

Supervision: Observation

LEAD 505

TM

March 21, 2010

This supervision/observation assignment did not require me to 'gain acceptance' to observe and evaluate because I chose to complete the project on a subordinate. However, because I am using this assignment process for a real life situation and it is not a 'foe situation' (to create more meaning and learning for myself) I am not able to write a report on 'two' subordinates, as suggested in this assignment. My subordinates' roles and experiences are so different it would be either unfair or confusing to try and compare them in this report under these circumstances. **Fair enough... the point of the exercise is to practice supervisory principles. Since you appear to already have much supervisory experience, the goal here will be to give you feedback as to the effectiveness.**

This report is broken down into four stages: pre-conference, observation, conference, and post-conference. Many different theories, practices and research's **influenced my practice**. Even though Marshall and Saphier had the strongest influence over my implementations, Zepeda and Whitaker still did have some influence. **Good mix** Deciphering between the four author's research and best practices suggestions was difficult and overwhelming at first. I had to view their model in **context my schools' climate and administrative situation**. With that being said, I was able to hand pick pieces of each model that I thought would work best for my depart, myself, and my subordinate. My process ended up using at least one piece from each model.

Observing and evaluating Catherine Edwards Family, our School Partnership and Enrichment Coordinator, was a pleasure not only because I think highly of her work or because she demonstrated great improvements; also because of **all the reflecting that went into this evaluation**. Evaluating is still something I struggle with and I have been performing evaluations for over five years. I keep trying new techniques and tools for evaluating and have yet to find the 'right' one that works for my leadership style. **Not a stretch, since each person is different... and as you cited, so too are situations** It is a task I, like most leaders, put off because it is time consuming. (That is a huge assumption on my part but my experience has led me to believe that because this task is dreaded it is either only done because it is mandated, rarely done, completed barely, not done at all, etc. **not really- it's a reality in many/most school settings?**) I am at the point I want to rid of this task so much that I have thought about ways to **delegate this responsibility (or perhaps share for both time & validity?)**... Full well knowing a good leader would take the time to do this and do it well.... With research based tools and practices... **and** Their **sp** no better time spent then on subordinates. A leader needs to give them **(time to?)** tend their fire and this is one great opportunity to do so. I am hoping that the process will not only get easier for me and be more effective for the staff, but also be a task I might enjoy. We'll see! **Last sentences are a little awkward, but I get the point.**

The **pre-observation conference** is **(both)** different and similar compared to that of teachers. For a teacher the pre-observation would include reviewing the anticipated lesson, its detailed plans, materials, and assessment. In lieu of the lesson plan, Catherine has annual goals that she is trying to

complete. The goals were created with me at the beginning of the year after thorough reflection on the previous year. Similarly to teachers who need the students to learn to reach a specific outcome, administrators need their staff. In both cases despite the formal lesson/goal sheet the outcomes are reached through indirect leadership. (say a little more... through indirect leadership how?)

Before setting goals at the beginning of this academic year, Catherine and I spent time reflecting about last year (as part of the pre-conference). We reviewed the budget (and the deficit), programs, and special events--in great detail. I pried with questions such as, "Were we successful?" "How do we know?" "Is that how another leader in the school would define success?" "What might they think?" "Is that achievable?" "Do we have data that would help us define our successes?" "What data do we have besides attendance to support successful programs and events?" "What other data collecting could we have done?" "Should we do that next year?" "Have we asked the kids?" "Do the kids think are programs are great?" The point of this reflection process is really to push Catherine's thinking to be reflective. I try not to be opinionated and suggestive; rather just hoping her thought process will grow from reflection, to improvement for the future year. Those are great questions... all external to CE, therefore non-threatening

After this reflection process with Catherine, and all of my other direct reporting staff, I would create school wide goals that I would like to see implemented this year (again, all part of pre-conference). Next to each goal I would list the best person to accomplish that goal (collaborative/shared)—either because of their skill level, passion, and/or desire to grow. Next, I would have a goal setting meeting with each of them, or some situations them together, getting buy-in for the project. Buy-in is one way to describe what I'm doing; what I'm really doing is assisting them to see the need for this project (through self-actualization) and then telling them why I think they would be the perfect person to get that job done¹. 😊 Before you know it, they are so proud to be trusted with such an important project and are happy to have been given the confidence for the task. I walk away not only feeling great to have made someone's day but free (monkey less) because I practiced indirect/distributed leadership². ... and Senge/shared

Catherine and I have a 'pre-conference' meeting in her office space (like Zepeda suggests) that consists of future year goal setting—similar to a teachers annual curriculum plan. Instead of subject contents, her focuses are on budget, attendance, staff supervision, and programs--we set goals under each content. For example, having had a deficit last year, we knew we wanted to break even this year. Our revenue was lower than anticipated and there was \$6,000 in balances due. The goal then becomes increasing private pay revenue, which we agreed could be done by increasing weekly fee's. Secondly, we could ensure fee's are paid by raising an issue on a three week balance due rather than waiting till it's three month's over due³. The attendance conversation was actually money driven. I reminded her of the expense of staff/labor and then made suggestions to her about how that might relate to attendance. Good connection I needed her to come up with the answer (this way I didn't need to gain consensus or buy-in) so offered her different calculations of staff verses children's attendance⁴. She finally suggested that one of this year's goals should be, "to ensure all groups are full at all times, if not

¹ Monkey

² Distributed Leadership

³ ISLLC 3

⁴ Attribution Theory

we'll have to cut back a staff." Brilliant, was my response along with a few probing questions of why that might be difficult so she could foresee hurdles and be proactive about them. We agreed that she does a great job spending time in the teachers room daily, making her rounds, offering help and praise to them—she needed to **continue with this frequent informal** supervision⁵. I created a new goal for her to **actually evaluate the teachers** this year. I said I would guide her through the process but ultimately it would be her responsibility. (I am preparing her to take my position in the future) We set program goals according to the data we received from surveying students and parents. The program goal was to include more athletics. This goal would have to be accomplished with the Athletic Director and Catherine—even better, **collaboration is required!** As one can see, goals set for the year either were imposed on Catherine, created by Catherine, or mutually agreed. **A good blend** Either way, it was the **map she needed** to follow for the year and the one she would be evaluated from at the end of the year. **Clear & detailed, yet ownership offered**

Kim Marshall suggests frequent informal **observations** of subordinates in order to cast the widest net of data for evaluations. This is similar to the business model '**manage by walking**'. **yes** I observe her all year long and am informally gathering data directly and indirectly. The indirect example would be: If her staff are doing well, **I can assume** she is succeeding as leader (**You can infer... how do you prove?**). Throughout the year continuous informal feedback is needed. I am continuously saying things like: "great job holding your staff accountable" "I appreciate how timely you were in getting that report to me" "I could not have completed that project without your help, thank you" and "you are appreciated, keep up all your hard work" I just keep filling her tank with positive reinforcements. The key, I have learned, is to be specific when praising, simply saying "great job" does not reinforce what behavior you believe the person did a great job on. If they don't know what you liked how are they going to be able to repeat it? **Do not assume anything**—always say more⁶. This continuous informal praise and observation would be what a teacher might call their 'observation period' yet instead of a set 60 minutes it is all year long at no set time. **You may consider telling her all of the good things (claims), with evidence, before going to "good job"- judgment.**

Conference: Is at the end of the year (which is not to say we don't discuss these items throughout the year, it is just **more formal** at the end of the year). The first thing we do is pull out all the goals we created at the beginning of the year (**accountability** is so critical) of review our progress in reference to Catherine's job performance/evaluation. If we failed at a goal or disowned one it is not to say she didn't do her job well—there needs to be flexibility (**so is part of the end-of-year evaluation actually mini-evals during the year to make them cumulative?**). Also, I say 'we' because they are 'our' goals I cannot and do not disown them because I expect her to do the work the need,(?) our goals are and need to be align. If they are her goals, as her supervisor, they are mine to—this is not a monkey I am taking on, it is **support and team effort**. Similarly, my goals are my bosses, but not hers; I protect her from overloading her with my goals. It is tricky business. **Yes, lots of interrelationships**

After reviewing the four goals: budget, attendance, staff supervision, and programs independently, I was prepared to sit with Catherine and evaluate her performance, commitment and dedication to these goals. I refresh her memory of our goals by handing her the document we created at the beginning of the year. I then ask her: "Can you give me **warm and cool feedback (I like that**

⁵ Marshall, Kim

⁶ Whitaker, Todd. Perception/how are we perceived

format/approach) for we each according to how well you think we achieved that goal and what role you played that was either positive or inhibiting? What barriers you might have faced, how you overcame them and what lesson may have been learned going into next year?” The great thing about my approach is I do **warm and cool feedback frequently**—this is **not a new tool** therefore she should feel comfortable.

My intention is to simply make **claims and provide evidence** about our goals’ progress/status.⁷ For example, “After reviewing the billing (evidence), I noticed there are no longer any outstanding balances (claim), how did you do that? Are you satisfied with those changes? Are they sustainable?” (**so this is an opportunity for her to provide evidence/clarity?**) Then I will praise, “Great job (judgment) taking the initiative on that project and kudos for doing it solo—I really appreciate your determinism!” Another claim regarding our budget goal to ‘not run a deficit’: “The revenue report shows only 33% of anticipated revenue and we are more than half way through the year.” She goes on to explain why. I am unhappy with these numbers but am unclear if there is anything she could/should have done differently to increase revenue, so I respond: “Do you think we will reach of anticipated revenue? What if we don’t? Is there a way to increase revenue? How could I help? Do you think there was anything else you could have done, that you didn’t? Do we need to cut back spending in case we don’t make our mark? If so, where will you cut back? To be conservative, do you think we should cut back spending either way, immediately?” I could evaluate her and say you didn’t hit your mark! Our revenue is down, what happened here? You didn’t do a good job! However, since these are our goals there have been times when I have offered to give some families some slack on their payments (our revenue really) and so it would **not be fair to solely blame her**. This is **our problem** and we need to try to solve it together. During a situation like this I am evaluating her on her **persistence, problem solving skills, willingness to take safe risks**, and implement **new strategies** independently. I evaluate her **timeliness**: does she know when she needs to bring something to my attention, is she paying attention to the numbers beyond the times I bring them to her attention? My feedback to her about the revenue is such: “I am concerned our revenue is down, I need you to be concerned also. Do not worry, but please tighten the straps on spending. Let me know if I can help.” I would go through the same process about attendance and programs: (which is a mix between Saphier and Whitakers’ suggestions) providing evidence, make claims, and then praising/refocusing/providing support. This is an interesting take/application of CEIJ... you don’t so much provide evidence, but inferences. **Could you make statements (claims, then provide evidence, THEN make inferences?**

Overall I believe the **post-conference** went well. It was a team effort and approach. **I am not clear on how to steer clear of judgment** because I feel like praise and redirection could also be labeled as a judgment and I don’t think they are ‘bad’ communication tools. I understand Saphier’s idea, playing with attribution theory which creates the buy-in, but I believe once the ‘ah-huh’ moment took place, praise and judgments could be offered. (**I think you’re OK with your approach... you have enough short-term data & evidence of improvement to offer praise**) I was happy to complete this project with Catherine and believe I spent more time than I typically would have creating a more valuable evaluation for she and I. It is also timely to do an evaluation **close to the end of the year** rather than at the actual end of the year because then there is still some **time to make improvements**. It is a win-win for everyone! (**some early reflection here on the Post Op**)

⁷ Saphier-CEIJ

In closing, I believe I follow the Kim Marshall approach: frequent informal observations fits my departments structure well. It was not only interesting to learn about Saphier's approach to conferencing but very enlightening. I stopped to think about my words, whether I was judging, claiming or providing evidence. (that's the point!) I think Saphier's model offered me the most support that I can see myself practicing from here on out. There is so much psychology behind why he suggests Claim, Evidence, Inference and Judgment and especially in that order. It plays off of attribution theory which I found to be an extremely useful practice. Zepeda's pre-conference and post conference suggestions...Whitaker also made great suggestions about the importance of timely follow-up and offering continuous support. Overall, this assignment taught me a lot and I am motivated to continue to practice new observation tools, evaluation methods,

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I'm sure it was a struggle to try & fit the task expectation into a more non-teacher application. It is obvious/evident through your examples that you are reflective, attempt to make important & meaningful connections to theory and practice, and are flexible enough to see what works best for effective supervision.

Having observed you in action confirms a warm working relationship with CE, a foundational piece to applying Marshall's approach.

Keep working the CEIJ as you converse with your staff: "I noticed that you did...."; "here's what I saw...."; "as a result..."; "good job!"

Well done!

	Target: Exceeded the Standard	Acceptable: Achieved the Standard	Unacceptable: Nearly Achieved the Standard	Total
Phase 1: Target: Supervision • Rationale • Lit. Review • RIDE • Influence	The candidate identifies and describes relevant area targeted for significant growth , includes a relevant lit. review, data, and effectively applies and integrates professional literature, contextual data, and constituent input to the intended area of study.	The candidate identifies and describes relevant area targeted for growth with reasonable explanation of its importance, an acceptable review of lit, data, and application of contextual and constituent input to the intended area of study.	Area targeted for growth is identified and described, but the candidate's descriptions fails to establish the importance of the targeted area , lit and data are unreliable/not connected, and relevance of project for candidate are weak or do not contribute to the design of the project.	
Phase 2: Plan of Action • Context • Lit & data • Goals • Design • Assessment	The candidate's description of planned action is very clearly stated , goals are clearly aligned with stated parameters, plan encourages active engagement with constituent(s)', clearly identifies adaptations and/or modifications to meet the identified needs of all constituent(s)	The candidate's description of planned action is clear and includes scope, duration, and intended outcomes, and potential for significant impact on constituent(s). Goals are clear and plans encourages engagement with constituent(s)', identifies some adaptations and/or modifications to meet the identified needs of all constituent(s)	The candidate provides little to no evidence that the key elements of the action plan (procedures, methods, measures, timeframes) were implemented as outlined in the action plan. Other considerations for constituent growth are weak or missing.	
Phase 3: Implementation: • Aligned w/ActionP • Data collection & analysis • Comprehensive	The candidate provides detailed evidence that the key elements (procedures, methods, measures, timeframes) were implemented as intended . Action systematically integrates constituent(s)' expressed needs, data is comprehensive, understandable & accurate.	The candidate provides some evidence that the key elements (procedures, methods, measures, timeframes) were implemented as intended. Action generally integrate constituent(s)' needs; data is somewhat comprehensive, understandable & accurate.	The candidate provides little to no evidence that the key elements of the action plan (procedures, methods, measures, timeframes) were implemented as outlined in the action plan. The candidate's data analysis fails to address indicated questions or area targeted for growth; data analysis is limited or flawed	
Phase 4: Data to assess impact on practice • Significance/actions • Connections: lit & best practice • Unintended outcomes	Candidate includes clear evidence of intended and unintended impact(s) of the action plan on the area(s) targeted for growth, a link between his/her findings and unintended outcomes (positive or negative)	Candidate includes some evidence of intended and unintended impact(s) of the action plan on the area(s) targeted for growth in terms of degree to which constituent(s) achieved and made progress toward goal(s).	Candidate fails to include evidence of intended and unintended impact(s) of the action plan on the area(s) targeted for growth in terms of degree to which constituent(s) achieved and made progress toward goal(s).	
Phase 5: Reflective Practice • Professional Identity Yours & Constituent • Advanced Prof. Goals	The candidate's discussion of the impact of the project on his/her professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions is outstanding . S/he shares critical insights about the ways in which the impact project has contributed to his/her professional knowledge, skills and dispositions <i>in</i>	The candidate's discussion of the impact of the project on his/her professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions is satisfactory . S/he describes the ways in which the impact project has contributed to his/her professional knowledge, skills and dispositions.	The candidate's discussion of the impact of the project on his/her professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions is lacking . S/he does not adequately describe the ways in which the impact project has contributed to his/her professional knowledge, skills and dispositions.	
Totals				T/20 A-