Leading the Learning

A Field Guide for Supervision & Evaluation

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Sneak Peek

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A Field Guide for Supervision and Evaluation

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Sneak Peek

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments
Introduction

I. The Contexts **1-74**
- A. What Do Schools Look Like...?
- B. Collaboration and Job-Embedded Learning
- B. Data Driven Discussions & Decisions
- C. Coaching and Mentoring for All
- D. The Supervision & Evaluation Process

II. Areas of Professional Performance **75-128**
- A. Planning Instruction
- B. Implementing Instruction
- C. Assessing Learning and the Instructional Program
- D. Orchestrating a Positive Learning-Centered Environment
- E. Organizing and Leading a Learning-Centered Environment
- F. Professionalism & Collaboration

III. Using Multiple Methods of Data Collection **129-176**
- A. Potential Sources of Data
- B. The Formal Observation Process
- C. Walk-Throughs & Other Informal Observations
- D. Student Achievement Data & Student Work
- E. Self-Assessment
- F. Professional Growth Plans
- G. Teacher Work including Portfolios

IV. Providing Growth Producing Feedback **177-218**
- A. Verbal
- B. Written
  - Informal and Formative
  - Formal and Summative

V. Tools (Also available on CD-ROM) **219-288**
- A. Forms/Formats for Collaboration and Job-Embedded Learning
- B. Data Gathering, Analysis, and Feedback
- C. Instructional Planning

VI. Appendices **289-298**

Index

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Introduction

This Field Guide is designed for use by supervisors of teachers and student teachers; coaches and mentors; and by classroom teachers at all stages of professional development.

The research and examples in this book are derived from the work of ASK Group members with school districts while creating or revising the supervision and evaluation processes. It also includes data from the Group's interactions with educators as they implemented induction programs, trained teacher leaders, and created professional learning communities. Educators who are working to understand and implement teaching, learning, and leading in a standards-based environment are finding that it is essential that all initiatives be aligned. They also find that the supervision and evaluation process must be embedded in the daily lives of educators, rather than being a series of events held to meet contractual obligations.

The ASK Group, in hundreds of discussions with classroom teachers, and those charged with the supervision and evaluation of teaching and learning, found widespread agreement that the supervision and evaluation process, as it has been implemented, does little to promote teacher growth and student learning. In fact, those interviewed agree that teachers prepare for scheduled classroom observations the way American families prepare for Thanksgiving dinner. For one special day, families prepare and serve food they do not eat any other day of the year. Then they present that food in a setting that is not part of the daily dining experience and with accompaniments rarely used.

That is the same way teachers often prepare and present their work in the formal observation process. In order for supervisors and mentors to know what goes on in classrooms, or in family dining practices, they need to partake on a regular basis and gather multiple forms of data in order to identify trends or patterns over time. This would require well-established and understood standards, clearly and mutually understood sets of criteria, systems for gathering and analyzing the effectiveness or efficiency of our practice, as well as feedback loops designed to further self-assessment and self-adjustment.

The other strong influence for developing this book was the extensive research base on best practice in classroom assessment and the strongly held belief that best practice in assessment of teaching and learning closely parallels best practice in classroom assessment.

Now let's go to work making a difference with this time consuming process that has incredible possibilities not yet realized!

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Collaboration and Job-Embedded Learning

As suggested in the **Top Ten Tips for Leading the Learning in a Standards-Based Environment** presented on page 9, supervisors who view the supervision and evaluation of competent teachers as an opportunity for collaboration and one-on-one professional development will find that the **structures listed here as formats for collaboration and job-embedded learning also appear on their list of data sources for supervision and evaluation.** As a result, many of the ways to structure job-embedded learning listed below are presented in the section entitled **Methods of Data Collection.**

- Instructional Focus for Meetings: pages 12-32
- Learning Walks: pages 34-39
- Peer Review of Plans & Products: pages 163-166
- Planning & Reflective Journals: pages 157-158
- Dialogue Journals: page 157
- Focus/Study Groups: page 34
- Book Clubs: page 33
- Learning Clubs: page 33
- Group Problem Solving
- Cognitive Coaching
- Case Studies
- Role Playing of Difficult Situations
- Analysis of Videotaped Teaching & Learning Episodes: page 27
- Observations for "Peer Poaching" & "Peer Coaching": pages 39-40
- Co-teaching: page 97
- Demonstration Teaching
- Expert Coaching
- Presentations by Internal & External "Experts"
- On-Line Chat Rooms
- Action Research: pages 41-44
- Data Analysis: pages 154-156
- Looking At Student Work: pages 45-50
- 3-D Teams: page 48
- Mentoring Relationships for All: pages 51-55
- Collaborative Teams: Grade Level, Subject Area, Vertical: page 56
- School Improvement Teams Focused on Teaching and Learning
- Teacher Leader Cadres: Building In-House Capacity: pages 57-61

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Focus on
Literacy Instruction Across the Curriculum
Ideas to Try... Best Practices to Note... Suggestions...

I want to try to... I want/need to be more purposeful about... I/You might consider... I noticed that... I/You need to... It is likely to promote student achievement if I/You ...

- Create a **text rich environment** by collecting, displaying, and using a wide variety of books, magazines, posters, etc., in the classroom
- Provide opportunities for **students to locate, organize, and use information from various sources** to answer questions, solve problems, and communicate ideas
- **Use diverse fiction and non-fiction sources** to include many authors and perspectives, as well as children's and young adult literature
- **Teach reading as a process of constructing meaning** through the interaction of the reader's prior knowledge and experiences, the information presented in the text, and the context/purpose of the reading
- **Teach affixes, prefixes, and common roots** used frequently in the content area
- Identify **independent, instructional, and frustration reading levels** of groups and individuals and plan assignments accordingly
- Provide opportunities for students to:
  - ➤**Speak** for a variety of purposes and audiences
  - ➤**Listen** in a variety of situations to information from a variety of sources
  - ➤**Write** in clear, concise, organized language that varies in content and form for different audiences and purposes
  - ➤**Read** various materials and texts with comprehension and critical analysis
  - ➤**View, understand, and use** nontextual visual information (NJ Core Curriculum)

See Chapter V: Integrating Literacy Instruction in *Why Didn't I Learn This in College?* and pages 14-19, 78-80, 88-89 in *Instruction for All Students.*

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Potential Sources of Data

Just as teachers gather assessment data in many ways, supervisors and coaches gather data about the work and the impact of teacher work on student learning in a variety of ways. **The use of multiple data sources helps ALL of us adjust our practice to enhance the learning of those we are teaching and leading.** To that end, it is recommended that supervision and evaluation processes include an acknowledgement that data sources about teacher work go well beyond traditional formal observations. That formal observations, while important, provide a limited picture of the complexity of teacher work.

Listed below are some, but certainly not all, possible sources of data about areas of professional performance. Some are useful with all areas while others are useful in selected areas. Those marked with an asterisk (*) are data sources that are already in place for other purposes but that have not, in the past, been officially acknowledged as data sources in the supervision and evaluation process.

- **Formal observation process**
- **Planning conferences**
- **Informal observations**
  - ▸walk-throughs
  - ▸parent/teacher conferences
  - ▸professional development events
  - ▸professional meetings
- **Student work***
- **Student achievement data***
  - ▸state*
  - ▸district*
  - ▸classroom assessments*
  - ▸longitudinal rubrics
  - ▸grade distribution reports*
- **Journals**
- **Self-Assessment**
- **Annual or multi-year professional goal/growth statements with action plans and documented results***
- **Teacher work**
  - ▸ year, unit, and daily lesson plans*
  - ▸ action research
  - ▸ review of records, such as plan book, grade book, teacher-prepared materials, grading policy*

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Potential Sources of Data

- teacher logs/records of after school assistance provided to students
- substitute plans*
- teacher's parent conference notes, phone logs*
- written communication initiated by the teacher, such as notes, memos, letters, and newsletters to parents, students, and colleagues*
- documentation of involvement in school and professional activities*

- **Portfolios**
- **Documentation of efforts/accomplishments in teacher leadership roles, such as mentor, department chair, team leader, curriculum design, professional development facilitator/coach, instructional advisory board, and program coordinator (i.e., International Baccalaureate, Reading Recovery)**
- **Shadowing**
- **Conversations and conferences**
  - planning conferences
  - reflective conferences
  - conversations*
  - structured interviews
  - book clubs
  - study groups
  - team meetings
  - department meetings
  - staff meetings
- **Transcripts or certificates of participation in professional development***
- **Feedback from students, parents, colleagues, and community**
  - written communications about the teacher, such as letters from parents, citations from organizations, and memos from school system personnel*
  - feedback from parent and counselor conferences
  - feedback from volunteers and business/community resources
  - substitute reports
  - student or parent surveys
- **School data sources**
  - pattern of discipline referrals and follow-up*
  - required reports for school and district*
  - requests for student placement, such as student requests to be placed in or taken out of the class or teacher requests for student to be removed*
  - attendance records*

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