Teacher evaluation has historically been viewed as a personnel function, not as a tool designed to improve instructional practice.

Significantly influenced by Danielson’s, *Enhancing Professional Practice; A Framework for Teaching* (1996), the Iowa Teaching Standards and Model Framework for Teacher Evaluation were mandated in 2003.
STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

“Teacher evaluation should provide opportunities for teachers at different developmental stages to be involved in processes and activities appropriate to their experience and expertise.”

“In addition, teacher evaluation should be heavily focused on the formative aspects of evaluation, using staff-directed activities for the purpose of promoting professional development, especially development focused on improving student achievement as determined by district achievement goals.”

PUSHFLOW FOR DESIGNING A LOCAL STAFF EVALUATION SYSTEM (P. 1)

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to determine if a representative sampling of teachers and administrators would report that the standards-based evaluation system mandated in the state of Iowa in 2003 has genuine utility and value.

- “utility”: the state or quality of being useful; usefulness: something useful; a useful thing. (Farflex, 2010)

- “value”: worth in usefulness or importance; utility or merit: a principle, standard, or quality considered worthwhile or desirable. (Farflex, 2010)
SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

A combination of professional and political pressures have influenced a majority of states (including Iowa) to turn to higher stakes, standards-based teacher evaluation systems.

Significant resources have been invested to devise and implement comprehensive teacher accountability systems.

Because of the potential impact on student success, it is critical to study whether or not there is credible evidence to indicate this investment is yielding the anticipated results that will eventually lead to increased student achievement.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. To what degree do teachers and administrators in Iowa report that they have a thorough knowledge of the Iowa Teaching Standards and Criteria and how do their responses differ?

2. To what degree do teachers and administrators in Iowa perceive that the policies and procedures related to the standards-based teacher evaluation system have been implemented in a fair and ethical manner and how do their responses differ?
3. To what degree do teachers and administrators perceive that individuals conducting evaluations have the necessary qualifications and expertise to conduct the evaluation process and how do their responses differ?

4. To what degree do teachers and administrators in Iowa perceive that the data generated and feedback provided during the standards-based teacher evaluation process help to improve teaching practices and how do their responses differ?

5. To what degree do teachers and administrators perceive that the standards-based evaluation system has impacted instructional practices and contributed to improved professional development programs and how do their responses differ?

6. To what degree do teachers and administrators report that their experiences utilizing the standards-based evaluation system contributes to professional growth, motivation and personal satisfaction and how do their responses differ?
7. Which components of the standards-based teacher evaluation system do teachers and administrators perceive as having the most impact on the professional practices of teachers and how do their responses differ?

**Related Literature**

- Donaldson, Morgaen (2009)
- Hughes, Victoria (2006)
- Lawler, Daniel (1992)
- Schumacher, Gerald (2004)
Sample for the Study:

- **Certificated Teachers** \((n = 1,792)\) that taught within their current district for at least one year and have completed at least one evaluation cycle utilizing the standards-based evaluation instrument adopted by their district.

- **Licensed Administrators** \((n = 207)\) who completed the Iowa Evaluator Training Program and are directly involved in conducting teacher evaluations utilizing the standards-based evaluation instrument adopted by their school district.

Representative Sample of 41 Iowa Schools

- **School Size**: The classification system for music and/or athletic competitions will serve as a guide to generate a listing of potential schools.

- **Geographic Representation**: 2 to 5 schools from each of the ten Area Education Agencies (AEA) in Iowa.
Survey Instruments were significantly influenced by:


   - The original TEP as well as several modified versions of the survey have been used in various studies spanning the past two decades.

Pilot Studies

1. Administrator Survey Pilot Study
   - School Administrators of Iowa Convention (August 2010)

2. Teacher Survey Pilot
   - 44 Teachers (25 elementary / 19 Secondary) – Pending

Modified Survey Cronbach’s Alpha Reliability:

1. Teacher Survey = .963
2. Administrator Survey: .957

Parallel Survey Instruments for Teachers & Administrators:

- Written permission to utilize “modified survey” was granted.
- Demographic Information:
  1. Gender;
  2. Years of Experience;
  3. Size of School;
  4. Grade Level Teaching / Administrative Assignment

- 44 Questions in Seven Categories
  1. Knowledge of Iowa’s 8 Teaching Standards and 42 Criteria.
  2. Perceptions regarding implementation of standards-based system.
  3. Perceived qualifications of those conducting evaluations.
  4. Quality of data and feedback provided during evaluation process.
  5. Impact of standards-based evaluation on professional practices.
  7. Questions focused on the impact of the various components of the Iowa Standards-Based Evaluation System.
SPSS Student Version 18.0

Demographic Sub-Groups:
1. Gender / School Size / Years of Experience / Grade Level Assignment

Descriptive Statistical Analysis:
1. Record individual responses with a value ranging from 1 to 5.
2. Individual survey responses were combined to create an aggregate score for teachers and an aggregate score for administrators for each question.
3. Frequency distributions were utilized to measure central tendency (mean) and dispersion (standard deviation) to create a descriptive analysis of survey responses for both teachers and administrators.

Comparative Statistical Analysis:
1. Aggregate scores for teachers and administrators were calculated for each of the seven sub-categories of the survey and for all questions contained in the survey.
2. One-way ANOVA was be used to determine if the variations in the clustered aggregate scores were statistically significant.
3. Decisions relating to statistical significance of the inferential statistical analysis were based on $p < .05$.
4. When significance was determined, Cohen’s $d$ statistic was utilized to determine effect size with 0.2 = small effect, 0.5 = medium effect and 0.8 = large effect.
5. The Games-Howell post-hoc test was utilized during the demographic analysis to identify specific sub-groups that were causing variations at the $p < .05$ significance level.
**CONCLUSION #1**

1. With the exception of Question 20 (student data supports teacher evaluation) administrators collectively rated every survey question higher than teachers.

Thus, indicating administrators are more likely to view the standards-based evaluation system as having had a greater impact on professional practices than do teachers.

**CONCLUSION #2...**

A consistent pattern emerged between the survey responses of teachers and administrators.

The mean survey rankings of administrators was 0.49 higher than the mean ranking of teachers.

Survey items ranked lower by administrators also tended to be ranked lower by teachers... An indication that teachers and administrators often had similar views of the standards-based teacher evaluation system albeit on a significantly different scale.
Both administrators and teachers ranked the first three sub-categories of the survey higher than the last four sections of the survey.

Higher Ranking Categories:
1. Knowledge of Teaching Standards
2. Fair and Ethical Implementation
3. Qualifications of Those Conducting Evaluations

Lower Ranking Categories:
4. Quality of Data and Feedback
5. Observed impact on Teaching and Professional Development
6. Motivation and Personal Satisfaction
4. Administrators ranked their knowledge of the Iowa teaching standards and their understanding of the purposes of the standards-based evaluation system at a significantly higher level than teachers.

5. Both teachers and administrators perceived their district’s expectations pertaining to the implementation of the standards-based evaluation to be reasonable. However, both also indicate that the support provided to help teachers meet the expectations might not be as strong as it could be.

6. Both administrators and teachers report that the standards-based teacher evaluation system has been implemented in a fair manner and has promoted ethical practices.

7. Teachers reported having a high level of confidence in the knowledge and expertise of the individual conducting their evaluations and that they perceive the standards-based evaluation system has been implemented in a non-threatening manner within their district.
8. Teachers and administrators reported that the feedback provided during the evaluation process is an accurate reflection of teaching practices and that there is a clear link between the feedback generated and the teaching standards and criteria.

However, teachers indicate that the link between the feedback generated during the evaluation process and professional development opportunities is much less evident.

CONCLUSION #8… “The Weakest Link”

9. Teachers and administrators agree that student achievement data currently plays a minimal role in teacher evaluation.

There is very strong agreement that little evidence currently exists to support the contention that the achievement levels of students have increased due to participation in the standards-based evaluation system.

There is strong disagreement between teachers and administrators regarding the increased use of student achievement data (formative data, summative data and standardized test scores) as a part of teacher evaluation in the future.

CONCLUSION #9… “The Data Divide”
“The Data Divide”

“Linking student performance and teacher evaluation is hugely important. You have to look at multiple measures, as you do in any profession. But the issue we have is that teacher evaluation has been entirely divorced from student performance, as if that’s not relevant. To me, that demeans the profession. We haven’t rewarded great talent, supported those in the middle and moved out those at the bottom.”

Education Secretary, Arne Duncan
Q & A: The Eyes of America are on Newark’s Reform

“Unfortunately, it’s not so straightforward in practice...” and getting from here to there will be bloody…”

“The answer, then, is to develop better training for supervisors and better methods of evaluating teachers, including using value-added analysis but also classroom observations and other tools. Parents should, of course, have access to the results of comprehensive evaluations. Not something as oversimplified as a computer spitting out a ranking of teachers, but a system that is more durable and far-reaching.”

Andrew J. Rotherham
Bellwether Education
http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,2020867,00.html
10. Administrators report that the implementation of the standards-based evaluation system has had a small to moderate impact on instructional practices while teachers indicate that few professional practices have changed as a result of the standards-based evaluation system.

11. There is some recognition among teachers and administrators that the standards are reflective of best practices and acknowledge that meeting the expectations identified in the standards will likely lead to improved instructional practices.

12. Neither teachers nor administrators report an increase in personal satisfaction as a result of their participation in the standards-based evaluation system.

13. Administrators report to a moderate extent, that the professional growth gained from participation in the standards-based evaluation system has been worth the investment of time and effort. Teachers indicate that the growth gained from participation in the standards-based evaluation system has not been worth the time and effort invested.
14. Administrators appear to be more supportive of the continued use of the standards-based evaluation system than teachers.

15. Administrators rated the impact of the mentoring program relatively strong in comparison to teachers who showed moderate support for the program.

16. Teachers and administrators ranked the post-observation conference as the most impactful component of the evaluation process while identifying the review of artifacts and portfolios as having the least impact on professional practices.

17. Both teachers and administrators indicated that the annual review of career development plans (the formative component of the evaluation system) had minimal impact on professional practices.

18. Administrators indicated a slight preference for informal (walk-through) observations while teachers prefer formal classroom observation of 30 minutes or more.
CONCLUSION #19 and #20…

19. For the administrator sample, there were no statistically significant differences in responses in three of the four demographic categories: grade level assignment, school size, or years of administrative experience. However, there was a significant difference in the rankings of male and female administrators regarding their perceptions of the qualifications and expertise of those conducting teacher evaluations.

20. For the teacher sample, there were significant variations in the responses in all four demographic categories: gender, grade level assignment, years of teaching experience and school size.

Recommendation #1…

BUILD ON INITIAL SUCCESS…

☑ The findings indicate that teachers and administrators agree that the expectations associated with the standards-based evaluation system are reasonable, that there is a relatively high confidence level in the qualifications of evaluators, that the evaluation system generates accurate feedback and promotes ethical practices.

☑ Stakeholders should do everything possible capitalize on this positive foundation in order to take this work to the next level. Several researchers note that an atmosphere of trust and confidence is a precursor to the effective implementation of an evaluation system that enhances the professional growth of teachers. (Larson, 2004; Petersen, 2000; Valentine, 1992)
The findings of the study indicate that practicing teachers and administrators in Iowa are not making the important connections between teacher evaluation, professional development and the implementation of meaningful instructional practices.

Stakeholders must recognize that implementing evaluation systems that impact instruction requires a significant commitment to the formative aspects of the evaluation process. Schools must be creative in finding additional time for observation, debriefing and coaching (New Teacher Project, 2009).

Future evaluator training in Iowa will include a focus on Assessing Academic Rigor; Fierce Conversations and Developing Professional Development Plans that Impact Teaching and Learning.

Student achievement data currently plays a minor role in teacher evaluation. Little evidence exists indicating the achievement levels of students have increased due to the evaluation system. Administrators appear to support the increased utilization of student achievement data while teachers do not.

What’s the most effective way to use student achievement data?
- No Child left Behind… Increasingly unattainable AYP levels.
- Performance goals should be ambitious but realistically obtainable with sufficient effort (Linn, 2003).
- An emphasis on Formative Evaluation and the manner in which data is utilized can shift the emphasis to professional growth (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Sergiovanni & Starrat, 2002).
Administrators rated the impact of the mentoring program for new teachers relatively strong in comparison to teachers who showed only moderate support for the mentoring and induction program.

It may be that the data for this item is skewed somewhat due to the fact that a number of the experienced teachers may not have had direct experience with the mentoring program. A follow-up study involving the individuals directly involved in the mentoring program may provide more reliable data.

Administrators and Teachers reported:
- The standards-based evaluation system did not increase their sense of personal satisfaction.
- The professional growth gained from participation in the evaluation system has not been worth the investment of time and effort.

As we move forward with High-Stakes Accountability:
- Recruiting, hiring and retaining good teachers continues to be a challenge, especially in critical shortage areas such as math and science (Darling-Hammond, 2000).
- Working in a collaborative environment will likely increase commitment to the organization and enhance job satisfaction (Woods & Weasmer (2002)).
Recommendation #6...

**OBSERVATION METHODS**

- Administrators indicated a slight preference for informal (walk-through) observations while teachers indicated a preference for formal classroom observation of 30 minutes or more.

- The training provided to evaluators in the state of Iowa emphasizes the importance of having multiple data sources and data points to reach valid conclusions (Day, et.al., 2006).

- The traditional model of summative evaluation is often linked to the formal classroom observation experience. This may suggest that more work is needed to instill the concept of ongoing, formative evaluation as the most effective means for improving instructional practices.

Recommendation #7...

**REPLICATION: ADMINISTRATOR EVALUATION**

- Administrators rated all but one question higher than teachers.

- On the one to five rating scale, the average mean ranking of administrators was 0.49 higher than the mean ranking of teachers.

- In 2007, a parallel standards-based evaluation system was initiated in the state of Iowa for school administrators.

- It might be beneficial to see if similar patterns emerge if a replication of this study were conducted to compare the perceptions of principals and superintendents regarding the impact of the standards-based administrator evaluation system.
Recommendation #8...

**FOLLOW-UP: MIXED METHODS STUDY...**

- Due to the limitations of the survey instruments, a more in-depth, mixed methods study could be conducted in districts that have implemented the standards-based teacher evaluation system.

- This would allow the researcher to ask specific follow-up questions of teachers and administrators that could better inform the next level of work related to teacher evaluation in the state of Iowa.

Time for Comments / Questions / Discussions

The Impact of Standards-Based Teacher Evaluation on Instruction and Professional Practices in Iowa

Kim P. Huckstadt
September 20, 2011
RESOURCES...


