

## Book Reviews

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Danielson, C., & McGreal, T. L. (2000). *Teacher evaluation: To enhance professional practice*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (156 pp. \$24.95 paperback, ISBN-O-87120-380-4).

The last decade has heralded a significant change in conceptualizing the teacher evaluation process, and this informative guidebook, *Teacher evaluation: To enhance professional practice*, provides an excellent discussion of the process and useful examples of forms and assessment tools currently in use in school systems. More than a primer, but less than a textbook, this work succinctly and clearly captures the most relevant information about how to think about the teacher evaluation function and how to design evaluation procedures that respond to the dual requirements of enhancing professional development and ensuring personnel accountability. The book is targeted to general education practitioners, teachers and administrators, and represents a joint collaboration of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) and Educational Testing Service (ETS). The two authors, one a development leader for ETS and the other a Professor Emeritus of Educational Organization and Leadership, have created a perspective on the topic that is both practical and persuasive.

The book is organized into ten chapters with the first seven focused on the foundation of teacher evaluation efforts. These chapters address the shortcomings of the typical system of teacher evaluation, provide a brief history of the past and present context, map out an overall blueprint, describe the *what* and *how* in more depth, discuss sources of information to be considered in the evaluation, and advocate for a process of system adaptation that builds ownership and commitment. The last three chapters deal with the structural framework for an evaluation system with three distinct tracks, one for beginning teachers, one for experienced teachers, and one for teachers in need of remediation. The appendices contain applications of the model in two school systems, one in Addison, Illinois and the other in Newport News, Virginia.

Danielson and McGreal acknowledge that the purposes of teacher evaluation are controversial but support a position in which two masters are served by combining formative and summative elements in the process. One purpose relates to professional learning and uses formative assessment to improve practice. The other purpose, related to quality assurance, requires summative judgments of teacher effectiveness based on clear standards, defined criteria, and reasonable evidence. The authors further suggest that the principal features of a system that integrates both purposes includes a differentiated approach that recognizes the life cycles of teaching, a culture that supports collaboration and inquiry, and carefully designed evaluation activities.

There are several insights presented in the book that are particularly deserving of attention. In chapter two, the authors summarize the set of conditions that they think are shaping the context for the next generation of evaluation practices. Their list of key elements included reform and restructuring initiatives, increased understanding of how adults grow, develop, and learn, increased awareness of the importance and complexity of teaching, increased focus on the development of teacher expertise (movement from novice to expert), new understanding about effective staff development, and the reappraisal of traditional supervision practices. This synopsis provided an interesting confluence of influences from learning theory, research, and practice.

In the chapter on the evaluative criteria, the authors distinguish between inputs and outputs and discuss issues involved in the assessment of student learning as one type of output. They

note that "approaches to teacher evaluation that incorporate a measure of student learning require valid techniques to assess that learning" (p. 41) and explore some of technical complications involved. While prudently acknowledging that assessment of student gains is a legitimate dimension of teacher performance, they also illustrate the complexity of providing appropriate documentation for this aspect. Among the issues they raise are the potential mismatch between standardized tests and instructional aims, the confounding influence of other variables outside the school, the difficulty of using a "value-added" approach, and the lack of reliability in teacher-generated instrumentation.

Having recently completed a graduate course in personnel administration, I was struck by the salience of the issues that were addressed in this work and by the translation of the conceptual into the practical. The book is well organized, easy to read, and offers valuable insights into the teacher evaluation process. It advocates a process for teacher evaluation that is multi-dimensional and dynamic, rather than unitary and singular. However, it does not wrestle with any of the issues that are raised in differential evaluation expectations for teachers of special populations, such as teachers of gifted students. A case in point is the sample classroom observation form which is quite generic. Item 3b provides a box to address "using questioning and discussion techniques." One can adapt one's expectations regarding the need for an *emphasis on higher-order* questions and *inquiry-focused* discussions for teachers of the gifted, but it would be helpful to use an instrument that provided cues to such expectations.

The book also does not address the relationship between staff evaluation, program evaluation, and curriculum evaluation. These three dimensions of evaluation need to work together to forge effective approaches to system accountability and renewal. Can student learning data collected for one aspect of the system (teacher evaluation) inform other aspects of the system (program evaluation) as well? This book neither answers, nor raises, the set of questions that underlie the integration of these informational demands.

Nevertheless, the book is well worth reading, particularly for gifted coordinators who may have moved into the ranks of administration without much preparation in the personnel administration function. The history of the evolution of the teacher evaluation process is particularly fascinating, and the ideas and strategies presented for designing and implementing a teacher evaluation system are clear, informative, and feasible.

*Reviewed by Linda Avery.*

Kasten, W.C., & Lolli, E.M. (1998). *Implementing multiage education: A practical guide*. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon (312 pp., \$39.95 paper, ISBN-0-926842-78-1).

The old adage, *everything old is new again* comes to mind when rediscovering multiage education, the once standard model used in one-room schoolhouses of the pre-industrial era. Multiage schools and classrooms are now regaining popularity in American schools and Wendy Kasten, a university researcher and Libbie Lolli, a former multiage school principal and current trainer for multiage implementation, provide a readable resource for educators to consult when considering the shift towards this trend. The authors leap to assumptions that constructivist learning, authentic assessment, and whole language approaches to literacy are synonymous with multiage education and provide examples, testimonials, and resource