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Principals' Perceptions of Teacher Evaluation Processes and Instruments

William Harold Carpenter

Eastern Illinois University

This research is a product of the graduate program in Educational Administration at Eastern Illinois University. Find out more about the program.

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Principals' Perceptions of Teacher Evaluation Processes and Instruments

BY

William Harold Carpenter

FIELD EXPERIENCE

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

SPECIALIST IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

1998 YEAR

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE GRADUATE DEGREE CITED ABOVE

April 14, 1998

DATE
Abstract

Each year principals in Illinois schools are required to evaluate teachers. This study was conducted to assess principal perceptions of teacher evaluation processes and instruments used in schools located in the southern Illinois counties of Clinton, Hamilton, Jefferson, Marion, and Washington. The study was conducted to determine the principal perceptions related to the following research questions: (a) What are the minimum number of classroom observations principals are required to make each year before developing the final teacher evaluation? (b) What type of teacher evaluation instruments are being used in districts? (c) What is the extent of principals’ satisfaction with district teacher evaluation instruments? (d) What recommendations would principals make for improving teacher evaluation instruments currently being used? (e) What is the extent of principals’ satisfaction with district teacher evaluation processes? (f) What recommendations would principals make for improving teacher evaluation processes currently being used?

The study took place during the fall of 1997. Questionnaires were mailed on November 4, 1997, to 81 principals whose schools were located in the southern Illinois counties of Clinton, Hamilton, Jefferson, Marion, and Washington. Responses were received from 65 (79%) of the principals.

Fifty-three percent of the principals reported that they were required to conduct one observation per year for each tenured teacher. Seventeen percent of principals reported that two teacher observations were required, while 11% reported that three teacher observations were conducted. Eleven percent of reporting principals related that one observation for a tenured teacher was required every other year.
Fifty-three percent of principals reported that two non-tenured teacher observations were required each year in their school districts. Seventeen percent of principals were required to have three observations for non-tenured teachers, with 16% completing four observations.

Twenty-two percent of responding principals reported that a subjective rating list of characteristics was used in teacher evaluation. Fourteen percent of principals indicated that a checklist was used as their teacher evaluation instrument, while 13% reported that a narrative was used. Fifty-one percent of reporting principals stated that more than one type of evaluation instrument was used. Nineteen percent reported using a combination of checklist and narrative; 14% used the checklist, narrative, and subjective rating; and 8% used the narrative and subjective rating combination.

Fifty-seven percent of principals reported that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with their district’s teacher evaluation instrument. Thirty-six percent of reporting principals were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Forty-one percent of reporting principals recommended making changes in the content of the teacher evaluation instrument, while 18% recommended making changes to the scoring system. Thirteen percent of principals made statements concerning the time necessary to complete teacher observation and evaluation instruments. Ten percent of principals recommended adding evaluations and having more formative teacher evaluations.

Seventy percent of the principals who completed the questionnaire reported that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the school district’s teacher evaluation process. Twenty-seven percent of principals reported that they were either dissatisfied or
very dissatisfied with the current teacher evaluation process.

Thirty-nine percent of reporting principals recommended increasing the number of teacher observations. Twenty-eight percent of principals indicated a need to add to the current evaluation process by (a) adding conferences (7%), (b) adding more instruments to complete during evaluation (14%); and (c) adding teacher goals reached or teacher accomplishments (7%). Eleven percent of reporting principals recommended making the teacher evaluation process more subjective.

Recommendations made to the Superintendent and Board of Education of West Washington County Unit #10 School District (where the author was employed as high school principal) as a result of the study included (a) incorporating additional types of instruments in the teacher evaluation process such as a combination of checklists, narratives, and subjective ratings of listed characteristics; (b) providing more time for principals to spend evaluating teachers through additional observations and completing teacher evaluation instruments; and (c) encouraging principals and teachers to participate in effective student instruction workshops.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Prior to the 1965 passage of the ESEA (Elementary and Secondary Education Act) by the federal government, very little organization existed in the formal evaluation of education and educational programs. Robert F. Kennedy was among those U. S. Senators who forcefully insisted ESEA require that educators be accountable for federal monies they received, i.e., they were to construct and file evaluation reports of how the federal monies spent were helping to improve public education (Center on National Education Policy, 1996). Educational evaluation continued to evolve with the 1970s, and attempts to set formal evaluation criteria were made by such groups as Phi Delta Kappa, the Evaluation Research Society, and federal government programs such as the Center for the Study of Evaluation and the National Institute of Education. Each of these groups was charged with the multifaceted task of generally evaluating public education, but no specific factors were developed to evaluate teachers.

The 1985 Educational Reform Act passed by the Illinois Legislature required that a formal teacher evaluation process be adopted by each school district, but the Act gave few details to follow in establishing that process. The School Code of Illinois (1996), 5/24A-1, stated the purpose of the law was to improve the educational services of the elementary and secondary public schools of Illinois by requiring that all teachers (certificated personnel) be evaluated periodically (Illinois Association of School Boards, 1996). Further, evaluations were required to result in remedial action being taken when deemed necessary.

The Illinois law also stated that teacher evaluation should begin with the 1987-88
school year with the teachers not on contractual continued service (tenure) being evaluated at least once during the first school year. Illinois law also required that each school district develop, in cooperation with teachers or its official bargaining agent, a teacher evaluation plan and submit that plan to the Illinois State Board of Education no later than October 1, 1986. Section 5/24A-5 of the Illinois School Code provided more generalities about what should be included in the teacher evaluation plan, but did not give a definite form or plan to follow. It was therefore necessary that each Illinois school district develop its own evaluation program, instrument(s), and procedures to use in teacher evaluation.

Since required teacher evaluation plans have been in existence in Illinois school districts from October 1, 1986 to the present time, evaluation practitioners (usually building principals) have had the opportunity to use various teacher evaluation instruments and processes. This study was designed to identify the perceptions of principals (evaluation practitioners) concerning the evaluation instruments and processes in use in their school districts.

It was anticipated that successful completion of this study would provide data that could be used in making recommendations to modify and improve the current teacher evaluation instrument and processes in West Washington County Unit District #10, where the author is employed as a principal.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify the perceptions of teacher evaluation instruments and processes by principals in Illinois Regional Offices of Education #13 and #25 which include the southern Illinois counties of Clinton, Hamilton, Jefferson, Marion, and Washington.
Research Questions

Following are research questions which the study was designed to answer:

1. What are the minimum number of classroom observations principals are required to make each year before developing the final teacher evaluation?

2. What type of teacher evaluation instruments are being used in districts?

3. What is the extent of principals' satisfaction with district teacher evaluation instruments?

4. What recommendations would principals make for improving teacher evaluation instruments currently being used?

5. What is the extent of principals' satisfaction with district teacher evaluation processes?

6. What recommendations would principals make for improving upon teacher evaluation processes currently being used?

Uniqueness of the Study

It was believed that the results of this study should benefit West Washington County Community Unit School District #10 by providing information to develop recommendations to improve its teacher evaluation instrument and processes. School districts in Regional Office of Education #13 and Regional Office of Education #25 were selected because these schools are located in a geographic area near West Washington County Community Unit School District #10.

Assumptions of the Study

It was assumed that principals participating in the study were responsible for teacher evaluation in their schools. It was also assumed that school districts in which these principals served had established teacher evaluation plans. It was further assumed
that the principals knew about the teacher evaluation instruments and processes in their
districts and would provide appropriate information concerning them.

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited to the perceptions of school principals concerning teacher
evaluation instruments and processes. The study was also limited to principals in the
Illinois Regional Offices of Educational #13 and #25 which include the southern Illinois
counties of Clinton, Hamilton, Jefferson, Marion, and Washington.

Delimitations of the Study

A delimitation of this study was the lack of involvement of certified teachers,
superintendents of schools, students, parents, and others not directly involved in the
school district teacher evaluation plan. Although many of these groups/individuals may be
involved in some way in the teacher evaluation process, they were not considered in this
study.

Definition of Terms

Evaluation instrument: the document completed during the required formal
evaluation of certified teachers.

Principal: the chief school official of each Illinois school building usually assigned
the responsibility for teacher evaluation, among other things.

Teacher evaluators: those administrators (usually principals) who have
administrative certification (an Illinois type 75 certificate), who have received Illinois
Administrators' Academy training in teacher evaluation, and are qualified to complete
teacher evaluation as described in Sec. 5/24 A-3 of the Illinois School Code.

Teacher evaluation process: those procedures developed under Section 5/24 A-4
of the Illinois School Code used to evaluate teachers.
Chapter 2
Review of Related Literature and Research

After the release of *A Nation at Risk*, the quality of the educational system in America today was in question (Bell, 1993). Bell stated that most states responded to *A Nation at Risk* with a flurry of legislative action which established mandates, accountability directives, and various other changes in educational policies. Several state legislatures and governors created their own commissions to study their state education systems and to recommend reform measures.

The Educational Reform Act of 1985 in Illinois was related to this concern over the quality of education in that many mandates and directives coming from the state capital were clearly directed at reforming the public schools in Illinois. Section 5/2-3.47 of the 1996 Illinois School Code required that, effective September 19, 1985, the Illinois State Board of Education should formulate a Comprehensive Educational Plan for all Illinois public schools to solve problems and deficiencies which existed at that time or may exist in the future. With that legislation came about a number of requirements with one such requirement concerning teacher evaluation (Illinois Association of School Boards, 1996). Teacher evaluation was required to be made according to an established plan by a qualified administrator. However, the Illinois School Code gave only general references as to what should be contained in the evaluation process. Each evaluation plan was to be developed by each school district following the state guidelines and submitted to the Illinois State Board of Education for review and approval (Illinois Association of School Boards, 1996). Specific job descriptions of teachers, methods of evaluation, evaluators, evaluation instruments to be used, and times of evaluations were to be developed by each Illinois school district. Since each school district was developing its own teacher
evaluation program, differences would arise in the mentioned job descriptions, evaluation procedures, evaluators, and evaluation instruments.

Reasons for performing teacher evaluation vary, but at least one major reason for the evaluation of teachers in Illinois schools by the school administrator was the fulfilling of the requirement of the law (Illinois Association of School Boards, 1996). The Illinois School Code indicated that the evaluation of certified employees was established to improve the educational services provided for the elementary and secondary public schools. Hansen and Smith (1989) stated that clinical supervision of teachers and teacher evaluation are a part of the instructional roles of the building principal.

Wiedmer (1995) stated that teacher evaluations could have two entirely different purposes. One teacher evaluation method, the formative evaluation, was the assessment of the teacher’s performance for the purpose of improving instruction. The second teacher evaluation method, the summative evaluation, was the assessment of a teacher’s performance for the purpose of making decisions about retention, tenure, and promotion. Wiedmer stated that clinical supervision (teacher observation in the classroom) should be a formative evaluation method of working with teachers for the purpose of improving student instruction. Instructional improvement involved administrators and teachers working together toward the goal of helping all students to master the basic skills needed for success in our complex society. Teacher observation and evaluation was one major way to positively impact each student in the classroom by making sure that the teacher was using effective instructional techniques in the classroom and that the students were learning. While teacher evaluation should be designed and used as a positive factor in instructional improvement, Wiedmer stated that most teachers do not like to be evaluated, react defensively to being evaluated, and view teacher evaluation as a threat to them.
DiGregorio, et al., (1994) stated that principals affirm and acknowledge the importance of teacher evaluation, but have serious concerns about the present teacher evaluation process. A number of principals believe that the present teacher evaluation process has placed principals in an adversarial position with teachers, rather than helping principals collaborate with teachers in improving classroom instruction for students. DiGregorio continued by stating that the desire of principals was to develop an evaluation system that would support the development of collegiality and reflective teaching between teachers and principals. Principals also believe that the observed lessons are not representative of what really happens in some classrooms on a daily basis. Isenberg (1990) agreed that teacher observation and evaluation must be more than an act put on by those being evaluated and must relate actual classroom experiences if the principal evaluator was to be helpful in assisting the classroom teacher to be successful.

Brandt (1996) indicated that teacher evaluation practices were frustrating both teachers and administrators because these practices did not produce the results either teachers or administrators wanted. Numerous educators were moving toward more constructivist teaching with students being actively involved in the learning situation and having more complex outcomes in the classroom. Educators believe that the traditional teacher evaluation process (as used by many school administrators) has violated the idea that adults (teachers) respond primarily to positive reinforcement, want to be involved in the evaluation process, and prefer to operate in a collegial environment. The traditional teacher evaluation process consisted of one teacher observation every year or two followed by the summative write-up.

Nolan, Hawkes, and Francis (1993) told of six clinical supervision case studies in
which the evaluators and teachers established collegial relationships. In the study, the evaluator was not necessarily the traditional evaluator (the principal), but in some cases was a professional educator that was not a principal. In one case, the evaluator was a college instructor, and in another case, the evaluator was a peer supervisor. In the clinical supervision case studies the qualities of the collegial relationship appeared to be more important than the organizational roles of the participants (whether or not the evaluators were principals/supervisors). As good working relationships developed over a number of months between the evaluator and the teacher, the teacher began to feel safe and supported. The evaluator and the teacher involved the teacher’s classroom concerns as the primary focus of the evaluation process rather than a set group of expected and required characteristics that effective teachers should demonstrate. As a result of establishing a collegial relationship between the teacher and evaluator, Nolan, Hawkes, and Francis (1993) told of the classroom successes that teachers achieved and indicated how teachers and evaluators developed great trust and respect for the other.

The writings of Gainey (1990), DePasquale (1990), and Searfoss and Enz (1996) indicated that successful teacher evaluation must have several characteristics in order to improve instruction for the students. Two common characteristics of successful teacher evaluation noted were (a) teacher observation and evaluation were an ongoing opportunity for teachers to develop professionally and (b) mutual respect, trust, and shared responsibility were achieved between the principal and the teacher.

Teacher evaluation instruments in Illinois were developed in part as a result of Illinois legislation which required each school district to develop a teacher evaluation plan. According to Braun (1996), the evaluation plan must include a description of each teacher’s duties and responsibilities and the standards to which that teacher is expected to
conform (Illinois Association of School Boards, 1996). Each Illinois school district developed its own evaluation plan which included its own instruments and processes. The Illinois School Code (Illinois Association of School Boards, 1996) stated that a copy of the evaluation must be placed in the teacher's personnel file and a copy must be provided to the teacher; hence, the evaluation had to be in some written form. The Illinois School Code also indicated specific areas in which teachers would be evaluated, which prompted school districts to develop evaluation instruments which would be used in the evaluation process.

The teacher evaluation instrument may be constructed in a variety of ways. Among the formats of the teacher evaluation instrument are the checklist, narrative, portfolio, and subjective rating of listed characteristics. Whatever format the school district chose, Bronowski, Toms-Bronowski, and Bearden (1993) stated that the teacher observation form should focus on observable teacher preparation/behaviors and observable teaching technique factors appropriate to a particular lesson. Bronowski, Toms-Bronowski, and Bearden recommended that the evaluation form be divided into two parts, one section called general characteristics and another section called instructional characteristics. The general characteristics would contain items such as classroom layout—physical arrangement, classroom mobility of the teacher, general appearance, mannerisms/gestures, and fluency in speaking. These items were rated by E, VG, G, F, P, NA which stood for excellent, very good, good, fair, poor, not appropriate. The instructional characteristics would include items such as (a) class time spent on lesson topics; (b) directions provided (logical transitions in material covered, appropriateness of material taught, amount of teacher/student initiated talk, amount of time spent on discussion—homework/worksheets—lecture—text—small group work); and (c) level of material appropriateness, reinforcement,
and closure. Each area would be rated E, VG, G, F, P, and NA. Immediately after the rating pages, printed text gave explanations for each evaluation category so that the principal evaluator and the teacher to be observed would be able to develop a common understanding before the pre-observation conference, observation, and the post-observation conference. Bronowski, Toms-Bronowski, and Bearden (1993) also expressed the idea that the teacher observation form served three purposes: (a) establish the purpose and range each category entailed; (b) help to focus the pre-observation conference; (c) provide for parameters for reflection by the evaluator and teacher in the post-observation conference. Bronowski, Toms-Bronowski, and Bearden (1993) also stated that teachers view observations as a legitimate manner in which to determine change, for self-improvement, and to follow the tenure track or pay-scale ladder.

Weber and McBee (1990) related the idea that teacher evaluation instruments may be used by principals and administration as a method of determining merit pay issues. Most evaluation programs which include merit pay are based upon the idea of monetarily rewarding good teachers by stipends or early advancement on the pay scale. Weber and McBee (1990) also stated that teacher evaluation was frequently an underdeveloped activity and that teacher evaluation instruments commonly fail to demonstrate the adequate validity and reliability required of instruments used to identify competent teaching. Charges by researchers, teacher advocates, and others in the field that instruments were inadequate and/or ineffective have been common. However, it was not likely that teacher evaluation and the use of teacher evaluation instruments would be discontinued, even with the problems associated with each. Weber and McBee’s study revealed that teacher attributes such as teacher behavior directed toward students, teacher cooperation and responsiveness to administrative needs of the school, and the teacher
professional demeanor were characteristics found in a typical teacher evaluation instrument. Based upon these characteristics, some validity would be found in the teacher evaluation instrument. In some cases, the teacher evaluation instrument could also be used to help differentiate between the meritorious and nonmeritorious teachers. But Weber and McBee did not feel that teacher evaluation instruments should be used as the only determining factor when deciding who should receive merit pay.

Pigford (1989) defined a checklist as a teacher evaluation instrument format that listed correct teacher behaviors and provided space for a check to be made on the evaluation form showing that the teacher received credit for each behavior. Pigford indicated that the checklist might destroy the art of teaching by reducing it to a list of discrete, observable behaviors. Other problems Pigford indicated were that checklists imposed a common set of teaching behaviors on all teachers, that checklists implied that there was only one best way of teaching, and that checklists could stifle the professional growth of educators. It was implied that student learning could be ignored as long as the teacher received the correct number of checks on the list the principal evaluator marked during the teacher evaluation observation. Pigford stated that checklists may be a starting point in the evaluation process for some novice teachers and supervisors, but checklists should not be the only teacher evaluation instrument used for the final teacher evaluation rating.
Chapter 3
Design of the Study

General Design of the Study

The study utilized a questionnaire to gather data about principal perceptions of teacher evaluation processes and instruments used in southern Illinois schools located within Illinois Regional Offices of Education #13 and #25 which include the counties of Clinton, Hamilton, Jefferson, Marion, and Washington. The questionnaire was designed to provide data to answer the following six research questions:

1. What are the minimum number of classroom observations principals are required to make each year before developing the final teacher evaluation?

2. What type of teacher evaluation instruments are being used in districts?

3. What is the extent of principals’ satisfaction with district teacher evaluation instruments?

4. What recommendations would principals make for improving teacher evaluation instruments currently being used?

5. What is the extent of principals’ satisfaction with district teacher evaluation processes?

6. What recommendations would principals make for improving teacher evaluation processes currently being used?

Sample and Population

The population surveyed consisted of 81 principals in the southern Illinois schools located in Regional Offices of Education #13 and #25 which serve Clinton, Hamilton, Jefferson, Marion, and Washington counties. Regional Offices of Education #13 and #25 were used to obtain the principal names, school names, and school addresses. This
population constituted all public school principals in the selected geographical area described. This population was selected because of similarity of location and characteristics of school districts in relation to West Washington County Community Unit School District #10.

Data Collection and Instrumentation

A questionnaire (see Appendix A) was developed by the author to collect information from principals concerning their perceptions of school district teacher evaluation processes and instruments. The questionnaire was then mailed to selected principals together with a cover letter (see Appendix B) which described the purpose of the questionnaire and a self-addressed, stamped return envelope. The cover letter and questionnaire were mailed on November 4, 1997. Returned surveys were compiled on December 15, 1997. Sixty-five of the 81 surveys were returned. One questionnaire was returned uncompleted because of stated inexperience of the principal in that school district. No additional questionnaires were mailed because of the 79% response rate received with the first request. Data were collected from the questionnaire for the research questions as follows:

Research Question #1 (Questionnaire Item #1): What are the minimum number of classroom observations principals are required to make each year before developing the final teacher evaluation? Principals were to check 1, 2, 3, 4, or other and list specific numbers for a tenured teacher and non-tenured teacher.

Research Question #2 (Questionnaire Item #2): What type of teacher evaluation instruments are being used in districts? Principals were to select all of the following that applied: check lists, subjective rating of listed characteristics, portfolio, narrative, and list other specific types of instruments used.
Research Question #3 (Questionnaire Item #3): What is the extent of principal satisfaction with district teacher evaluation instruments? Principals were to select one of the following: very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied, very dissatisfied.

Research Question #4 (Questionnaire Item #4): What recommendations would principals make for improving teacher evaluation instruments currently being used? Principals were to respond by listing recommendations in the space provided on the questionnaire.

Research Question #5 (Questionnaire Item #5): What is the extent of principal satisfaction with district teacher evaluation processes? Principals were to select one of the following: very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied, very dissatisfied.

Research Question #6 (Questionnaire Item #6): What recommendations would principals make for improving teacher evaluation processes currently being used? Principals were to respond by listing recommendations in the space provided on the questionnaire.

Questionnaires Returned

Of the 81 questionnaires sent to building principals, 64 questionnaires (79%) were completed and returned. One uncompleted questionnaire was returned with the first year principal indicating that lack of experience in the district made a response inappropriate.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data that were collected from the returned questionnaires. The analyses of the data are presented in numbers and percentages and summarized in tables. Percentages were rounded to the nearest whole percents. A trend analysis was conducted for Research Questions 4 and 6.
Chapter 4
Results of the Study

Overview

A questionnaire concerning principals’ perceptions of teacher evaluation processes and instruments was sent to 81 principals in the five southern Illinois counties of Clinton, Hamilton, Jefferson, Marion, and Washington located in the Illinois Regional Offices of Education #13 and #25. Sixty-four principals returned a completed questionnaire representing a 79% response rate. Four questions were arranged in a check list format, while two questions were arranged with a space for principals to make written comments.

The numbers and percentages presented in the tables below represent the responses of principals completing and returning the questionnaire. The following research questions concerning the principals’ perceptions of teacher evaluation processes and instruments used in their school district were addressed in the questionnaire:

1. What are the minimum number of classroom observations principals are required to make each year before developing the final teacher evaluation?

2. What type of teacher evaluation instruments are being used in districts?

3. What is the extent of principals’ satisfaction with district teacher evaluation instruments?

4. What recommendations would principals make for improving teacher evaluation instruments currently being used?

5. What is the extent of principals’ satisfaction with district teacher evaluation processes?

6. What recommendations would principals make for improving teacher evaluation processes currently being used?
Results for Research Question 1

Table 1 describes data regarding the minimum number of teacher observations required for principals to make before developing the final teacher evaluation. Fifty-three percent of the principals reported that a tenured teacher was evaluated after one observation each year, 17% reported two observations were required, and 11% reported that three observations were required. No principal responding to the questionnaire stated

Table 1

Minimum Number of Observations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal responses (n=64)</th>
<th>Tenured teacher</th>
<th>Non-tenured teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One observation</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two observations</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three observations</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four observations</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zero</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One every other year</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two every other year</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three every other year</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
that four observations were necessary for tenured teachers. Three percent of principals reported that six observations were necessary for tenured teachers each year, and 2% reported that no formal teacher observation was required each year for tenured teachers. One group of responding principals reported that tenured teachers must be evaluated every other year with 11% stating that one observation must be made, 2% stating that two observations must be made, and 2% stating that three observations must be made every other year before developing the final teacher evaluation.

As indicated in Table 1, 53% of the principals reported that the final teacher evaluation for non-tenured teachers were developed after two required observations each year, while 8% of the principals developed final evaluations after only one required observation. Seventeen percent of the principals were required to make three observations each year, while 16% required four observations each year before developing the final teacher evaluation for non-tenured teachers. Three percent of the principals stated that six observations were required each year and 2% stated that no observations were required each year before developing the final teacher evaluation for non-tenured teachers.

Results for Research Question 2

Table 2 describes responses of area principals to question 2 which concerned the types of evaluation instruments used, i.e., checklists, narrative. Twenty-two percent of responding principals indicated that a subjective rating list of characteristics was used in teacher evaluation. Fourteen percent of the principals indicated checklists as their questionnaire response, while 13% checked narrative as their choice. No principal stated that the portfolio was used as the exclusive method of instrumentation to report the final teacher evaluation.
Table 2

Types of Evaluation Instruments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal responses (n=64)</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subjective rating of listed characteristics</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checklists</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checklist and narrative</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checklist, narrative, subjective rating</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative and subjective rating</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checklist and subjective rating</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio and narrative</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checklist, narrative, portfolio</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 2, over one-half (51%) of the principals indicated that a combination of the listed types of instruments was used for the final teacher evaluation. A combination of the checklist and narrative for the final teacher evaluation was used by 19% of the principals. The combination of checklist, narrative, and subjective rating of listed characteristics was used by 14% of the principals. Additional combinations listed by principals were: narrative and subjective rating at 8%; checklist and subjective rating at 6%; portfolio and narrative at 2%; and checklist, narrative, and portfolio at 2%. Two
percent of the principals did not respond to question 2. In addition, other items were included in the teacher evaluation by certain principals. One principal indicated that teachers may include professional development plans as part of the formal evaluation documentation. Another principal stated that all teachers who were evaluated must report all professional conferences and institutes attended, document each attendance, and report in writing what was learned and how this knowledge was utilized by them professionally.

Results for Research Question 3

Principals were asked to indicate their overall satisfaction with their teacher evaluation instrument in question 3. As shown in Table 3, 57% percent of the principals who responded indicated that they were very satisfied or satisfied with their district teacher evaluation instrument. Thirty-six percent of the principals reported being dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their district teacher evaluation instrument, while six percent of the principals did not respond to question 3.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal responses (n=64)</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very dissatisfied</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results for Research Question 4

Principals were asked to make recommendations for improving the teacher evaluation instrument in their school districts. Of the 64 principals who returned the questionnaire, 39 responded to questionnaire item 4. Some responses were recommendations, and others were simply statements regarding the evaluation instrument or teacher evaluation. As shown in Table 4, 41% percent of the principals who wrote suggestions recommended making changes in the content of the instrument. Eighteen percent of responding principals recommended making changes in the scoring system of the evaluation instrument while 13% commented about the amount of time needed to complete teacher evaluation. Ten percent of principals recommended adding more evaluations and using the evaluations in a formative method rather than a summative method. Eight percent of principals recommended an increase in the use of current effective teaching research and methodology in teacher evaluation instruments, while 10%

Table 4

| Principal recommendations for improving teacher evaluation instrument
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal responses (n=39)</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make changes in content of instrument</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make changes in scoring system</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time to complete evaluation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add number of evaluations and formative evaluations</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase effective teaching research and methods</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other comments</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
made other comments. Specific recommendations for improving teacher evaluation instruments are presented in Appendix C.

Results for Research Question 5

Principals were asked to indicate their overall satisfaction with the district teacher evaluation process. As indicated in Table 5, 70% of principals were very satisfied or satisfied with their district teacher evaluation process, while 27% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their process. Three percent of principals did not respond to question 5.

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Principal Satisfaction With District Teacher Evaluation Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal responses (n=64)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results for Research Question 6

Question 6 asked principals to make recommendations needed to improve the teacher evaluation process. Less than one-half (28) of the 64 responding principals made recommendations on how to improve the current teacher evaluation process in their school district. Thirty-nine percent of the principals recommended increasing observation time. Twenty-eight percent of principals stated a need to add to the evaluation process by additional conferences while 11% felt that the evaluation process should be more
subjective. Twenty-one percent of principals made other various comments about recommendations for improving the district teacher evaluation process. Specific principal recommendations for improving district teacher evaluation processes are presented in Appendix D.

Table 6

Principal Recommendations for Improving District Teacher Evaluation Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal responses (n=28)</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increasing observation time</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add to evaluation process by additional conferences</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process should be more subjective</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other comments</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 5
Summary, Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary

This study investigated principals’ perceptions of teacher evaluation processes and instruments in the southern Illinois counties of Clinton, Hamilton, Jefferson, Marion, and Washington. It was believed that the results of this study would benefit West Washington County Community Unit School District #10 by providing information to develop recommendations to improve its teacher evaluation processes and instrument.

The specific research questions addressed by this study were:

1. What are the minimum number of classroom observations principals are required to make each year before developing the final teacher evaluation?

2. What type of teacher evaluation instruments are being used in districts?

3. What is the extent of principals’ satisfaction with district teacher evaluation instruments?

4. What recommendations would principals make for improving teacher evaluation instruments currently being used?

5. What is the extent of principals’ satisfaction with district teacher evaluation processes?

6. What recommendations would principals make for improving teacher evaluation processes currently being used?

This study was based on data collected from a questionnaire sent to building principals located in Regional Offices of Education #13 and #25, consisting of the southern Illinois counties of Clinton, Hamilton, Jefferson, Marion, and Washington. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data collected for each research question.
Findings

Fifty-three percent of principals who responded to the questionnaire reported that formal teacher observation for tenured teachers was required once each year. Twenty-eight percent of the responding principals reported that tenured teachers were required to be observed either twice (17%) or three times (11%) per year. Fifteen percent of reporting principals responded that tenured teachers were required to be observed every other year with 11% reporting one observation required, 2% requiring two observations every other year, and 2% requiring three observations every other year.

Fifty-three percent of responding principals reported that formal teacher observation for non-tenured teachers was required twice each year. Other responses indicated that non-tenured teachers required one observation per year (8%), three observations per year (17%), four observations per year (16%), and six observations per year (3%). Two percent of the reporting principals reported that no formal observations were required for non-tenured teachers.

Principals reported that a variety of evaluation instruments were used and used in different combinations. Of the principals reporting using only one evaluation instrument, 22% used a subjective rating of listed characteristics, 14% used checklists, and 13% used a narrative form. None of the reporting principals reported using the portfolio exclusively. Fifty-one percent of the reporting principals used a combination of the four listed evaluation instrument examples with 19% reporting the use of checklists and narratives; 14% using checklists, narratives, and subjective ratings; 8% using narratives and subjective ratings; 6% using checklists and subjective ratings; 2% using portfolio and narrative; and 2% using checklists, narratives, and portfolios.

Fifty-seven percent of the principals reported that they were either satisfied or very
satisfied with their district evaluation instruments, and 36% reported that they were either
dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their district's teacher evaluation instrument. Six
percent did not respond to this question.

Thirty-nine reporting principals wrote a response for question 4 that asked
principals to make recommendations for improving their district's teacher evaluation
instrument. Some responses were recommendations, and others were simply statements
regarding the evaluation instrument or teacher evaluation. Forty-one percent of the
principals who wrote suggestions recommended making changes in the content of the
instrument. Eighteen percent of responding principals recommended making changes in
the scoring system of the evaluation instrument, while 13% commented about the amount
of time needed to complete teacher evaluation. Ten percent of principals recommended
adding more evaluations and using the evaluations in a formative method rather than a
summative method. Eight percent of principals recommended an increase in the use of
current effective teaching research and methodology in teacher evaluation instruments,
while 10% made other comments.

Seventy percent of principals reported being very satisfied or satisfied with the
teacher evaluation process used in their districts. Twenty-seven percent of principals
reported being very dissatisfied or dissatisfied with the current teacher evaluation process.
Three percent of reporting principals had no response concerning teacher evaluation
processes.

Less than one-half (28) of the responding principals made recommendations
concerning how to improve current teacher evaluation processes. Thirty-nine percent of
the principals responding to this item recommended an increase in observation time by
having more observations. Twenty-eight percent of principals stated a need to add to the
evaluation process by (a) additional conferences (7%); (b) adding more instruments to complete during evaluation (14%); and (c) adding teacher goals reached and accomplishments (7%). Eleven percent of responding principals felt that the evaluation process should be more subjective. Twenty-one percent of the principals made various other comments.

Conclusions

Although the principal responses in this study indicate that one tenured teacher observation per year and two non-tenured teacher observations per year were the most common, the writer feels that this limited number of observations is not sufficient to adequately evaluate teachers.

Types of evaluation instruments described in question 2 were checklists, subjective rating of listed characteristics, portfolio, narrative, and other. It was interesting to discover that a majority of questionnaire responses chose the “other” category. In elaborating on written responses under the other category, no one single type of evaluation instrument was chosen. Rather, a mixture or combination of different instruments was reported by principals. This is notable since Pigford (1989) (as reported in Chapter 2 of this study) related that using only one type of evaluation instrument (checklists in that case) was not the proper way to evaluate teachers and suggested that a combination of different instruments may be the best way to arrive at fair and proper teacher evaluation.

It was quite surprising for the writer to discover that a majority (57%) of principals who returned the completed questionnaire reported that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the teacher evaluation instrument, while only 36% of principals reported being dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. During discussions between the author and other
principals at workshops, conferences, etc., the majority of principals had expressed dissatisfaction with the teacher evaluation instruments and/or the teacher evaluation processes.

Recommendations for improving their district’s teacher evaluation instrument revealed that the responding principals had a few ideas in common. Only 39 of the 64 reporting principals wrote an improvement recommendation, which may indicate that many principals realize that there is a problem with the teacher evaluation instrument, but were unsure of how to improve it. Forty-one percent of responding principals recommended making changes in the content of the instrument, while 18% commented on changing the scoring system in some way. Thirteen percent commented about the need to increase the amount of time used to evaluate teachers. Ten percent of responding principals recommended adding to the number of observations and using formative rather than summative evaluations. Eight percent of principals recommended using effective teaching research and methodology, while 10% had other various comments.

The vast majority (70%) of the responding principals expressed satisfaction with their current teacher evaluation processes. This again was notable since the writer believed that most principals were dissatisfied with current teacher evaluation processes.

Only 44% of the responding principals chose to make comments or recommendations regarding the improvement of teacher evaluation processes. This percentage is low and perhaps expresses the idea that there is no easy solution to arriving at an excellent teacher evaluation process for all principals to use. Of the reporting principals, 39% commented about the amount of observation time that was necessary and the amount of time used to complete the evaluation forms. Twenty-eight percent of the reporting principals recommended adding something to the evaluation process: 7%
recommended additional conferences, 14% recommended increasing the variety of evaluation instruments, and 7% recommended using goals reached and teacher accomplishments as a part of the evaluation process. Eleven percent of principals recommended making the process more subjective while 21% made other comments concerning the teacher evaluation process.

Recommendations

The following are recommendations which the author has made to change and improve the teacher evaluation process for West Washington County Unit #10 Schools:

1. Incorporate additional types and combinations of teacher evaluation instruments, i.e., use checklists, narratives, and subjective ratings of listed characteristics to improve the quality of the teacher evaluation instrumentation.

2. Provide more time for principals to evaluate teachers. This time should be provided so that additional teacher observations can be made by the principals and so that the teacher evaluation instruments can be completed in an appropriate and timely fashion.

3. Encourage administrators and teachers to participate frequently in effective student instruction workshops in order to keep staff members current with effective instruction practices and research so that student instruction can continually be reviewed and improved.

4. Place more emphasis on formative evaluation processes for tenured teachers.
References


Appendix A

Questionnaire Concerning Principal Perceptions of Teacher Evaluation Processes and Instruments

This form should be completed by the individual responsible for teacher evaluation. Please answer the following questions with a check mark placed by your response or by writing your answer in the space provided. All answers to question(s) should be in relation to and apply to your school district, the district where you now are an administrator responsible for evaluating teachers.

1. What is the minimum number of classroom observations you are required to make each year before developing final teacher evaluations?
   - Tenured teacher
     - __1__
     - __2__
     - __3__
     - __4__
     - __Other (please specify)__
   - Non-tenured teacher
     - __1__
     - __2__
     - __3__
     - __4__
     - __Other (please specify)__

2. Please indicate the type of evaluation instrument(s) used in your district. (Check as many as apply)
   - __Check list__
   - __Subjective rating of listed characteristics__
   - __Portfolio__
   - __Narrative__
   - __Other (please specify)__

3. Please indicate your overall satisfaction with your district teacher evaluation instrument(s).
   - __Very satisfied__
   - __Satisfied__
   - __Dissatisfied__
   - __Very dissatisfied__

4. Please indicate any recommendations you have for improving the teacher evaluation instrument(s) used in your district.
5. Please indicate your overall satisfaction with your district teacher evaluation process.
   ___ very satisfied  ___ satisfied  ___ dissatisfied  ___ very dissatisfied

6. Please indicate any recommendations you have for improving the teacher evaluation process used in your district.
Appendix B

Cover Letter

TO: School Principal or Individual Responsible for Teacher Evaluation
FROM: Harold Carpenter, Principal of Okawville Jr. Sr. High School
DATE: November 4, 1997
RE: Current teacher evaluation instruments and procedures

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather data concerning current teacher evaluation instruments and procedures. Please take a few minutes to answer the questionnaire. The data collected from your response will be used as part of a field study for Eastern Illinois University. The knowledge gained will be used to improve the teacher evaluation program at West Washington County Unit #10 School District.

Please complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope by Friday, November 14, 1997. Thank you for your time and consideration. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 618-243-5201.

If you would like to receive a copy of the results of the questionnaire, please place your name and address on a separate sheet of paper and return it with the questionnaire.

Sincerely,

Harold Carpenter, Principal
Okawville Jr. Sr. High School
400 S. Hanover Street
Okawville, IL 62271

enclosures
Appendix C

Principal Recommendations for Improving Teacher Evaluation Instrument

1. **Make changes in content of instrument:** 41% of respondents (16)

   a. change instrument so that factors which impact student learning will be rated higher
   b. evaluation areas not thoroughly covered with current checklist instrument
   c. change some of the rating characteristics in the instrument
   d. make the evaluation instrument more objective instead of so subjective
   e. instrument should include section for characteristics noted during informal observations
   f. need to develop teacher portfolios
   g. develop an instrument for teacher self-evaluation
   h. develop instrument which has section for goal setting in teaching and evaluating
   i. use professional development plans as part of the teacher evaluation instrument
   j. use more narrative format in the evaluation tool -- (2 principals)
   k. evaluation instrument should have sections of checklists, portfolios, and narratives in order to properly judge teaching ability
   l. change from current checklist approach to narrative evaluation
   m. add professionalism as a category and use such things as professional dress, professional growth, etc.
   n. have more descriptors in evaluation areas
   o. evaluation areas not thoroughly covered with current checklist instrument

2. **Make changes in scoring system:** 18% of respondents (7)

   a. break down evaluation points into areas of instruction
   b. need to have point total for excellent, satisfactory, unsatisfactory
   c. change ratings on instrument from excellent, satisfactory, unsatisfactory to some other rating such as successful or unsuccessful
   d. use a 4 point rating scale: N/A is rated 0, Excellent is 3, Satisfactory is 2, Unsatisfactory is 1
   e. delete the three categories of evaluation, teachers either meet expectations or they don’t meet
   f. increase rating scale to 4, superior, excellent, satisfactory, unsatisfactory
   g. lessen the emphasis on the scoring system in the summative evaluation and emphasize formative evaluation, especially for tenured teachers

3. **Time to complete evaluation:** 13% of respondents (5)

   a. instrument requires a lot of time to complete and does not give very good feedback
   b. spend more time in the classroom evaluating
   c. increase observation to two successive observations to see continuity
   d. difficult to have adequate formative and summative evaluation because of time needed
   e. reduce the number of areas evaluated, now have 43 different evaluation areas, time constraints make evaluation difficult
4. **Add number of evaluations and formative evaluations:** 10% of respondents (4)
   a. recommend requiring tenured teachers have 2 observations
   b. emphasize formative evaluation, especially for tenured teachers
   c. teacher evaluation needs to be used for improvement (formative), not used for a yearly test (summative)
   d. instruct teachers that evaluations are to help improve instruction

5. **Increase effective teaching research and methods:** 8% of respondents (3)
   a. change instrument so that it reflects current teacher evaluation methodology
   b. topics on evaluation instrument should include all aspects of good teaching practices
   c. observation categories and definitions needs to be from effective school research

6. **Other comments:** 10% of respondents (4)
   a. recommendation to change instrument
   b. revise teacher evaluation instrument as it is 10+ years old -- (2 principals)
   c. we did just change instrument
Appendix D

Principal Recommendations for Improving District Teacher Evaluation Process

1. **Observation time, form completion**: 39% of respondents (11)
   a. to truly evaluate teachers, unannounced observations need to be used
   b. using pre-observation conference, observation, post-observation conference system is very time consuming when evaluating very many teachers, but important
   c. have two observations per year for tenured teachers and three for non-tenured teachers
   d. increase amount of time spent on evaluation process
   e. require minimum of three visits to teacher classroom
   f. spend more time in classroom evaluating and working with teacher
   g. alternate year evaluations
   h. increase time for teacher evaluation
   i. have more time to evaluate and spend more time in classroom
   j. have one to two week observation times
   k. shorten the form

2. **Add to evaluation process**:

   **Additional conferences**: 7% of respondents (2)
   a. add a step in the evaluation process--a communication conference about evaluation for clarification purposes
   b. final conference at the end of all evaluations required separate from any post observation conference

   **Increase variety of instruments used**: 14% of respondents (4)
   a. Add an evaluation instrument which evaluates actions outside the classroom, i.e., attitude, cooperation, peer/administrative relationships, etc.
   b. develop a student performance method of evaluation--(2 principals)
   c. option to eliminate checklists with tenured teachers and use narratives when needed

   **Teacher goals reached and accomplished**: 7% of respondents (2)
   a. develop a career ladder for teachers
   b. build evaluation on accomplishments and objectives reached

3. **Process should be more subjective**: 11% of respondents (3)
   a. see less rating scales and more subjectivity
   b. make evaluation more subjective than a checklist
   c. evaluation instrument needs to be more than a checklist, needs more narrative in evaluation

4. **Other comments**: 21% of respondents (6)
   a. place more weight on teaching ability rather than having the same value as arriving to school on time
   b. state of Illinois should develop a state wide evaluation instrument and process
c. eliminate (change) teacher union “red tape”, i.e., mastery teacher, just cause
d. teacher awareness of evaluation process needs to be raised
e. require teachers to attend workshops emphasizing good teaching practices
f. use peer evaluators and outside (other schools) evaluators