

were to improve the performance of professional employees, to provide recognition for good performance, to provide assistance to professional employees who requested it, to make personnel decisions, and to assign ratings in accordance with Article 24 of *The School Code of Illinois*.

The alternative methods offered to the teachers at School One made up the additional strands. A teacher could choose one of the alternative methods if he was tenured and had been rated satisfactory or superior under the traditional strand. Each strand involved the participation of three to four people - primary and secondary observers assigned by the principal, the teacher, and a coach selected by the teacher. The process for all three alternative strands began the same. All the strands required the completion of the traditional strand by November 1st of the school year. Also, all included the development of a Professional Development Plan by December 15. The strands became more individualized at that point.

Collaborative Clinical Strand - The teacher and coach participated in a clinical supervision model in which the teacher was the primary person analyzing the process and the coach acted as a mediator. The teacher then revised the Professional Development

Plan based on the information found during the clinical supervision. A Teacher's Professional Development Log was maintained along with a Coach's Professional Development Log. The goals of this strand were to improve the performance of professional employees, to provide assistance to professional employees who would request it, to extend teachers' consciousness about their planning, teaching and reflective behaviors, and to engage teachers in analyzing the inferences and judgments they would make about practices that influence student learning.

Collaborative Coaching Strand - The teacher and coach participated in cognitive coaching. The coach must have been previously trained in this process. The Professional Development Plan was then revised as a result of the cognitive coaching sessions. A Teacher's Professional Development Log and a Coach's Professional Development Log were maintained. The goals of this strand were to extend teachers' consciousness about their planning, teaching and reflective behaviors, to engage teachers in analyzing the inferences and judgments they made about practices that influence student learning, to extend teachers' thinking and decision-making skills during planning and teaching, and to provide structures and skills for

having professional dialogues about curriculum, instructional practices, and problematic issues.

Collaborative/Action Research Strand - The teacher and coach developed a research design of interest to the teacher. Observations and data were gathered. A final report was submitted containing the findings of the research. A Teacher's Professional Development Log and a Coach's Professional Development Log were maintained. The goals of this strand were to engage teachers in thinking about what they wanted to know about the relationship between their current educational programs and student learning, to engage teachers in generating questions and collecting data about the relationship between what they were teaching and what students were learning, to engage teachers in studying their actions so they could ascertain what behaviors and programs were influencing student learning, and to assist teachers in solving problems by using data from multiple perspectives.

Purpose of Evaluation

During the interview, the principal of School One stated his view of the purpose of teacher evaluation:

I believe there is a need for both the traditional and the alternative methods of evaluation. The purpose for the traditional method is for the beginning teacher to work on how

business is done. It allows the person the chance to learn the norms of the institution he works in. After the third year, the teacher should have those norms down and then should work on developing professionally through the alternative forms of evaluation available to him.

The chairperson also responded:

The spirit of evaluation is to help the teacher grow and become the best teacher he can be.

Table 1 shows the most common responses to what the administrators and teachers indicated as the purpose of evaluation. The responses fell into one of three categories: assessing instruction for decisions on retention of the teacher, improving instruction, and professional growth of the teacher. The majority of the teachers and administrators interviewed responded that the purpose of the traditional method of evaluation was to assess instruction for personnel decisions on hiring or firing. Under the alternative methods of evaluation, 55% of the subjects thought professional growth of the teacher was the primary purpose of evaluation. Improvement of instruction was the only response to occur under both the traditional and alternative methods. This response occurred 33% of the time under the traditional method and 44% under the alternative method.

Table 1

Frequency Distribution for Responses to the Purpose of Evaluation

| Responses | Traditional | Alternative |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Assessing Instruction for Retention | 66% | |
| Improving Instruction | 33% | 44% |
| Professional Growth | | 55% |

n=9

Activities Resulting from Evaluation

The majority of teachers interviewed at School One indicated the collaborative coaching strand as their method of evaluation. The remaining teachers chose the traditional strand and action research strand. No teacher chose the collaborative clinical strand. The teachers who indicated the collaborative coaching strand all commented on the collegiality which the strand promoted. All the participants were able to choose the colleague whom they wanted as a coach. At least one member of the partnership had been trained in cognitive coaching. The areas chosen to work on were techniques in questioning, rubric development, applying the ESL standards to the IGAP, and applying Bloom's Taxonomy to higher-level thinking skills when creating and teaching lessons. One teacher praised the collaborative coaching strand saying that the process allowed

coaching a teacher through his chosen area of interest without any fear of punitive action.

A teacher who chose the collaborative action research strand gathered data by interviewing students, looking at student artifacts, and also surveying students. The teacher felt the process allowed the time and format to do something the teacher would not have done otherwise. No consequences were attached if the research did not prove anything significant.

The teacher who experienced the traditional method did not have a choice of an area to investigate but was told of the areas needing improvement. The teacher liked the detailed report of the observations and felt that the administrators were supportive. One concern noted was the lack of communication over expectations. The teacher was disappointed because more information was needed concerning specific guidelines in the lesson that the administrator wanted followed, before the formal observation took place.

Professional Growth

Under the traditional, a teacher can find the method useful once he knows that someone is not coming in to find fault, that the method can be collegial. The traditional method of evaluation promotes reflection by the teacher and encourages him to engage in dialogues about teaching. But it is also a process that sets certain standards of expectations for teaching in our district. The supervision under this method is

rigorous. The endeavor of teaching kids is serious. Teachers know what to expect. The alternative methods of evaluation show the teachers what can be done. For those teachers who choose an alternative method, their view towards the classroom is that of a laboratory. It allows one to test what they've been doing. The alternative method promotes a professionalism, a rigor in ones thinking, reflectiveness on how one plans lessons and teaches students.

The chairperson so commented in answering questions about professional growth and its relationship to the evaluation process. As shown in Table 2, teachers indicated more growth occurred under the alternative method than the traditional method. The traditional method allowed teachers to grow in lesson improvement. It also helped to increase the teachers' awareness of patterns and habits.

Table 2

Frequency Distribution for Areas Indicating Professional Growth

| Responses | Traditional | Alternative |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Reflective Practice | | 11% |
| Sharing of Ideas/Information | | 33% |
| Students More Clear on Expectations | | 11% |
| Lesson Plan Improvement | 11% | 11% |
| Awareness of patterns/habits | 11% | |
| Total | 22% | 77% |

n=9

Under the alternative method 33% of the subjects indicated sharing of information and ideas with a colleague resulted in growth.

Student expectations having more clarity indicated growth by 22% of the teachers and administrators. The remaining subjects thought growth occurred through reflection and improvement of lessons.

Table 3 indicates the components needed for professional growth to occur. According to 33% of the teachers the traditional method promotes professionalism. One teacher stated that the alternative format helped to develop a sense of professionalism among teachers but also that everyone should go back to the traditional method after a certain number of years to check their teaching skills. The traditional method protected the school and kept everyone responsible.

Table 3

Frequency Distribution for the Components of Professional Growth

| Responses | Traditional | Alternative |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------|
| Professionalism | 33% | 11% |
| Choice | | 55% |
| n=9 | | |

Over half of the subjects thought choice was a key factor to growth under the alternative method. One teacher stated that both methods promoted professional development but the alternative

gave the teacher the choice of what area in professional life would be developed.

Another teacher felt that the alternative method provided the avenue for growth but that the traditional method promoted professionalism in teaching.

The public may see this whole coaching thing as well . . .
where's the meat and potatoes of it?

One teacher argued that the traditional method does not make any sense for the tenured teacher.

Analysis

The structure of the evaluation plan at School One supported the research by McGreal on professional growth tracks.⁷⁴ School One, through the Professional Development Plan, offered the teachers different tracks or strands in which to participate. The teacher was also allowed to develop his own professional goal and choose the person who would act as his coach. The four assumptions of Adult Learning Theory - self-direction, experimental learning processes,

⁷⁴Brandt, 30-33.

real-life events, and application to immediate circumstances - were all met with this plan.⁷⁵ The traditional plan remained a part of the evaluation for every teacher evaluated.

The subjects' responses to the purpose of evaluation at School One agreed with the research. The purpose of the traditional method was to assess instruction to decide on retention of a teacher. This made the strand a summative process. The alternative method supported the primary goal of the Professional Employee Development Plan, teachers collaborating, and was a formative process.

The majority of teachers chose the collaborative coaching strand. This strand was supported by training in cognitive coaching and a strong backing by the principal. All of the strands under the alternative method required collaboration, an indication that the school believed teachers need to work together rather than in isolation.

Professionalism and choice were the two components that emerged from the interview data for professional growth to occur. The data supported the literature on adult learning that having a choice was necessary for growth to occur. The interview data also

⁷⁵Zemke and Zemke, 5.

showed that the teachers felt the need to continue with the traditional method because it proved professionalism. The alternative method could not stand on its own. The teachers at School One indicated that the traditional method was needed for public perception. There was a lack in the research regarding the need to continue with the traditional method in addition to the alternative method. School One responses indicated that the alternative method could not stand on its own.

Case Study-School Two

This section consists of the demographics of School Two, structure of the evaluation process, purpose, activities and professional growth. An analysis on the data concludes the section.

Demographics

School Two served 2200 to 2250 students from six communities. The professional staff consisted of a principal, an associate principal, and approximately 150 faculty members. Just over 79% of the teachers had earned a Masters degree or above. The researcher interviewed eight educators at School Two. The experience level ranged from fourteen to twenty-five years in

education. The two administrators interviewed were the principal and associate principal. The six teachers represented the mathematics/science, social science, foreign language, vocational education, physical education/discipline, and counseling departments.

Structure of the Teacher Evaluation Process

The evaluation program at School Two was an integral part of the union contract and consisted of two parts - Plan A and Plan B. Evaluation Plan A was the traditional method of evaluation and had been in place since the early 1980s. The goal of the traditional method was to improve the quality of instruction. Upon employment at School Two all teachers received a list of specific performance criteria in the areas of instruction, service to students, and application of school policies. These areas were the basis for evaluation of all teacher performance. The traditional method was required of all non-tenured teachers, teachers rated as unsatisfactory, and teachers rated as marginal. The process included the principal, associate principal, director (division chair) and the teacher. It occurred every year for teachers in one of these categories. The process entailed an initial conference, if requested by

the teacher, a formal observation, a post-conference, and a written report. Additional observations deemed necessary to reach an accurate evaluation would be scheduled. The evaluation process was completed before May 25 (or March 25 if the teacher was subject to dismissal through reduction in force or performance dismissal). Goal setting was not a part of this plan.

The second part of evaluation offered to teachers at School Two was the Evaluation Plan B. Plan B was the alternative method of evaluation. Tenured teachers chose the alternative method by agreement of the principal, associate principal, or director. The alternative method was considered the professional growth option. The teacher initiated the plan by submitting a proposal to the associate principal or director. If the proposal was approved by that administrator and the principal, the teacher could move forward with the plan. The administrator had at least one interim evaluation/progress conference with the teacher. The final assessment took place on or before May 15th during that year. Professional growth plans were self-generated programs for individual teachers that allowed for innovation, self-actualization, and professional renewal. Growth could be fostered through

individual, group, or interdisciplinary activities. The contract for School Two stated that the quality of education could improve as a result of professional growth plans.

Purpose of Evaluation

The principal of School Two stated:

The whole experience results in the professional growth of the teacher. It is also used to validate the hiring decision. Plan B is intended for those teachers doing their job and who want to pursue some interest.

A teacher responded to the purpose of evaluation:

Evaluation ought to be to enhance instruction and student achievement. It is used for checking up on teachers which is largely not effective.

Table 4 shows the most common responses to what the administrators and teachers thought was the purpose of evaluation. The responses fell into one of three categories: enhancement of instruction and student achievement, a validation process, or professional growth. All of the teachers and administrators interviewed responded that the purpose of the traditional method of evaluation was to validate the hiring process and check whether teachers were doing their job. Under the alternative methods of evaluation, 25% of the subjects also believed the validation process was the primary purpose. Enhancement of instruction and student

achievement and professional growth were both indicated 38% of the time as the purpose of evaluation for the alternative method.

Table 4

Frequency Distribution for Responses to the Purpose of Evaluation

| Responses | Traditional (Plan A) | Alternative (Plan B) |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Enhance Instruction and Student Achievement | | 38% |
| Validation Process | 100% | 25% |
| Professional Growth | | 38% |
| n=8 | | |

Activities Resulting from Evaluation

The majority of teachers interviewed chose the alternative method (Plan B) as their method of evaluation. The remaining teachers chose the traditional strand (Plan A). The teachers who choose the collaborative coaching strand all commented that the alternative method gave the teacher more control in the evaluation process and allowed the teacher to make decisions on the process. The areas chosen to work on under the alternative method were computer integration, study of gender and racial bias in the content, assessment tools, and grading policies. One teacher stated that the alternative method was good because it kept the teacher aware of

what was available in current research and staff development. The teacher thought it allowed for choosing what was important for children.

One teacher who chose the alternative method did a study of curriculum content to determine if there were gender or racial bias. The teacher collected data by evaluating the curriculum and interviewing co-workers. The teacher indicated that the process was beneficial because it created an awareness of bias for the department, the teachers, and the administration.

The teacher who experienced the traditional method did not believe that there was a benefit from the evaluation process. The teacher thought the traditional method did not encourage anything. Also, the only goal that was satisfied from this method was that it met the state guidelines for evaluation. This teacher indicated that it had the possibility of improvement if a goal-setting component would be included in the process. The teacher would continue in the traditional method because it was easy and also added that he did not need any incentive to grow but would do so because of his own need to develop professionally.

Professional Growth

The associate principal spoke of professional growth:

Under Plan A, the new teachers grow professionally because they always need another set of eyes (making the teacher aware of what is going on in the classroom). Overall, this method does not promote professional growth. Plan B gives teachers the opportunity to do some curriculum development with regards to their own special interest as a motivating factor of continued improvement.

Table 5 shows that, according to teachers' perceptions, more growth occurred under the alternative method (Plan B) than the traditional method (Plan A). The traditional method allowed teachers to grow in competence. No other area of growth was indicated under this method.

Table 5

Frequency Distribution for Areas Indicating Professional Growth

| Responses | Traditional (Plan A) | Alternative (Plan B) |
|---------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Teacher Motivation | | 25% |
| Professionalism | | 12.5% |
| Goal Setting | | 12.5% |
| Departmental Growth | | 12.5% |
| Innovative Projects | | 25% |
| Competence | 12.5% | |
| Total | 12.5% | 87.5% |

n=8

Under the alternative method, 25% of the subjects indicated that teacher motivation and innovative projects resulted in teacher growth. The remaining teachers and administrators felt growth occurred through professionalism, goal setting, and departmental growth.

Table 6 indicates the components needed for professional growth to occur. According to 37.5% of the teachers and administrators the traditional method (Plan A) promoted competence. One teacher stated that the main purpose of the traditional method was to give a rating and use it to point out the weaknesses of a teacher.

Table 6

Frequency Distribution for the Components of Professional Growth

| Responses | Traditional (Plan A) | Alternative (Plan B) |
|-----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Professionalism | | 12.5% |
| Competence | 37.5% | |
| Support | | 12.5% |
| Time | | 24.5% |
| n=8 | | |

The majority of subjects thought time was a factor to growth under the alternative method (Plan B). One teacher stated that some teachers might not choose the alternative method because it took

more time than the traditional method. Professionalism and support, each chosen 12.5% of the time from the subjects, were the two other components indicated. One teacher stated that the support necessary for professional growth to occur was extensive and continuous. The teacher thought that the staff development programs set up and the availability to attend workshops and conferences made professional growth more than available to the willing teacher.

One teacher did not think either the traditional method of evaluation or the alternative method of evaluation promoted professional growth. The teacher thought the alternative method was the closest to achieving professional growth but needed more components before it actually did so. The components suggested were peer coaching and college courses.

Analysis

The structure of the evaluation plan at School Two supported the research done by Duke and Stiggins on evaluation methods.⁷⁶ According to Duke and Stiggins, teacher evaluation methods intend to

⁷⁶Duke and Stiggins, *Teacher Evaluation*, 14.

reach two goals - competency and professional development of teachers. School Two had two plans that address each of these areas. The traditional method, Plan A, focused on competency and the alternative method, Plan B, focused on professional development. Both goals were equally important and School Two recognized the need for each of the plans.

The teachers' and administrators' responses to the purpose of evaluation at School Two agreed with the purpose stated in the teacher's contract. The purpose of both plans was to improve the quality of education. Under the traditional method the subjects responded that the purpose was to validate what the teachers were doing in the classroom. Under the alternative method the subjects indicated instruction, student achievement and professional growth were the purposes of the plan.

The majority of teachers chose the alternative method of evaluation. The alternative method was similar to an Individual Growth Plan as described by Gordon.⁷⁷ The school supported this plan greatly by allowing the teachers to choose and personalize their growth plan. The plan was supported by numerous staff

⁷⁷Gorden, 29.

development programs inside and outside the school. There was an indication that teachers needed the outside support and expertise of other organizations to grow professionally.

Teacher motivation and innovative projects were the two areas that emerged from the interview data where professional growth occurred under the alternative method. The data supported the literature on adult learning that adults tend to prefer self-direction and desire things that they can apply to their immediate circumstances.⁷⁸ The interview data also showed that the subjects indicated the traditional method only promoted competence in a teacher and the alternative method promoted components needed for professional growth.

Case Study-School Three

This section consists of the demographics of School Three, structure of the evaluation process, purpose, activities and professional growth. An analysis on the data concludes the section.

⁷⁸ Zemke and Zemke, 5.

Demographics

School Three serves 1800 to 1830 students from one suburban town. The professional staff consists of a principal, two assistant principals, and 250 staff members. Approximately 78% of the teachers have earned a Master's degree or above. The researcher interviewed seven educators at School Three. The experience level ranged from five to thirty-one years in education. The two administrators interviewed were the principal and a department chair. The five teachers represented the social science, English, and ESL departments.

Structure of the Teacher Evaluation Process

The evaluation program at School Three was called the Instructional Improvement/Personnel Evaluation. The program was described in a handbook given to every teacher upon employment in the district. The Board of Education adopted an Instructional Improvement and Evaluation Program in June of 1982. A district-wide committee of teachers, department chairs, and administrators examined several possible approaches including a plan developed by

Dr. Jerry Bellon of the University of Tennessee⁷⁹. In June 1982, the Board of Education entered into a contractual agreement with Dr. Bellon for training and implementation of the Instructional Improvement/Personnel Evaluation Program. The plan was piloted during the 1982-83 school year. In the fall of 1983, three committees began work on developing guidelines and procedures for the implementation of the program throughout the district. The handbook was a result of their efforts. In January 1991, the Teacher Evaluation Plan was reviewed by a District Review Committee. This review resulted in the implementation of a Differentiated Supervision/Evaluation Phase.

The primary goal for the Instructional Improvement/Personnel Evaluation program (traditional method) at School Three was the cooperative improvement of performance throughout the district. The following assumptions were intended to clarify the rationale of the instructional improvement program being implemented into the district.

- Assumption 1: People want to improve their performance.
- Assumption 2: Objective feedback helps to improve performance.
- Assumption 3: Pervasive patterns of teaching behavior can be identified.

⁷⁹ Bellon, Bellon, and Blank, 11-18.

- Assumption 4: When selected patterns of teaching behavior are changed, instruction can be improved.
- Assumption 5: Feedback to improve performance will be effective when there is mutual trust.
- Assumption 6: The primary goal of the supervision process is to improve instruction.⁸⁰

The Instruction Improvement Program (traditional method) was required of all teachers. The method was executed by the principal, department chairperson and teacher. It occurred every other year for the tenured teacher and every year for the non-tenured teacher. The process entailed a pre-conference, a formal classroom observation, an observation report, a post-conference and a summative conference. A summative report that contained a rating was completed by May 31 of the school year. All non-tenured teachers were observed a minimum of four times per year. Department chairs conducted three of the four observations, with the fourth observation conducted by the principal or assistant principal. The tenured teachers were evaluated on a two-year cycle. A minimum of three classroom observations were conducted by

⁸⁰School Three Handbook on Teacher Evaluation, 4.

department chairs for each observation-cycle tenured teacher. The principal or assistant principal conducted a classroom observation. Those teachers not in the observation year met with their department chair at the beginning of the year. The purpose was to agree upon a work plan to focus on improvement efforts. A written report of the conference was completed by the department chair by the end of September. An interim conference to discuss progress was held in January and a summative conference was held at the end of the year. The method of recording data was done through scripttaping, checklists, and anecdotes in order to identify patterns of behavior.

The Differentiated Supervision/Evaluation Phase, (alternative method) provided a more individualized program of growth and development for tenured teachers. The goals of the differentiated supervision/evaluation phase (alternative method) were:

1. to provide an alternative to the present system for individual growth and development;
2. to recognize different stages of professional development and to allow for individualization of improvement plans to match those development stages;
3. to empower teachers and to provide for increased leadership roles among the faculty;
4. to allow for professional growth to be incorporated into collegial associations, such as collegial/peer coaching, instructional teams and staff development leaders.

5. to encourage individual professional growth and personal renewal.⁸¹

A teacher could choose the differentiated supervision if the teacher had five or more years of experience in the district and was tenured. The teacher would come up with a plan to present and would discuss the plan with the department chair. Mutual agreement between the teacher and the department chair on the proposed plan with concurrence from the building principal was necessary before implementation occurred. An interim conference in December or January was conducted by the department chair and a summative conference took place before June 1. The teacher had to undergo one formal classroom observation by his department chair or administrator. The teacher could select the differentiated supervision for no more than two consecutive observation years. The teacher would then experience the traditional method again. Data was collected by the teacher throughout the year and shared with the department chair during the summative conference.

⁸¹Ibid.

Purpose of Evaluation

The handbook which described the evaluation process at School Three stated that the primary goals of the evaluation process were to improve instruction and to recognize individual professional growth. An administrator interviewed described the process as “an opportunity for the administration to sit down with a teacher and give him credit for a heck of a job!” Table 7 shows the most common responses that the administrators and teachers gave when asked the purpose of evaluation under each method.

Table 7

Frequency Distribution for Responses to the Purpose of Evaluation

| Responses | Traditional (II/PE) | Alternative (Differentiation) |
|---|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Improvement and Support of Teacher Performance | 29% | 29% |
| Validation Process | 57% | |
| Professional Growth | | 57% |
| Punitive | 14% | 14% |

n=7

The responses fell into one of four categories: improvement and support of teacher performance, validation, professional growth, and punitive action. The majority of the teachers and administrators interviewed responded that the purpose of the traditional method of

evaluation was to validate the hiring process and check whether teachers were doing their job. A few teachers (29%) responded that the purpose of the traditional method and the alternative method was to improve and support teacher performance. Also under the alternative method of evaluation, 57% of the subjects answered professional growth was the primary purpose. One person responded the purpose of both methods of evaluation was a punitive function towards the teacher.

Activities Resulting from Evaluation

The majority of teachers interviewed chose the differentiated method (alternative) as their method of evaluation. The teachers who chose the differentiation method all commented that the method had more value for the teacher because the project was developed by the teacher and not mandated by an administrator. The areas chosen to work on under the differentiated method were integrating the computer, researching cultural content to bring into class, studying improvement of writing skills, and incorporating state standards.

The remaining teachers participated in the II/PE (traditional) because they did not have a choice at that time in their career. Half

of the teachers in the II/PE method had participated in the differentiated method during previous evaluation years. The teachers who experienced the II/PE method responded positively towards this method. One teacher, who was back on the traditional method, stated:

It is a healthy way to keep me on my toes because there is a tendency for an older teacher to get set in patterns and be afraid to change.

The teacher stated that she was very comfortable with the visits required of the traditional method. The teacher also responded that the differentiated method was much better for professional growth. Another teacher indicated she would stay with the II/PE method because the teacher viewed it as being more oriented toward classroom performance.

Professional Growth

Part of the goal under the differentiated plan was to allow for professional growth and individualization of improvement plans.

One administrator responded:

To observe teachers doesn't allow them to develop professionally in that teacher's career. So, in order for it (the evaluation process) not to become mundane, the differentiated method was implemented to get a more complete package.

Table 8 shows teachers indicated more growth occurred under the differentiated method (alternative) than the II/PE method (traditional). The traditional method allowed teachers to grow in lesson planning and awareness of patterns.

Under the alternative method 29% of the subjects indicated growth in the area of technology implementation. The remaining subjects felt growth occurred in lesson planning and engagement of students.

Table 8

Frequency Distribution for Areas Indicating Professional Growth

| Responses | Traditional (II/PE) | Alternative (Differentiated) |
|---------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Technology Implementation | | 29% |
| Lesson Planning | 14% | 14% |
| Engaging Students | | 14% |
| Awareness of Patterns | 29% | |
| Total | 43% | 57% |

n=7

Table 9 indicates the components needed for professional growth to occur. The majority of the teachers and administrators interviewed indicated that professional growth occurred most under the differentiated method. Choice in the areas the teachers would like to focus upon was considered the most important factor (43%)

needed for professional growth to occur. The teachers indicated that support, in the form of encouragement or staff development programs, was the component needed in both the II/PE and differentiated methods.

Table 9

Frequency Distribution for the Components of Professional Growth

| Responses | Traditional (II/PE) | Alternative (Differentiated) |
|-----------|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Choice | | 43% |
| Support | 14% | 29% |
| Self | | 14% |
| n=7 | | |

One teacher did not think either the traditional method of evaluation or the alternative method of evaluation promoted professional growth. The teacher responded that growth would occur if the individual wanted it to occur no matter what evaluation method was in place.

Analysis

The structure of the evaluation plan at School Three supported the research done by Bellon on evaluation methods.⁸² School Three

⁸² Bellon, *Teaching from a Research Knowledge Base*.

based the evaluation plan on a set of assumptions that coincided with the research Bellon did on the basic development of any evaluation program.⁸³ One of the main concepts emphasized in the Bellon research was collaboration. It too was emphasized in the primary goal of School Three - the cooperative improvement of performance throughout the district. School Three also recognized the need for further avenues to promote professional growth. The school addressed this by implementing the differentiation method, which allowed teachers to participate more fully in the direction of their professional growth.

The subjects' responses to the purpose of evaluation at School Three differ from the purpose stated in the evaluation handbook for the traditional method of evaluation. The primary purpose of the traditional method, as stated in the handbook, was to improve instruction. The teachers and administrators indicated most often that the purpose of the traditional method was to validate the hiring of the teacher. The primary purpose of the alternative method in the handbook and the teachers and administrators responses indicated an agreement to promote professional growth.

⁸³ Duke and Stiggins, *Teacher Evaluation*, 14.

The majority of subjects chose the differentiated method (alternative) of evaluation. The school supported this plan greatly by allowing the teacher to choose and personalize his growth plan. The plan was supported by numerous staff development programs inside and outside the school. The staff development programs were taught by consultants and many of the school's own staff members. This showed support of the programs and encouragement for teachers to participate.

Teacher choice and administrative support were the two components that emerged from the interview data for professional growth to occur. The data supported the literature on adult learning that adults tend to prefer self-direction and desire things that they can apply to their immediate circumstances.⁸⁴ Both methods indicated the need for support if any growth was to occur.

One participant did think that the evaluation method as a whole needed to be emphasized more by the administration. The teacher indicated that when one chose the alternative method, he was free to do as little as possible. It was suggested better vigilance of the method.

⁸⁴ Zemke and Zemke, 5.

One participant viewed the whole evaluation process in a negative light. The subject felt the observation reports reflected the biases of the evaluator. The person also felt teachers should be allowed more exploration. Even though the subject agreed that choice was a major component of the alternative method, it still remained too restrictive. The evaluation method was not a “spur” for professional growth.

Overall, the majority of teachers indicated they were satisfied with the evaluation process. No one made any comment about having to return to the traditional method periodically. The data collected indicated the difference between the traditional purpose and the perceived purpose. There was also some indication that the number of visits written in the plan under the alternative method may not always occur.

Case Study-School Four

This section consists of the demographics of School Four, structure of the evaluation process, purpose, activities and professional growth. An analysis on the data concludes the section.

Demographics

School Four serves approximately 2200 students from one suburban town. The professional staff consists of a principal, an assistant principal, and 140 staff members. Approximately 65% of the teachers have earned a Master's degree or above. The researcher interviewed eight educators at School Four. The experience level ranged from two to thirty years in education. The two administrators interviewed were the principal and a department chair. The six teachers represented the social science, English, and special education departments.

Structure of the Teacher Evaluation Process

The evaluation program at School Four was called the Evaluation Process. The program was described in the contract given to every teacher upon employment in the district. The Board of Education adopted the Evaluation Plan, mutually developed by the administration and association, in 1986. The evaluation plan was broken into two parts - Summative (traditional method) and Formative (alternative method).

The primary purpose of the evaluation plan at School Four was to improve the quality of instruction. The following assumptions

were intended to make this a “synergistic process,” as described in the handout on teacher evaluation.

1. Everyone wants to be viewed as being competent.
2. Objective, interactive feedback is a major factor in improving performance.
3. Instructional patterns can support or detract from student learning.
4. The primary purpose of the observation program is the professional development of the participants.
5. Career stages of teachers should give direction to professional development programs.⁸⁵

The summative evaluation process (traditional) was identified at School Four as being utilized primarily for accountability and meeting state mandates. All non-tenured and tenured staff members who received an unsatisfactory evaluation were involved in the full summative process. It occurred every other year for the tenured teacher and every year for the non-tenured teacher. The process entailed a pre-observation conference, a performance observation, and a post-observation conference. A formal written evaluation was shared with the teacher at the post-conference. This cycle was performed a second time ending with a second formal report and a rating of the teacher's performance. This process was completed by April 1 of the school year.

⁸⁵School Four Teacher Evaluation Handbook, 1.

Tenured teachers had a choice of staying with the traditional process or choosing an alternative method. The traditional method was an abbreviated summative process. It consisted of the pre-observation conference, three performance observations, and a post-conference. The cycle ended with a formal evaluation report and a rating given to the teacher. The performance observations in the summative process occurred openly and with full knowledge of the teacher. The summative process was conducted by either the principal or the assistant principals.

The tenured teachers also had the option of participating in the formative (alternative) evaluation process. If a teacher chose that process, the teacher would have met with an assigned administrator to sign off on the summative process (traditional). This meant that the teacher agreed to accept the last rating received as the current rating. Once this document was signed by all parties, the teacher selected either the department chairperson or an administrator to assist with the formative process. The teacher could pick one of two options under the formative plan - either four formative cycles or two formative cycles and a staff development work plan. A formative cycle consisted of the pre-conference, classroom

observation, and post-conference. The cycle was different from the traditional cycle used in the summative process in that it was collegial in discussion and sharing of ideas. The teacher played a major role in determining the activity that would be observed and the type of data collected. The principal indicated the teachers and administrators had been trained by the Bellons for the past eight years in collegial relationships.

The work plan available in the second option was to help the teacher collegially focus on instructional or professional development. The work plan was meant to be developed by the teacher and the department chairperson or administrator selected. The teacher had final say about what would be involved in the work plan. A work plan consisted of one goal with the supporting objectives, activities, and resources or as many goals as the teacher felt could be completed in one or two years. The teacher expected to meet with the selected chairperson or administrator at least once a semester to discuss the selected goals and related objectives, activities, and resources. A teacher was assured that all information exchanged or gathered by the department chairperson or administrator during the formative process was confidential, unless

the teacher engaged in unethical or illegal activity. All written material generated during the formative process was returned to the staff member at the end of the year.

Purpose of Evaluation

The contract in place at School Four stated that the primary objective of teacher evaluation was to improve the quality of instruction. The summative evaluation (traditional) process was utilized primarily for accountability and meeting state mandates. The formative process (alternative) was intended to be a collaborative effort that would promote professional growth. An administrator described the process:

The summative process is purely for hiring and firing.
The formative process is for teacher improvement by looking for patterns.

Table 10 shows the most common responses that the administrators and teachers gave when asked the purpose of evaluation under each method.

Table 10

Frequency Distribution for Responses to the Purpose of Evaluation

| Responses | Traditional (Summative) | Alternative (Formative) |
|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Improvement of Teacher Performance/ Student Learning | 38% | 75% |
| Professional Growth | 13% | 25% |
| Hiring/Firing/Tenure | 50% | |

n=8

The responses fell into one of three categories - improvement of teacher performance/student learning, professional growth, and hiring/firing/tenure. The majority of the teachers and administrators interviewed responded that the purpose of the traditional method of evaluation was to decide on the continued employment of a teacher and whether the teacher should be granted tenure. The majority of teachers and administrators (75%) indicated improvement of teacher instruction/student learning as the purpose of the alternative process. Also under the alternative method of evaluation, 25% of the subjects answered that professional growth was the primary purpose.

Activities Resulting from Evaluation

The teachers interviewed split evenly in their choice of evaluation methods. The teachers who chose the alternative method

commented that the method helped to develop a trust among teachers and chairpersons or administrators. The areas chosen to work on under the alternative method were school improvement plans, development of new courses, reading and writing strategies, and student interaction lessons.

The remaining teachers participated in the summative (traditional) process because they did not have a choice at that time in their career. One teacher who participated in the traditional method stated:

I like the opportunity for them to see what I'm doing. I want them to know I am consistent and uphold district policies and philosophies. It also gives me a chance to agree or explain my teaching.

A second teacher indicated that the traditional method did not do much for the teacher. The teacher stated that the process was there purely to assess the skills and competencies of the teacher.

Professional Growth

The goal under the formative process (alternative) was to form a collaborative effort that would promote professional growth. One administrator stated, "This process makes it easier for people to be honest about what is actually going on in the classroom." Table 11 shows that teachers indicated more growth occurred under the

formative process (alternative) than the summative process (traditional). The traditional method allowed teachers to grow in awareness of expectations.

Under the alternative method 50% of the subjects indicated growth in the area of project implementation. The remaining subjects felt that growth occurred through collaboration.

Table 11

Frequency Distribution for Areas Indicating Professional Growth

| Responses | Traditional (Summative) | Alternative (Formative) |
|------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Project Implementation | | 50% |
| Expectations | 17% | |
| Collaboration | | 33% |
| Total | 17% | 83% |

n=6

Table 12 indicates the components needed for professional growth to occur. The majority of the teachers and administrators interviewed felt that professional growth occurred most under the alternative method. The teachers indicated that support from the selected chairperson or administrator working with the teacher was the component needed most (38%) for professional growth to occur.

Support was also indicated under the traditional method (25%) as an important component.

Table 12

Frequency Distribution for the Components of Professional Growth

| Responses | Traditional (Summative) | Alternative (Formative) |
|------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Researched-based | | 13% |
| Support | 25% | 38% |
| Trust | | 13% |
| Consistent | 13% | |
| n=8 | | |

The subjects also indicated the development of trust and the researched-based process were important for professional growth to occur under the formative (alternative) method. Consistency among evaluators of the summative process (traditional) was chosen to be significant to promote professional growth.

Analysis

The structure of the evaluation plan at School Four coincided with the research by Bellon on evaluation methods.⁸⁶ School Four based the evaluation plan on a set of adult learning assumptions that emphasized professional development.⁸⁷ One of the main concepts

⁸⁶Bellon, Bellon, and Blank, *Teaching from a Research Knowledge Base*.

⁸⁷Duke and Stiggins, *Teacher Evaluation*, 14.

emphasized by Bellon and the formative process (alternative) of School Four was the interactive process of collaboration.

School Four also recognized the conflict between the two goals of accountability and professional growth. School Four addressed this by clearly stating that the purpose of the summative process (traditional) was accountability and the purpose of the formative process (alternative) was to promote professional growth through collaborative efforts. The majority of the subjects interviewed understood the above to be the purpose of each process.

Half of the teachers chose the formative method (alternative) of evaluation. The school supported this plan by allowing the teacher to choose the focus of the observation. Also the work plan allowed the teacher to develop and direct the growth area in which the teacher had most interest. The plan was supported by numerous staff development programs inside and outside the school. The staff development programs were taught by consultants and many of the school's own staff members. This showed support of the programs and encouragement for teachers to participate. It also encouraged the development of trust between the teacher and evaluator. The

traditional method assessed the skills and competence of the teachers.

Focusing the teacher on a specific area was considered to be the prime component needed for professional growth to occur. The teachers indicated that the formative process (alternative) helped the teacher “zero in” on specific growth areas. One teacher indicated the formative process (alternative) forced the teacher to go beyond the normal and do something different. Another participant said the workplan caused one to better themselves and the school because some of the workplans resulted in things other teachers could use in the classroom.

One participant did indicate that the evaluation process as a whole did very little for the teacher. The teacher did not think the goals of the evaluation process were satisfied; the teacher felt that this was all right because the administration knew what was going on instructionally in that teacher’s classroom.

One administrator interviewed did express some concern that there was nothing to pull a teacher back into the summative process once the teacher had chosen the formative process. There was no safety net for the teachers who might slip through the cracks. The

administrator stated that the teachers should go back to the summative every 3 to 5 years. Later in the interview this same administrator expressed the need to give up the summative (traditional) process altogether. This contradictory statement was made while talking about the formative (alternative) process.

All but one subject indicated satisfaction with the evaluation process. The majority of the subjects thought that the process satisfied the goals stated in the contract. The majority of the participants agreed with the purpose stated for each method. As one subject stated: "Everyone involved is a straight shooter!"

Case Study-School Five

This section consists of the demographics of School Five, structure of the evaluation process, purpose, activities and professional growth. An analysis on the data concludes the section

Demographics

School Five served approximately 1064 students from five communities. The professional staff consisted of a principal, two assistant principals, and 226 teachers, deans, and counselors. Just

over 66% of the teachers had earned a Master's degree or above. The principal stated in the school report card:

Regardless of background or level of academic success our expectation is that each and every student and staff member have the opportunity to be the best they can possibly be.

The School Five teacher evaluation description stated that evaluation of teacher performance was vital to any effective instructional program and vital to the strength and growth of the high school. The researcher interviewed eight educators at School Five. The experience level ranged from 22 to 32 years in education. The two administrators interviewed were the principal and assistant principal. The six teachers interviewed represented the math, English, social science, business, and family and consumer science departments.

Structure of the Teacher Evaluation Process

The evaluation program at School Five was called "The Evaluation Plan" and was attached as an appendix to the contract. The plan detailed the evaluation process, performance ratings, qualified evaluators, and job descriptions. The evaluation instrument and procedures used were reviewed yearly for revisions by a committee consisting of two teachers designated by the union and

two administrators appointed by the superintendent. The evaluation process described in the appendix was the traditional method of teacher evaluation. The alternative method of evaluation was presented to the staff in a separate booklet, "From Mentoring to Peer Coaching to Collegial Evaluation".

The primary purpose of the evaluation process at School Five was the improvement of instruction. The school believed excellence could be achieved in education through a clear focus on student learning, emphasis on instruction, use of the process of peer coaching for teacher skill development, and provision for a support network consisting of administrative support, training, funding, experts, research and community interest. The peer coaching program that was available to teachers at School Five consisted of a non-threatening, non-evaluative, instructional support system which allowed participating teachers to grow professionally by cooperative planning, data gathering, and analysis of the teacher's classroom performance in order to capitalize on strengths, to address appropriate needs and to develop an individual teaching style best suited for that teacher. The program was based on the Robert Goldhammer Clinical Supervision model. It included the five stages

of his model as components - pre-observation conference, observation, analysis and strategy, post-observation conference, and post-conference analysis.

The formal evaluation method consisted of conferences and observations between the teacher and the principal or designee. The principal or designee formally evaluated each non-tenured teacher annually. Each tenured teacher was evaluated at least every other year formally and at the teacher's discretion. The teacher and the evaluator initially agree upon a two-week time period during which the formal evaluation took place. The teacher was responsible for submitting lesson plans to the evaluator for the agreed-upon two weeks. The evaluation instrument stated that the most important aspect of the evaluation process was the observation of the teacher in the classroom, the discussion of the performance and the suggestions made to improve the performance in the future. The evaluator made at least two classroom observations of at least twenty to thirty consecutive minutes. The observations were discussed informally with the teacher before they were compiled in writing. They were discussed formally after the data were compiled in writing into the formal report. A formal conference was held by

the evaluator and the teacher within ten days following the second formal observation to discuss and sign the written report. This procedure was repeated as necessary within each semester. The teacher and his evaluator held a concluding conference before the end of the school year to sign off on a final evaluation.

The alternative method offered to the teachers at School Five was an extension of the peer coaching program implemented at the school. As an alternative to the formal teacher evaluation process, tenured teachers could elect to participate in a professional growth strand of collegial coaching. The teacher completed two consecutive cycles of tenured evaluation with excellent or satisfactory ratings and must also have completed the school's peer coaching/collegial evaluation training programs. The formal evaluation was repeated every third cycle or six years. The purpose of the alternative method was to permit teachers to observe each other's classrooms, to get feedback about their own selected teaching behaviors, to experiment with new techniques and to get support from other teachers towards the improvement of instruction. The objectives for the Collegial Strand of Evaluation were:

1. Allow teachers to set their own goals toward improvement of instruction.

2. Use collegial coaching as a vehicle to promote teacher professional growth.
3. Provide an opportunity to apply skills learned through the staff development program.
4. Develop mastery and application of instructional strategies through collegial coaching.
5. Do a written self-evaluation with self-rating for their file by a designated administrator and collegial coach.
6. Do an assessment at the conclusion of the first year to evaluate the above objectives.
7. Use the results of the assessment to accept/reject or modify the Professional Growth Strand of Evaluation.⁸⁸

In the Collegial Strand of Evaluation, the principal or designee held an initial meeting with all teachers/coaches to discuss the process, instruments and timelines. The principal or designee conducted at least one observation each year. This person would have had to be qualified and registered with the State of Illinois to make classroom observations. The teacher and coach participated in a pre-observation conference to determine the focus of the observation and to complete the pre-conference instrument. At least two observations took place. The coach provided written descriptive data based on the agreed-upon focus of the observation between the teacher and the coach. This data was discussed in a post-observation analysis done between the teacher and the coach, and the post-conference instrument was completed within ten days of the

⁸⁸School Five Teacher Evaluation Handbook.

observation. A semester and year-end formal written self-evaluation completed by the teacher was given to the principal or designee. A conference was held between the teacher, the coach, and the principal or designee at the conclusion of the observations/conferences each semester. They signed off on the final written self-evaluation instrument, which included a self-ranking. If the administrator believed the formal written self-evaluation was incomplete or inaccurate, he wrote his objections and attached them to the evaluation report.

Purpose of Evaluation

During the interviews at School Five the administrator stated:

The summative process (traditional) doesn't allow for much growth. The administrators do all the thinking. The collegial evaluation (alternative) results in collaboration and interdisciplinary work. The process helps the kids draw connections. It supersedes evaluation and goes directly to learning.

The evaluation plan for School Five stated that the primary purpose for evaluation of the teacher was to improve instruction. Under the alternative strand of evaluation (collegial evaluation) a secondary purpose stated was to provide for teachers a vehicle to promote teacher professional growth. Table 13 shows the most common

responses of administrators and teachers when asked the purpose of evaluation under each method.

Table 13

Frequency Distribution for Responses to the Purpose of Evaluation

| Responses | Traditional (Summative) | Alternative (Collegial) |
|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Improvement of Teacher Performance/ Student Learning | 75% | 100% |
| Hiring/Firing/Tenure | 25% | |
| n=8 | | |

The responses fell into one of two categories - improvement of teacher performance/student learning and hiring/firing/tenure. The majority of the teachers and administrators interviewed responded that the purpose of the traditional method of evaluation was to improve performance of the teacher and students. All teachers and administrators indicated improvement of teacher instruction/student learning as the purpose of the alternative process. Also under the traditional method of evaluation, 25% of the subjects answered that hiring and firing decisions were the purposes of teacher evaluation.

Activities Resulting from Evaluation

The teachers interviewed split evenly in their choice of evaluation methods. The teachers who chose the alternative method

indicated that the method provided the opportunity to try new ideas and strategies in a risk-free, non-threatening environment. The areas chosen to work on under the alternative method were measurement of student understanding, development of curriculum, and strategies of teaching.

The remaining teachers participated in the traditional method of teacher evaluation. These teachers all expressed satisfaction with the method. One teacher felt the traditional method allowed the subject to learn things he could not on his own. Another teacher stated that the process was a reaffirmation that the teacher did things that worked well for the students.

Professional Growth

Table 14 shows that teachers indicated that growth occurred equally under each of the traditional and alternative methods. The traditional method caused teachers to grow by keeping them updated on current educational research (34%) and focusing on the teaching/learning process(17%). This same area was indicated most often (34%) by the teachers choosing the alternative method. Reflection on the teaching process (17%) was also indicated as an area of growth by teachers.

Table 14

Frequency Distribution for Areas Indicating Professional Growth

| Responses | Traditional (Summative) | Alternative (Collegial) |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Focus on depth of teaching/ learning process | 17% | 34% |
| Knowledge update | 34% | |
| Reflection | | 17% |
| Total | 51% | 51% |
| n=6 | | |

Table 15 indicates the components needed for professional growth to occur. The majority of the teachers and administrators interviewed indicated that professional growth occurred most under the traditional method when choice (37.5%) was involved. The teachers indicated this occurred because they were able to determine the classes the evaluator would observe and what would be taught. A risk-free/non-judgmental environment was also indicated as a component needed for professional growth to occur.

Table 15

Frequency Distribution for the Components of Professional Growth

| Responses | Traditional (Summative) | Alternative (Collegial) |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Choice | 37.5% | 12.5% |
| Risk free/ non-judgmental | 12.5% | 25% |
| Same field | | 12.5% |
| n=8 | | |

The risk-free environment was indicated most often (25%) under the alternative method of evaluation. The subjects indicated choice (12.5%) with whom one worked as a component of growth. The need for the peer coach to be in the same field of study (12.5%) as the teacher participating in the evaluation also was indicated as a growth component.

Analysis

The structure of the evaluation plan at School Five supports the concepts developed from the initial work of Goldhammer.⁸⁹ School Five based the evaluation plan on the observation process in both the traditional and alternative methods. The evaluator and collegial partner gathered data about classroom practice and then shared the data with the teacher. In the traditional approach, the evaluator made suggestions for improvement to the teacher. In the alternative method, the peer coach strictly shared the data without making judgments.

School Five stated in the evaluation booklet that the purpose of the evaluation process of the teacher was to improve instruction. The majority of teachers under both methods agreed that

⁸⁹ McGreal, 9-14.

improvement of instruction was the purpose of evaluation. The administrators and staff had communicated well with each other and indicated an understanding of this purpose at School Five. One teacher indicated the purpose of the traditional method was hiring and firing.

Under the traditional method of teacher evaluation, the majority of the teachers indicated choice as the component needed for professional growth to occur. The teachers who spoke about choice stated that being allowed to make decisions on the classes the evaluator visited and the content taught made them feel more professional. This component usually occurred under the alternative method. The reason this occurred under the traditional method might be due to the large amount of administrators and staff that had been trained in the peer coaching. The teachers felt good about having input into the process.

The teachers in the traditional method all answered that they would continue in the traditional method. All of the teachers stated the reason they would not participate in the alternative evaluation was due to the amount of time it involved. One teacher stated:

I might try the alternative, but I have no motivation to. I found the ability to grow within this method. People have

jumped to collegial evaluation because they had had a negative experience.

The teachers in the traditional method indicated satisfaction with the evaluation. All of the teachers in this method had 24 or more years of experience. They were comfortable with the process, found that it stimulated growth and saw no need to change.

The teachers who chose the alternative method of evaluation indicated most often that a risk-free/non-judgmental environment was an important component for professional growth to occur. All the participants indicated that this allowed them to try new teaching strategies and ideas without fear of any repercussions. One teacher said that he worked harder for a peer coach than for an administrator because the administrator was not in his field of study. Another teacher indicated the experience was good when the peer was out of the content area. A teacher stated:

You must have the ability to be vulnerable with a peer. At the same time it's all right to try new ideas; if all doesn't turn out 100%, it's all right.

One administrator interviewed did express some concern that there was lack of accountability under the alternative method. Nevertheless, immediately after making that comment, the administrator stated that was the management side of the position

being expressed. This same administrator indicated preference for the alternative method because it could change the culture of a school since it was a more in-depth process.

All the subjects indicated satisfaction with the evaluation method that they had chosen and said they would continue in that method. The majority of the subjects thought the process satisfied the goal stated in the contract. The majority of the participants agreed with the purpose stated for each method.

CROSS-ANALYSIS

Structure

The structures of the traditional methods followed by each school were basically the same. All the schools had traditional methods that used the pre-conference, observation, post-conference, rating, and formal report cycle. The cycle occurred every year for non-tenured teachers and every two years for tenured teachers.

The structures for the alternative methods used at each school, however, were varied. All of the structures were set up to promote collegiality and collaboration. Three of the schools supported

collaboration between teachers. Two of the three schools based their structure on Bellon's research on teacher efficacy and development.⁹⁰ All of the schools structured the evaluation method so that the tenured teacher had the choice of participating in the alternative method or remaining in the traditional method.

An alternative method of evaluation was needed to promote professional growth among the staff. There was general agreement among the schools that the traditional method was evaluator-centered. Teachers were told by the evaluator what was good and bad about their teaching, and there was not much input from the teachers. The evaluation was up to the administrator to make sure all the steps took place. Teachers who participated in the traditional method at one school did indicate they had input regarding the logistics of the evaluation time, place, and content but no input regarding the content of the feedback.

The alternative method provided an avenue for the teacher to be more of a participant in the evaluation process. Across all schools, the alternative method allowed choice and decision-making by the teacher. The teacher determined what area of education would be researched and implemented dependent upon his interest.

⁹⁰Bellon, Bellon, and Blank, 458.

There was no indication that the alternative method was easier than the traditional method. In fact, those teachers who preferred the traditional method stated that the structure of the alternative method created more time to complete the evaluation process. All the schools required the teachers to remain in the traditional method until they had four to five years of teaching experience.

All of the administrators interviewed indicated that the alternative structure was the format that promoted professional growth among teachers but that the traditional method was still needed for the new teacher and the remediable teacher. One administrator commented:

The traditional is a dog-and-pony show. There is very little growth because it consists of a checklist. I will look for whatever I want to look for. The alternative promotes dialogue. We share and personalize the experiences.

The implementation of the alternative structure did allow the administrators more time to work with the teachers who were in need of the traditional structure. Also, according to Daniel Duke, the alternative method allowed administrators to play a more constructive role in the growth process of the teacher choosing the alternative structure.⁹¹

⁹¹Duke, "Barriers to Professional Growth," 704.

The majority of schools were not ready to forego the traditional method in the evaluation process. Four of the five schools required the teachers choosing the alternative method to revisit the traditional method after two cycles. The administrators and teachers indicated this was necessary for accountability purposes. One administrator, whose school did not require teachers to use the traditional method once the alternative method was chosen, did acknowledge some concern about the possibility of teachers “slipping through the cracks.” The same administrator indicated there should be a traditional method component in the alternative process.

The need to continue making the traditional method a component of the evaluation process might be due to a couple of factors. Public perception about teacher accountability was a concern brought out by teachers. Duke and Stiggins acknowledged the importance of conveying to the public the image of rigorous personnel management.⁹² Teachers indicated there was a necessity for the traditional method because it allowed for standardized documentation of teacher behaviors. It is a method the public may find easier to understand than the alternative process.

⁹²Duke and Stiggins, *Teacher Evaluation*, 14.

The administrators, due to their roles as leaders, might also be dealing with the conflict of teacher choice and administrator control. It is possible that all of the administrators interviewed supported the alternative methods, but needed the control of having teachers periodically revisit the traditional method.

Purpose

The evaluation documents given to the employees at each school all stated that the purpose of evaluation was the improvement of instruction. A few of the schools divided this purpose into further categories, such as professional growth, retention/dismissal, and the opportunity for professional dialogue to take place among teachers. Four of the schools stated that the alternative method of evaluation had a purpose of promoting professional growth among the teachers. The responses given in the interviews as to the purpose of the evaluation process varied. Under the traditional method, 60% of the administrators and teachers interviewed responded that retention or dismissal was the purpose. Improvement of instruction was indicated in 35% of the responses. This indicates that the perceptions of administrators and teachers differ as to the purpose of evaluation

under the traditional method from what is written in the evaluation document.

A difference also existed between the responses of administrators and teachers. Under the traditional method of evaluation 50% of the administrators indicated the purpose was the improvement of instruction. Only 30% of the teachers agreed. Forty percent of the administrators and 67% of the teachers indicated the purpose was the retention or dismissal of teachers. The teachers perceive the purpose to be not only different from the written purpose of the evaluation documents but also different from half of the administrators. These differences may be due to a miscommunication of information about the purpose between the administrators and the teachers. They might also be due to the roles inherent in the jobs of the teachers and administrators. The administrators are, in fact, responsible for the retention and dismissal of teachers. This may be prominent in the minds of the teachers when an administrator evaluates. A factor may also be the structure of the evaluation methods set up at the schools. All have in place an alternate method of evaluation. This might indicate that the purpose of the evaluation needs to be changed.

Under the alternative method of evaluation, three out of the five schools stated that the purpose of the alternative method was the professional growth of the teacher. The evaluation documents of the remaining two schools stated that the purpose was to improve instruction. Overall, 58% of the administrators and teachers indicated that the improvement of instruction was the purpose of the alternative method of evaluation. Thirty-five percent answered that the professional growth of the teacher was the purpose of the alternative method of evaluation.

When broken down by administrators and teachers responses, 60% of the administrators indicated professional growth as the purpose of the alternative method of evaluation. Improvement of instruction was indicated 40% of the time by the same group. The teachers indicated in 67% of the responses that the improvement of instruction was the purpose of the alternative evaluation, and professional growth was given as a response 27% of the time. Again, there was a discrepancy between the responses of administrators and teachers. Miscommunication may be part of the reason for the discrepancy. It may also be due to the understanding of professional development and improvement of instruction. Hickcox indicates that

either the interpretation of what is meant by the improvement of instruction must be broadened or else the purpose must go beyond the improvement of instruction.⁹³ The administrators may have broadened their scope of the purpose of evaluation by choosing professional development as the purpose. This would again indicate miscommunication between the administrators and teachers as to the scope of the purpose of evaluation.

Activities

Under the traditional method of evaluation, all of the schools ended the process with a post-conference between the teacher and evaluator during which a written report was presented to the teacher. Teachers and administrators from three of the five schools indicated satisfaction with this activity in that it reaffirmed to the teachers their skills and highlighted their patterns of teaching.

The activities that took place under the alternative method of evaluation used at the five schools were all related to content development, assessment of student understanding, and technology integration. The participants used the opportunity to choose areas of interest to further their professional development. One teacher

⁹³Hickcox, 11-12.

indicated that having the opportunity to choose the activity allowed the teacher flexibility in the direction that he wanted to go, which was key to promoting professionalism.

Professional Growth

The teachers and administrators were asked to indicate the areas in which professional growth occurred. Overall the responses given varied among the participants. Under the traditional method professional growth occurred in the areas of teaching patterns, lesson planning, and content knowledge. The teachers indicated that this was information told or given to them.

The teachers and administrators indicated under the alternative method that growth occurred most often in the areas of project implementation, collaboration with colleagues, teacher motivation, and reflective practice. The teachers indicated that growth took place with the help of others but only when information was discovered rather than given.

Across the schools, the components needed for professional growth to occur which were listed most often were choice and support. The teachers and administrators indicated that choice was

essential to continued professional development. There needed to be the support from administration, colleagues, and staff development programs for the teacher to be willing to make a choice. According to Duke, the support from administration must also be non-judgmental.⁹⁴ Professionalism was also indicated among the schools. Teachers wanted to be treated professionally and given the opportunity to choose the area of growth in which to participate.

⁹⁴Duke, "Barriers to Professional Growth," 704.

CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This final chapter summarizes the purpose of the research, as well as the sample population and the procedures used in the study. Additionally, conclusions are presented based on the data gathered from the sample population. Recommendations for future studies are also offered.

Linking evaluation and professional development is a difficult task for teachers and evaluators. Although there are few easy answers, the evaluation process need not be a dead end. It can result in a professional development process that will promote growth for the teacher, administrator, and students. The primary purpose of this study was to compare traditional teacher evaluation methods and alternative teacher evaluation methods as used by selected suburban Chicago high schools. A secondary purpose of the study was to assess teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the effectiveness of the evaluation methods used in promoting professional growth.

The following questions guided the research:

1. **What are the structures, purposes and activities of traditional teacher evaluation methods?**
2. **What are the structures, purposes, and activities of alternative teacher evaluation methods?**
3. **How do the perceptions of the effectiveness of traditional evaluation methods used to promote professional growth compare to the perceptions of the effectiveness of alternative evaluation methods used to promote professional growth?**

The sample population utilized consisted of five suburban Chicago secondary schools which had evaluation plans in place that offered an alternative process in addition to the traditional process of evaluation. Each school was represented in the study by two administrators and at least six teachers. The teachers were chosen from the alternative evaluation track and from the traditional evaluation track.

Summary

This study investigated the connection between traditional and alternative teacher evaluation methods and professional growth. The connection was studied through the application of qualitative measures developed after an analysis of the written, formal evaluation plans of selected suburban Chicago high schools. The

connection was further studied through interviews with administrators and teachers selected from the secondary schools.

The following steps were used in gathering the data necessary for the completion of the study:

1. A copy of the school's evaluation tool was obtained. The tool was reviewed in an effort to compile data before the interviews.

2. An interview lasting one to two hours per subject was conducted with each participant. Data collection was done through audio taping and notes taken by the investigator. The interviews were completed between October, 1996 and February, 1997.

3. Following the interview, data was transcribed and analyzed. Follow-up phone interviews took place to clarify information and gather additional data.

The process of data analysis proceeded in the following sequence. Interview tapes were reviewed and transcripts made. The transcripts were coded to identify themes, patterns, comparisons, and contrasts. A matrix containing the data was established to better identify the emergence of a pattern. Upon completion of the data analysis, a narrative was developed reflecting

the connections among the interview data, the evaluation plan data, and the theoretical framework described in the reviewed literature.

Conclusions of the Study

The structures and activities of the traditional teacher evaluation methods were quite similar among the sample schools, and the teachers and administrators believe that the traditional method of evaluation serves a useful purpose for maintaining accountability in the profession. Four of the five schools in the study required the teachers choosing the alternative method to revisit the traditional method periodically. The administrator of the remaining school indicated there should be a traditional method component in the evaluation process for all teachers. Sixty percent of the teachers and administrators indicated that the purpose of the traditional method was the retention or dismissal of the teacher. This decision is based on a set of standard behaviors that each school had established in adhering to the state guidelines. According to Duke and Stiggins, teachers are accountable for demonstrating minimum levels of competency in their jobs.¹ Districts are accountable for

¹Duke and Stiggins, *Teacher Evaluation*, 104.

protecting the due process rights of the teachers and for conveying to the public the image of rigorous personnel management.

While all of the sample schools used an alternative teacher evaluation method, the purposes of the alternative methods were more similar among the schools than the structures and activities of the alternative methods. Three of the five schools stated in the evaluation documentation that the purpose of the alternative method was the professional growth of the teacher. The two remaining schools had statements that indicated the purpose was to improve instruction. The structures of the alternative methods used at the schools consisted of tracks similar to what McGreal's research had indicated.² The structures also had proposals based on Bellon's research, and mentoring/peer coaching/collegial evaluation programs.³ The activities among the schools were related to content development, assessment of student understanding, technology integration, questioning skills, and implementing standards.

The teachers and administrators had different perceptions of the purpose of evaluation. Under the traditional method of evaluation 50% of the administrators indicated the purpose was the

²McGreal, *Successful Teacher Evaluation*.

improvement of instruction. Only 30% of the teachers agreed. Forty percent of the administrators and 67% of the teachers indicated the purpose was the retention or dismissal of teachers. Under the alternative method, 60% of the administrators indicated professional growth as the purpose while 67% of the teachers responded that the improvement of instruction was the purpose of the alternative method. Neal found that most faculty members perceive evaluation differently from administrators.⁴

The alternative method of evaluation provides an avenue for professional development by integrating the theories of Adult Learning into the process. Two of the four assumptions of Adult Learning theory are that adults tend to prefer self-direction and that adults desire things that they can apply to their immediate circumstances.⁵ The structures of the alternative methods developed at each school were all based on the component that teachers had the choice of the direction of their own professional growth and that the area chosen would be of benefit to their teaching.

³Bellon, Bellon, and Blank, *Teaching from a Research Knowledge Base*.

⁴ Neal, 1.

⁵Zemke and Zemke, 5.

In general, the teachers and administrators in the study believe that professional development of the teacher is most likely to occur under alternative forms of evaluation when the teacher is involved in the development of the process. The teachers in the study indicated the components most needed for professional growth to occur were choice and support. All of the schools participating in the research allowed the teachers the opportunity to choose the area of study under the alternative method of evaluation. Also, the schools had built-in support by providing a peer coach or assigned administrator for the teacher along with staff development programs.

The perceptions of the teachers and administrators in the study were consistent with the literature that suggests that teachers and administrators can contribute to professional development by working together collaboratively to build trusting relationships that encourage risk-taking. The teachers and administrators both indicated choice was essential for the teachers to develop professionally. Support was also needed from administration, colleagues, and staff development programs for the teacher to be willing to make a choice. The support from the administration must

also needed to be non-judgmental, according to studies done by Duke.⁶ One teacher indicated that collaboration results in a non-threatening, risk-free environment, which promotes more room for growth. Among the five schools in the study, collaboration was mentioned in the documentation under the alternative methods of evaluation.

Recommendations for Action

As a result of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Schools that employ two methods of evaluation, traditional and alternative, should create two separate purpose statements related to each particular method.
2. The purpose statements of the evaluation methods used in a school should clearly be communicated and understood by both teachers and administrators.
3. When collaboration is emphasized in the process of evaluation, all the participants - teacher and administrators - should have some training in the coaching process.

⁶Duke, "Barriers to Professional Growth," 104.

4. Adult learning theory and its relationship to growth should continue to be studied in detail by administrators and teachers.

Recommendations for Further Study

As a result of the study, it is recommended that the following areas be considered for further study:

1. Investigate the academic achievement of students at the schools that employ both the traditional and alternative forms of evaluation.
2. Conduct research on the necessity of the traditional method of evaluation for those participating in an alternative form of evaluation.
3. Replicate the study in a larger geographic area to generalize the data to a larger population.

APPENDIX

July 15, 1996

Dear Dr./Mr./Ms. _____,

As a follow up to our phone conversation, I am requesting a copy of the teacher evaluation tool that is used at _____ High School. Currently, I am doing doctoral research at Loyola University, and the area I am interested in studying is traditional and alternative teacher evaluation methods.

Thank you for agreeing to send me your evaluation tool. Please feel free to contact me with any questions concerning the research.

Sincerely,

Sharon Michalak
Associate Principal of Instruction
Lincoln-Way High School - East Campus
201 Colorado Avenue
Frankfort, Illinois 60423
(815)469-9605

October 20, 1996

Dear Dr./Mr./Ms.,

As per our telephone conversation, I am requesting to set a date to visit _____ High School to interview teachers and administrators. Currently I am engaged in doctoral research at Loyola University, and the area I am studying is traditional and alternative teacher evaluation methods. Your school was chosen because it offers both evaluation methods.

I would like the opportunity to interview at least six teachers and two administrators. Preferably the teachers should have tenure and participate in the traditional or alternative methods.

Thank you for agreeing to be a part of my research. I will follow up with a phone call in the near future.

Sincerely,

Sharon Michalak
Associate Principal of Instruction
Lincoln-Way High School - East Campus
(815) 469-9605

WRITTEN CONSENT

Project Title: A Multiple-Site Case Study Comparing Teacher Evaluation Methods:
Traditional vs. Alternative

I, _____, state that I am over 18 years of age and that

I wish to participate in a research project being conducted by Sharon K. Michalak.

Purpose of the Research: The purpose of this research is to investigate the nature of the activities, processes, and structures of traditional teacher evaluation methods and alternative evaluation methods that promote professional development. The procedure to be followed is to meet with the subject for an interview session. The meeting will be taped so that this investigator has accurate notes. Follow up phone interviews may be made to clarify any questions based upon the notes. The potential discomfort that might exist is that the views of the subject might differ from the views held by the district in which they are employed. The name of the participant will not be disclosed. The potential benefits that exist are that the opinions of the subject are valued and incorporated into a body of research and that the information gained from the study might guide schools in decisions having to do with teacher evaluations.

I acknowledge that Sharon K. Michalak has fully explained to me the risks involved and the need for the research; has informed me that I may withdraw from participation at any time without prejudice; has offered to answer any inquiries which I may make concerning the procedures to be followed; and has informed me that I will be given a copy of this consent form.

I understand that biomedical or behavioral research such as that in which I have agreed to participate, by its nature, involves some risk of injury. In the event of physical injury resulting from these research procedures, emergency medical treatment will be provided at no cost in accordance with the policy of Loyola University. No additional free medical treatment or compensation will be provided except as required by Illinois law.

In the event that I believe that I have suffered any physical injury as the result of participation in the research program, I may contact the Chairperson of the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects for the Lake Shore, Water Tower and Mallinckrodt Campuses of Loyola University. ((312)508-2471)

I freely and voluntarily consent to my participation in the research project.

Signature of Investigator

Date

Signature of Subject

Date

Interview Guide
(Administrator)

Main 1) Describe the teacher evaluation plan used at your school with tenured teachers.

- Probes
- a) Who was involved in the development of the evaluation plan? When was the plan developed? Why was the plan developed?
 - b) What training took place for the evaluators?
 - c) Who participates in the evaluation process?
 - d) How are data collected during the evaluation process?
 - e) How are the data used?
 - f) How does the school satisfy the state's requirements for evaluation?

Main 2) What is the purpose of the teacher evaluation process?

- Probes
- a) How do you measure the effectiveness of the evaluation plan?
 - b) What evidence do you have that the plan is working?

Main 3) How does the teacher evaluation process promote professional growth?

- Probes
- a) What is the teacher's role in developing a professional growth plan as a result of the evaluation?
 - b) What types of support are given to the teacher in order for professional growth to occur?
 - c) What attributes of the evaluation process promote professional growth?
 - d) Give an example of when the traditional method of evaluation led to professional growth of a teacher.
 - e) Give an example of when the alternative method of evaluation led to professional growth of a teacher.

Main 4) Compare the traditional evaluation process to the alternative evaluation process.

- Probes
- a) In your opinion, which method of evaluation better promotes professional development?
 - b) What is the breakdown on the number of teachers who choose the traditional method? the alternative method?
 - c) What are the pros of each method? What are the cons of each method?
 - d) How have the teachers benefited from each method?
 - e) How have you benefited from each method?
 - f) Do you think each method satisfies your school's goal of teacher evaluation?

Interview Guide
(Teacher)

Main 1) Describe the teacher evaluation plan in which you have chosen to participate.

- Probes
- a) What is your involvement in the development of the evaluation plan?
 - b) How were you informed about the evaluation process and the way it works?
 - c) Who participates in the evaluation process?
 - d) Who decides on the kind of data that will be collected? How are data collected during the evaluation process?
 - e) How are the data used?

Main 2) What do you think is the purpose of the teacher evaluation process?

- Probe
- a) Do you think the evaluation method is effective?

Main 3) How does this evaluation process promote professional growth?

- Probes
- a) Are you a part of developing a professional growth plan as a result of the evaluation?
 - b) What types of support are given to you in order for professional growth to occur?
 - c) What attributes of this evaluation method promote professional growth?
 - d) Give an example of when this evaluation method led to professional growth.
 - e) What specific activities of the evaluation process led to this example?
 - f) How do you think you benefit from participating in this method of evaluation?
 - g) What concerns do you have about this evaluation method?

Main 4) Why did you choose this method of evaluation?

- Probes
- a) Do you think the goal of the teacher evaluation method is satisfied?
 - b) Will you continue participating in this method? For what reasons?

Contact Summary Form

Contact Type
Visit
Phone

Site:
Contact Date
Position: Administrator

1. Summary of the information you got (or failed to get) on each target question.
 1. Describe the teacher evaluation plan used at your school with tenured teachers.
 - a) Who was involved in the development of the evaluation plan? When was the plan developed?
 - b) What training took place for the evaluators?
 - c) Who participates in the evaluation process?
 - d) How are data collected during the evaluation process?
 - e) How are the data used?
 - f) How does the school satisfy the state's requirements for evaluation?
 - 2) What is the purpose of the teacher evaluation process?
 - a) How do you measure the effectiveness of the evaluation plan?
 - b) What evidence do you have that the plan is working?

- 3) How does the teacher evaluation process promote professional growth?
 - a) What is the teacher's role in developing a professional growth plan as a result of the evaluation?
 - b) What types of support are given to the teachers in order for professional growth to occur?
 - c) What attributes of the evaluation process promote professional growth?
 - d) Give an example of when the traditional method of evaluation led to professional growth of a teacher.
 - e) Give an example of when the alternative method of evaluation led to professional growth of a teacher.
- 4) Compare the traditional evaluation process to the alternative evaluation process.
 - a) In your opinion, which method of evaluation better promotes professional development?
 - b) What is the breakdown on the number of teachers who choose the traditional method? the alternative method?
 - c) What are the pros of each method? What are the cons?
 - d) How have the teachers benefited from each method?
 - e) How have you benefited from each method?
 - f) Do you think each method satisfies your school's goal of teacher evaluation?

Contact Summary Form

Contact Type
Visit
Phone

Site:
Contact Date
Position: Teacher

1. Summary of the information you got (or failed to get) on each target question.
 1. Describe the teacher evaluation plan in which you have chosen to participate.
 - a) What is your involvement in the development of the evaluation plan?
 - b) How were you informed about the evaluation process and the way it works?
 - c) Who participates in the evaluation process?
 - d) Who decides on the kind of data that will be collected? How are data collected during the evaluation process?
 - e) How are the data used?
 - 2) What is the purpose of the teacher evaluation process?
 - a) Do you think the evaluation method is effective?
 - 3) How does the teacher evaluation process promote professional growth?
 - a) Are you a part of developing a professional growth plan as a result of the evaluation?

- b) What types of support are given to you in order for professional growth to occur?
 - c) What attributes of the evaluation process promote professional growth?
 - d) Give an example of when the traditional method of evaluation led to professional growth of a teacher.
 - e) What specific activities of the evaluation process led to this example?
 - f) How do you think you benefit from participating in this method of evaluation?
 - g) What concerns do you have about this evaluation method?
- 4) Why did you choose this method of evaluation?
- a) Do you think the goal of the teacher evaluation method is satisfied?
 - b) Will you continue participating in this method? For what reasons?
2. What were the main issues or themes that struck you in this contact?
3. Anything else that struck you as salient, interesting, or important in this contact?
4. Any questions to be considered?

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APPROVAL SHEET

The dissertation submitted by Sharon K. Michalak has been read and approved by the following committee:

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The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

This dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

April 9, 1998

Date

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Director's Signature