A STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP MODEL FOR TEACHER EVALUATION USING WALKTHROUGHS FOR STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AT INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS IN THAILAND

John McGrath[1]

Sangob Laksana[2]

Abstract: This study used a multi-method approach to develop a model that changed the focus of teacher evaluation by using walkthroughs to guide teacher evaluation in order to increase student engagement utilizing a strategic leadership model. The objectives were (1) to explore the current practices in teacher evaluation, walkthroughs, and student engagement, (2) to determine the current practices of teacher evaluation, walkthroughs and student engagement at international schools in Thailand, (3) to develop the proposed strategic leadership model in teacher evaluation using walkthroughs to increase student engagement, and, (4) to implement the proposed strategic leadership model in teacher evaluation using walkthrough to increase student engagement in an international school in Bangkok. Current practices regarding teacher evaluation were established by using a content analysis-based questionnaire sampling schools registered with the International Schools Association of Thailand.

The results of the questionnaire and the focus group interviews conducted, pointed to a major problem with teacher evaluation and its implementation. Current models of teacher evaluation and the leadership behind them were not effective.

A new strategic leadership model was developed to use walkthroughs to improve student engagement. The model was implemented at a family of international schools in Bangkok over a six-month period. Walkthroughs gauging student engagement in areas of curriculum, instruction, environment and learning were conducted at the beginning and end of the trial period. A paired sample t-test was used to measure for statistical significance. In each of the four areas the findings were significant thereby validating the strategic leadership model and its application.

Keywords: Strategic Leadership, Walkthroughs, Student Engagement, Teacher Evaluation.

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[1] Ph.D. Candidate in Education Leadership, Graduate School of Human Sciences, Assumption University, Thailand.
  mcgrath.johnj@gmail.com

[2] Ph.D., Former Dean of Graduate School of Human Sciences, Assumption University, Thailand.
  sangoblks@gmail.com

Introduction

Education and teaching changed as a result of the advent of the World Wide Web and the expansion of the internet (Schlecty, 2004). When this happened, teachers were no longer the primary source of learning. Students now had access to instant information and teaching of became even more complex. Teaching changed but the evaluation of teachers did not. Student engagement as the key factor in determining teacher effectiveness became the focus of the research in order to effect social change. For a paradigm shift in teacher evaluation away from the teacher and towards the learner to happen a new type of leadership model was needed.

An investigation into the role of strategic leadership as a driving factor in teacher evaluation was at the core of this research. This study created a link between teacher evaluation and student engagement. By using walkthroughs, the researcher collected data on student engagement and shared this data with teachers. Teachers then used the data in order to refine their teaching so that they would be geared towards student engagement within a series of four pre-established categories. Student engagement became the focus.

Data gathering, using a walkthrough tool was taken at the beginning of the implementation cycle and again at the end to identify the gains in student engagement. The research sought to see if there would be gains in student achievement in the four identified areas as a result of the walkthroughs. A strategic leadership model was implemented to implement this intervention and to create a direct connection between teacher evaluation and student engagement.

Research Objectives

The objectives were (1) to explore the current practices in teacher evaluation, walkthroughs, and student engagement, (2) to determine the current practices of teacher evaluation, walkthroughs and student engagement at international schools in Thailand, (3) to develop the proposed strategic leadership model in teacher evaluation using walkthroughs to increase student engagement, and, (4) to implement the proposed strategic leadership model in teacher evaluation using walkthrough to increase student engagement in an international school in Bangkok.

Literature Review

Four areas were identified as key for this study: 1) teacher evaluation, 2) student engagement, 3) walkthroughs, and 4) strategic leadership.

Teacher Evaluation

The evaluation of teachers has been around for hundreds of years with little or no perceptible change. What have been consistent are the power dimension and the role of the evaluator as decision maker regarding the teachers continued employment. In the past three decades new philosophies and attitudes regarding the role of supervision in schools and the attitudes about professional development and teacher growth have shifted. Literature is plentiful when it comes to identifying how a teacher should be evaluated. Changes in attitude about styles of observation, a plethora of opinions about pedagogy and an evolving landscape in leadership have all had impact. Curriculum delivery, attitudes and theories about supervision and even

teacher training have also had an influence. Yet none of these have had a significant impact on how teachers change styles to increase effectiveness in the classroom (Tucker & Stronge, 2005). In agreement with the complexities and the issues related to current teacher evaluation systems Danielson and McGreal (2010) point to the inherent flaws in teacher evaluation. They cite six main areas of deficiency in teacher evaluation:

      a. Outdated, limited, evaluative criteria

      b. Few shared values and assumptions about good teaching

      c. Hierarchical, one-way communication

      d. Limited administrative experience

      e. Lack of precision in evaluating performance

      f. No differentiation between novice and experienced practitioner.

In the past few decades a new model of teacher observation has been delineated based on the ideas of mini-observations and walkthroughs. Rather than relying simply on the clinical supervision, many theorists are suggesting the value of increased frequent visits of a shorter duration. These walkthroughs are mostly based on the work of Charlotte Danielson and the five domains she suggested in her seminal work, Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching, 1996.

In current practices teacher evaluation has been closely linked with the accountability movement. In most instances teacher evaluation and student achievement have been connected. The factor that seems to have the greatest impact on student achievement is teacher performance (Danielson, 2001; Darling-Hammond, Wise & Klein, 1999; Tucker & Stronge, 2005). Systems and formats have varied a great deal and debate has raged over the effectiveness of each system. Marzano (2012) postulates that the reason for all this debate comes down to a critical point whereby the definition of teacher evaluation must be based on the purpose of the evaluation "is it fostering teacher learning or measuring teacher competence" (Marzano, 2012 p. 14). Marzano states that, "an evaluation system that fosters teacher learning will differ from one whose aim is to measure teacher competence" (Marzano, 2012, p. 14). Marzano believes that both elements are important. While measurement looks at only a few elements in order to rate the teacher, development is more comprehensive and focuses on areas of growth in the teacher and their instructional strategies. Teacher evaluation continues to be an area of great debate.

Student Engagement

In 1991 the opening of the World Wide Web to the public was perhaps one of the greatest game changers of all time (http://www.internethalloffame.org/). Its impact was universally felt and its influence has continued to grow since its public offering. Various parts of the world have embraced it at varying times and to varying degrees. Education was one of the first areas to see its potential. This became a major paradigm shift in education where the teacher was no longer the primary source of information. In the mid-1990's Phil Schlecty emerged on the scene postulating that there was an inherent difficulty in the current educational system. He began by pointing out that the role of the teacher had changed. The teacher was no longer the source of information. Schlecty argued that a current issue was that the teacher was a performer in the classroom, should there even exist teacher performance appraisal systems

(Sparks, 1998). He identified that the current focus of education was on the teacher, ignoring that the other 50% of the classroom was the students. The focus should be on the learners. Schlecty states, "the teacher's performance is important, but student performance is more important.

Johnmarshall Reeve writes in Chapter 7 of *Handbook of Research on Student Engagement* (Christenson, Reschly & Wylie 2012) about the self-determination theory perspective on student engagement. Reeve looks at the relationship between motivation and achievement and that engagement changes the learning environment in a significant manner. He defines engagement as the active participation by the learner in the process of learning. The public access to knowledge and information changed with the invention of the World Wide Web. Schlecty (2001) postulates that not since the invention of the printing press has education faced such a cataclysmic event. The printing press suddenly gave access to information and content (Schlecty, 2001). The teacher became the transmitter of that information and in a position of control. The teacher was the source of knowledge. This remained true until the access granted by the worldwide web and the onslaught of devices designed to give everyone access instantaneously. The teacher was no longer necessary in the traditional sense and in many cases became the obstacle for the student to overcome. If the teacher is no longer the center of education then the student must be. Traditional teaching techniques must change and Schlecty argues that teachers must find ways to get students engaged if teachers are to retain relevance.

Walkthroughs
The idea of mini-observations and short, unannounced drop-ins or treasure hunts are often bordering on the edge of evaluation and drive the debate on supervision versus evaluation. The main difference between the two does not deal with types of supervision and evaluation, but rather the purpose in the collection of the data. Danielson and McGreal clearly indicate that there are two purposes of teacher evaluation, quality assurance and professional development (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). In her work Zepeda states supervision is formative while evaluation is summative. "Teacher evaluation is summative and ideally occurs as compliment to formative supervision" (Zepeda, 2003, p.21). Walkthroughs provide this opportunity. Classroom walkthroughs can add a great deal to a school-learning climate. However, the data must be used and interpreted in a collaborative manner (Bloom, 2007). Otherwise the process can end up with mounds of data that accomplishes nothing. Moss warns against the dangers of simply collecting information (Moss 2008). Conversely, the walkthroughs, if done correctly, lead to thoughtful and productive discussions about the learning process.

In every classroom the learner is doing the work through an intellectual process. Hence it follows that when observing in a classroom the focus of the observer should not be limited to the teacher, but also attend to the active process of the learner. Its primary purpose is that walkthroughs provide data in order to create meaningful dialogue between the teacher and the principal. It is not teacher evaluation but rather a component of teacher evaluation.

Strategic Leadership

The strategic leader envisions a future with the present in mind, paying attention to the short-term goals with an eye to accomplishing the long-term goals. Quong and Walker (2010) identify the following question in their study, 'What is strategic leadership, and what do strategic leaders do?' Based on their work in Hong Kong over a three-year period they came up with seven principles in relation to their research question. They argue that the nature of strategic leadership has changed, that it used to belong to only upper management and that when managers engaged in the implementation of the process they were in fact called strategic. They posit that this has changed and that strategic leader is involved in more than writing strategic plans and vision statements (Quong & Walker, 2010, p.22) Strategic Leadership is gaining momentum as evidenced by the creation of the Strategic Leadership Programme for principals in New Zealand. It states as its goal, "Our Strategic Leadership Programme for Principals helps educational leaders develop long-term plans that make a difference to their schools and communities" (SpringboardTrust, 2015, p1.). The program is comprised of workshops a practicum and a mentor to guide. Strategic Leadership as a style emerged.

Rowe, Nejad and Nejad (2009) postulate that there is a new type of leader required in today's world, the strategic leader. This person has a variety of attributes and displays skills that combine visionary and managerial components of an organization at an even higher level. This is not to be confused with dual leadership that combines the two. The strategic leader is even more than this. The strategic leader envisions a future with the present in mind, paying attention to the short-term goals with an eye to accomplishing the long-term goals. The authors point out the strengths of the strategic leader as having the following characteristics:

- Ability to combine administrative tasks with leadership tasks
- Emphasizes ethics and integrity
- Handles daily, monthly annual and future concerns
- Design and implement methods that are immediately operational and are futuristic while adhering to company survival based on its mission and vision
- Hold everyone, including themselves, to high standards
- Controlled focus on strategy and budget
- Actualizes formal and informal knowledge on individual and organizational level
- Can use convergent or divergent thinking processes
- Believes in themselves and their actions and decisions

The role of the leader in creating an atmosphere and system that can alleviate the anxiety and mistrust in teacher evaluation is critical in ensuring that evaluations are used effectively to enhance student engagement. Strategic leadership is needed to break down the barriers that exist between teacher evaluation and student engagement. Strategic leadership breaks down these barriers by recognizing change and encouraging innovation to deal with the shifting sands. The strategic leader both empowers and allows the organization to maintain coherence and functionality.

Conceptual Framework

In order to improve student engagement a link must be established between teacher evaluations and student engagement. The strategy to do this is to gather data on student engagement, share the results with the teachers and collaboratively set goals in the established evaluation criteria, take data sampling on student engagement and check for improved engagement. Finally, determine if the student engagement has improved as a result of the walkthroughs thereby validating the goal setting in determining the summative evaluation. Clear vision of this process as outlined is critical for efficacy.
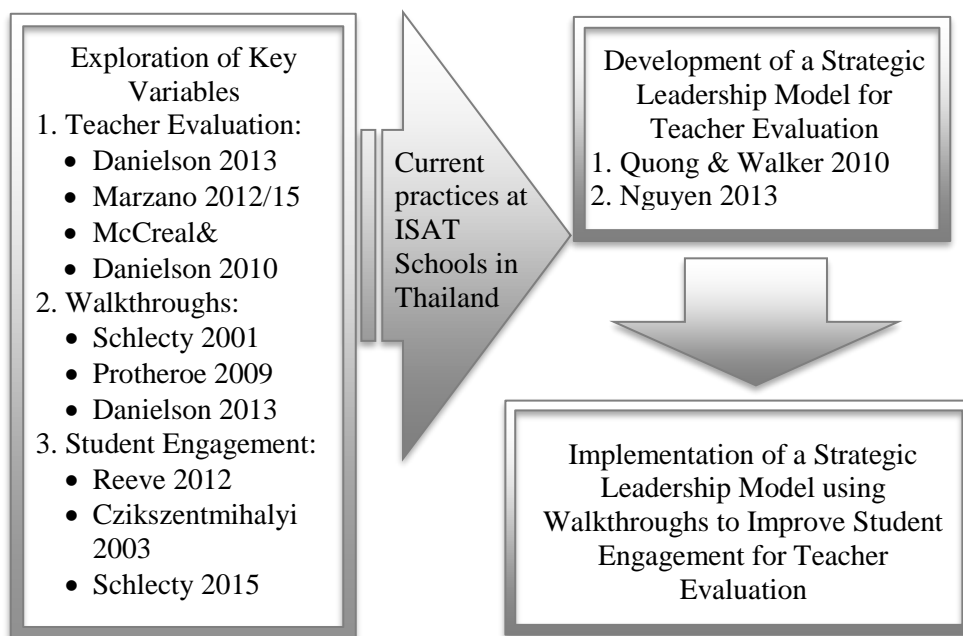

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of This Study

Methodology

A multi-method approach was used for this study. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were incorporated. Content analysis using coding tables and descriptive statistics were employed for the literature review and to create the questionnaire to determine current practices at International Schools in Thailand. A likert style scale was employed. The strategic leadership model was developed through compiling the results of a questionnaire and Focus Group Interview based on objectives one and two in order to create a strategic leadership model and implementation strategy. Once the model was developed a SWOT Analysis of a sample of schools was done. To measure the effectiveness of the strategic leadership model a walkthrough tool measuring student engagement before and after was taken. A paired samples t-test measured the significance.

Findings

Objective 1
The content analysis identified three major areas in the literature; Teacher Evaluation, Student Engagement, and Walkthroughs that were then broken down into further areas of focus as outlined in the following table.

Table 1: Categories and Themes

Teacher Evaluation	Student Engagement	Walkthroughs
1. Clinical/Developmental	1. Strategies	1. Structure
2. Observations	2. Achievement	2. Focus/Purpose
3. Feedback		
4. Professional Development		
5. Standards		

Based on the literature review there were three basic areas investigated that yielded several items each as subheadings for the research-based questionnaire. Qualitative content analysis was used to determine these results. The data from over 100 sources from two libraries as well as online sources were employed and analyzed using coding sheets. The researcher used tables and inductive reasoning to present the clustering of the data. The findings from this process were presented as three main categories teacher evaluation, student engagement and walkthroughs. Each of these categories was further broken down into cluster tables. These tables provided the basis for the scale questions in the questionnaire with corresponding sub-categories that were interpreted as the main areas of focus for developing a framework that would present as a new model. Within each of these the patterns emerged as to what the literature was pointing to as significant.

Objective 2
The results of the questionnaire identified that there was no consistent approach to teacher evaluation at the responding schools and that the purpose and results from teacher evaluation do not conclusively point to a single purpose, method, application or use of teacher evaluations. Gathering this information proved to be particularly difficult. All International Schools in Thailand are in direct competition with one another and regard the sharing of information as exposing themselves to poaching and adverse publicity thereby affecting the enrollment that makes each of them viable. Many Schools contacted indicated that they did not have a method for assessing teacher practice that would fall under the general heading of teacher evaluation.

Heads responses to teacher evaluation questions indicate that in most instances' evaluators conducted traditional style and format of evaluations. These results indicate that Heads are following traditional methods of evaluation that focus on formal evaluations. Heads are still performing the traditional practice of sitting in on full lessons and using this as the main method of teacher evaluation. Head responses to student engagement questions show that supervisors place a good deal of importance on this area and that they consider that they are observing for student engagement. Teacher questionnaire results illustrated that there is a clear lack of understanding of the purpose of teacher evaluation. The findings also show that the

traditional styles are still being used and that student engagement and walkthroughs are inconsistently used with no connectivity. It also, very clearly supports the idea that teacher evaluation is still focused on the teacher while the learner is secondary to the process.

In short, teacher evaluation at the schools surveyed lacked a consistent format or application thus rendering them only minimally effective. This was borne out by the focus group interviews.

Objective 3

The findings from objective one and two clearly illustrated that a new model was needed in order to render evaluation relevant. The results from research objective one and two were considered. It was abundantly clear that the teacher evaluation models in place were inconsistent and did not reflect either current research nor the changing paradigm of teaching and that International Schools in Thailand were basically free to follow individual practice. With a focus on student engagement at the core a strategic leadership model was developed that would provide a step-by-step model that could be implemented at any school. The concepts of Quong and Walker (2010) were used to help shape the model. If a leader is strategic and follows the implementation steps then the output of increased student engagement would result.

Figure 2: Strategic Leadership Model

By following the steps outlined below, which were developed in conjunction with the Head of Schools, Principals, Board Representatives, and Teacher Representatives a step by step guide was created that could be implemented.

Table 2: Steps to Becoming A Strategic Leader in Respect to Teacher Evaluation

1. Create a Questionnaire to determine school status. Use Focus Group Interviews to substantiate results of questionnaire.
2. Check the existing research and complete a SWOT Analysis of the school.
3. Design an implementation strategy and produce an Action Plan with timelines, responsibilities and budget.
4. Determine the area for focus that reflects areas identified for growth; i.e.: student engagement
5. The Head must be open to changing priorities, methods of implementation and be a lifelong learner
6. The Head must be able to communicate, evaluate, plan, implement and be inclusive.
7. The Head must be focused on what a school needs that might not be what it wants.

Implementation Steps:

1. Have teachers complete and submit a goal-setting sheet
2. Conference with each teacher on his/her goal-setting responses.
3. Review Walkthrough tool and its use.
4. Over a three-week period gather data on student engagement according to the Danielson Domains by using a Walkthrough Tool.
5. Meet with the teachers and go over the results of the walkthroughs.
6. Review and adjust the goal-setting sheet.
7. Conduct a formal observation of each teacher.
8. Review the formal observation and provide feedback.
9. After several months have passed, conduct a second series of walkthroughs.
10. Meet with the teachers and review the results in comparison to the first set of walkthroughs.
11. Complete and file the teacher evaluation.

Objective 4

In order to test the model three principals and the Head of Schools and Director met to create an implementation plan and communication plan to test this new Strategic Leadership Model for Teacher Evaluation using Walkthroughs for Student Engagement. At that meeting it was decided to use the existing goal-setting sheet as the teachers and stakeholders would be comfortable with this component of the change. The plan identified the action to be taken, the purpose behind the action, the timeline, and the person/s responsible. Walkthroughs were conducted at the beginning of the implementation to create a baseline for comparison. After six months a second set of walkthroughs were conducted to establish whether there was significant improvement in student engagement.

Using a paired samples t-test which measured the effectiveness of increasing student engagement in four areas of focus; curriculum, instruction, environment, and learning it was found that there were significant gains in student engagement.

Table 3: A Paired Samples T-test

	Paired Differences				
	Mean	S.D.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
Pair1 Curricular1-Curricular2	-70.67	57.49	-3.01	5	.030
Pair2 Instruction1-Instruction2	-29.20	34.26	-3.81	19	.001
Part3 Enviroment1-Enviroment2	-79.71	66.35	-3.18	6	.019
Part4 Learning1-Learning2	-69.31	51.75	-4.82	12	.001

Conclusion

This study looked at creating a new Strategic Leadership Model by utilizing an indirect approach based on the idea that if student engagement became the focus, as a result of the influence of the world wide web and instant access to all things, then classroom instruction and performance would increase.

Research objectives were met in this study. The findings clearly indicated that current practices both in theory and in practice were not effective in terms of teacher

evaluation, and the relationship of walkthroughs to student engagement. Current leadership practices are not clear in creating the social change that is necessary in order to create relevancy in all areas. The invention of the Internet and its impact on teaching and learning is clear. As teachers and the nature of teaching changed so to do the systems that evaluate and inform instruction. With evaluation mired in traditional pre-1994 styles teacher evaluation relevancy becomes moot. The literature review and the current practices as demonstrated by the 273 respondents to the questionnaire in research objective 2 clearly convey the message that it is not working as it exists now. However, by using strategic leadership the shift of focus to student engagement there is promise for improving education. A further section of this study looked at developing a strategic leadership model and then testing its effectiveness by looking at a new way to use walkthroughs to increase student engagement.

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Recommendations

Schools need to have teachers focus more on engaging the learner. When this is done, the student has greater opportunity and desire to access the curriculum. Having focused thus, it is inevitable that student learning and achievement will increase. Teachers must be provided with on-going, focused and targeted professional development. Then the teacher must work collaboratively in order to set goals that they then will have ownership in. Consequently, the desire to increase or improve performance will naturally follow. Heads must be the instructional leaders and engage in a collaborative process in terms of working with students and teachers providing continuous and deliberate feedback that will lead to meaningful evaluations. Data must be taken in order to create a baseline for comparison. This will ensure accountability to boards and owners. It is important that parents as stakeholders be involved in the process so that they can see the results of improved engagement for their children and the resulting achievement. Student engagement needs to be connected to the larger picture in terms of community service and responsible global citizens. Engagement with the curriculum is only a start. More research needs to be done in designing site-based walkthrough tools, a connection to student achievement, the role and impact of professional development, and improved leadership. This

model can and should be duplicated as it alleviates the fear of teacher evaluation and responds to the learners of the 21st century. This study responds to the changing nature of teaching and learning and will end the debate over teacher evaluation.

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