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Teacher Evaluation: The Change We Wish to See; Improving the Formal Observation Process to Improve Student Learning

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TEACHER EVALUATION: THE CHANGE WE WISH TO SEE
*IMPROVING THE FORMAL OBSERVATION PROCESS TO IMPROVE STUDENT
LEARNING*

Merryl B. Brownlow

Educational Leadership Doctoral Program

Submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements of

Doctor of Education

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Document Origination Statement for Digital Commons @ NLU

This document was created as *one* part of the three-part dissertation requirement of the National Louis University (NLU) Educational Leadership (EDL) Doctoral Program. The National Louis Educational Leadership EdD is a professional practice degree program (Shulman et al., 2006). For the dissertation requirement, doctoral candidates are required to plan, research, and implement three major projects, one each year, within their school or district with a focus on professional practice. The three projects are:

- Program Evaluation
- Change Leadership Plan
- Policy Advocacy Document

For the **Program Evaluation** candidates are required to identify and evaluate a program or practice within their school or district. The “program” can be a current initiative; a grant project; a common practice; or a movement. Focused on utilization, the evaluation can be formative, summative, or developmental (Patton, 2008). The candidate must demonstrate how the evaluation directly relates to student learning.

In the **Change Leadership Plan** candidates develop a plan that considers organizational possibilities for renewal. The plan for organizational change may be at the building or district level. It must be related to an area in need of improvement, and have a clear target in mind. The candidate must be able to identify noticeable and feasible differences that should exist as a result of the change plan (Wagner et al., 2006).

In the **Policy Advocacy Document** candidates develop and advocate for a policy at the local, state or national level using reflective practice and research as a means for supporting and promoting reforms in education. Policy advocacy dissertations use critical theory to address moral and ethical issues of policy formation and administrative decision making (i.e., what ought to be). The purpose is to develop reflective, humane and social critics, moral leaders, and competent professionals, guided by a critical practical rational model (Browder, 1995).

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ABSTRACT

Teacher evaluation is a formal construct for improving instruction and student learning. Formal observations are a central component of that process. This change model explores the option of a videotaped observation model as an alternative to the current Illinois state-mandated in-person formal observation to increase teacher ownership, promote reflective practice and improve instructional practices. The evaluation process is a vehicle that promotes collaboration among building leaders and staff. The Illinois shift to a professional practice model provides a construct for a culture and climate that encourages reflection and promotes professional growth (Danielson, 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2013; Jay, 2003; Stuhlman, Hamre, Downer, & Pianta, n.d.). In examining practices related to evaluation and the formal observation, the idea is to build systems empowering teachers and focused on collaboration to promote reflection and professional growth (Myung & Martinez, 2013). The premise of the change model is to realize the context, culture, conditions and competencies that will reflect an effective system with a focus on student learning (Wagner & Kegan, 2006). Qualitative research methods were used to gain a deeper understanding of the teacher and administrator perceived value of the formal observation. Analyzing data from surveys and semi-structured interviews regarding the observation experience, the findings suggest that there is an opportunity to examine alternate structures for the formal observation to increase its value as a tool for professional growth. A further case study of the change model was conducted with three teachers and three administrators. Given responses to the case study coupled with the survey and interview data, I found there is merit to exploring how the videotaped alternative may contribute to an improved teacher evaluation process.

PREFACE: LESSONS LEARNED

As a twice-National Board Certified Teacher, the power of reflection in improving instructional practice is a critical lens through which I look to improve teaching and learning. In exploring videotaped observations as a model for promoting reflective practice and professional growth, the teachers and administrators involved in the case study affirmed the powerful impact reflection has on improving instruction. While reflection is expected in the traditional formal observation experience, the videotaped alternative increased teacher ownership and the value of the experience for the teachers. Increasing ownership and self-assessment coupled with a reflective conversation creates the context for active intellectual engagement that promotes professional learning (Danielson, 2016). During the research conducted as a part of this change model, I witnessed this engagement and professional growth play itself out in the enthusiasm that was generated in response to the videotaped observation experience.

As part of this change model, I also observed benefits in improving the trust in the process between teacher and administrator. Having the videotape at the center of the professional reflective conversation versus notes that were generated by an evaluator, the post conference experience supported deeper levels of reflection on the part of the teacher. The teacher ownership for identifying the celebrations and opportunities for growth in the videotaped observation increased trust in the process, allowing the teacher to more openly seek feedback. The evaluator could take the role of coach and the teacher was empowered to focus on continuous improvement. The power of this process to improve overall culture and climate in a school did not go unnoticed.

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SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

Purpose

Johnson, Leibowitz, and Perret (2017) stated that the role of the principal has traditionally been an authoritative one, but has been evolving to become one of influence rather than authority. They go on to point out that teachers today want honesty, transparency, and partnership in a leader, not one who does not empathize with their perspectives fears and aspirations. The landscape in Illinois, and especially in Century School District, has shifted in recent years to support this premise.

PERA is the acronym for the Performance Evaluation Reform Act that became law in Illinois in 2010. The law requires that districts evaluate teachers using an instructional framework based upon research regarding effective instruction that is aligned with the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards. The state recommended framework for implementation is Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching (Smith, 2015). This mandate and the recommendation to use the Danielson's framework led to a shift in the focus from a tool used for coaching to improve teaching and learning to one that is now the umbrella for perceived high stakes evaluation of teachers (Danielson, 2016). However, there is an opportunity to promote continuous improvement using a professional practice framework, but there is a need to examine how to create a culture and climate of trust around the evaluation process. The teacher evaluation process is the lens through which the change will be promoted. This change plan examines how practices related to teacher evaluation, with specific emphasis on the formal observation process, may be improved to encourage higher degrees of collaboration and trust between teachers and administrators. It will examine how to embed intentional practices

promoting teacher reflection and professional growth into the observation and evaluation processes. Specifically, the change plan examines the use of a videotaped observation experience as an alternative model to the traditional formal observation process in place in the district, as mandated by the state of Illinois. Ultimately, the intent of this change plan is to improve student learning by encouraging more authentic teacher reflection within a culture focused on growth mindset.

Century School District has a staff committed to continuous improvement, however, the current perspective on teacher evaluation is one of disconnect from its intent to promote teacher learning and professional growth. Thus, the change plan is designed to address this lost opportunity to improve teaching and learning. As identified by Brownlow (2016), teachers in Century School District find teacher evaluations to be administrator driven and to have little impact on improved teaching and learning, particularly with respect to promoting teacher reflection and professional growth. Prior to 2015-2016 school year, teachers in Century School District received no professional development in standards based teacher evaluation models. This past year was the first time they were exposed to a model of professional practice in teacher evaluation. When I joined the district in 2015, teachers shared the historically insulated approach to professional development. Prior to the 2013-2014 School Year, the district had not addressed the transition to new state standards and found themselves taking a quick fix approach to bringing the district into alignment. This paralleled a time when board and administrative relationships were strained. For the ten years prior to 2013, the district had a reputation for being high performing and there was no impetus for budgeting to support professional development around current best practices in education related to topics such

as the power of collaboration, data driven decision making, assessment literacy, standards of professional practice and standards based instructional practices. As the standards shifted, expectations around student outcomes evolved, and demographics were changing in Century School District, instructional approaches remained static and resulted in lower than expected performance on the new Illinois state assessment chosen to measure the new Illinois Learning Standards. These combined factors resulted in a culture of fear and insecurity that has created a lack of shared ownership and trust across buildings and promoted a climate of competition as an instinctual response on the part of building principals.

Since the evaluation process is so central to a district's work and provides a common thread for collaboration among building leaders, as well as staff, the shift to a professional practice model of evaluation based on Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching provides an opportunity for the district to move towards a culture and climate that encourages reflection and promotes a growth mindset (Darling-Hammond, 2013; Jay, 2003; Stuhlman et al., n.d.). Within that structure, we can examine ways to embrace shared ownership for learning and embed collaborative structures that will allow us to learn from one another with a focus on improving student learning. By examining our practices related to teacher evaluation and more specifically, teacher observation, the idea is to build a system that is focused on collaborative opportunities between teachers and administrators to promote reflection and professional growth, by empowering teachers in the process (Myung & Martinez, 2013). The change plan suggests alternative ways of structuring the teacher observation processes to increase the value of these components within the overall evaluation process; more specifically a model where teachers may opt

to videotape the formal observation, rather than having an in-person observation of instruction. In promoting this shift in processes, we have the potential to realize the context, culture, conditions and competencies that will reflect a strong school system with a focus on student learning (Wagner & Kegan, 2006).

Rationale

My program evaluation conducted in Century School District found that the formal observation process is perceived as a high stakes event that produces anxiety and often results in a less than authentic teaching and learning experience in the classroom. Since observation is a primary vehicle for collecting evidence related to professional practice, as noted in my program evaluation, the opportunity for the experience to support the development of reflective practitioners and promote professional growth is monumental. As I reviewed the findings from the program evaluation, the number of teachers valuing the observation and teacher evaluation process as opportunities for reflection and growth were of concern. The data indicated that 25 of 38 survey respondents did not find the observation process meaningful in promoting their skills as reflective practitioners, a primary intended outcome of the process. Additionally, all teachers interviewed indicated there was little connection between the observation processes and future discussions regarding improved instructional practice (Brownlow, 2016). This finding is consistent with the research, which also identifies a disconnect between the formal observation and its impact on improving practice (Darling-Hammond, 2013; Education Sector, 2008).

My program evaluation findings resulted in recommendations that position the teacher evaluation system and formal observation process as vehicles for adaptive

change. One recommended outcome focused on the implementation of the new evaluation system as one that values growth mindset through teacher ownership in the formal observation and evaluation process. A second recommendation was to find ways to shift the perception that the formal observation is the dependent factor in determining a summative evaluation rating. Instead, the district can create a system that expands the opportunities for reflecting on teacher practice through informal observations and collaborative discussions with administrators about student work. Out of the first two recommendations comes a third related to building a trusting and collaborative school culture (Brownlow, 2016). The structures created from the proposed change plan will provide an opportunity to create frameworks for shaping reflective conversations that promote risk taking and professional growth as suggested by Charlotte Danielson (personal communication, July 15, 2016). Danielson suggested that administrators create constructs that solicit the teacher's thinking in the post observation conversations.

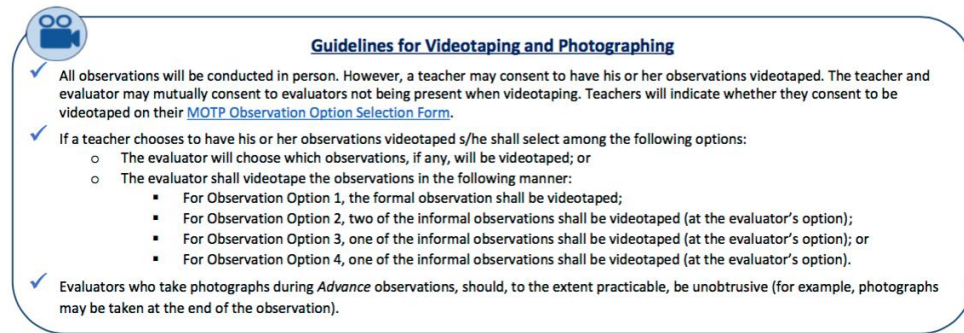
Another consideration in pursuing this program change is the feedback generated by the teacher interviews during the program evaluation. Many of the teachers shared thoughts about potential alternative models for the formal observation process that might promote a more authentic experience for teachers (Brownlow, 2016). The kinds of ideas they shared are reflected in some of the research that informed the program evaluation. In the research by Darling-Hammond (2013), she addressed systems of evaluation that use videotaping coupled with student work and teacher reflection as a method for teachers to collect evidence for the purposes of a professional growth conversation with respect to teacher observation and evaluation. Danielson (personal communication, July 15, 2016) suggested the idea of a third-party observer providing notes in response to a videotaped

lesson experience to the principal and teacher for the purposes of teacher reflection. From her perspective, this would eliminate the potential anxiety and reduce the prevalent perceived bias on the part of staff during the observation process.

Given the teacher responses and the connection to the body of research from my program evaluation, pursuing a change model for teacher evaluation with a targeted focus on the formal observation is justified. The district is in its first year of implementation of a new teacher evaluation system and the evaluation committee reviewed implementation in the Spring of 2017. As a result, the group recommended some refinements based on Brownlow's (2016) program evaluation results. To promote shared ownership in the overall evaluation process, the committee added a self-assessment component for teachers as part of the formal observation process, as well as, the summative evaluation process. Providing intentional opportunities for teachers to reflect on their practice in relationship to professional standards is a first step in creating the shared ownership between teacher and administrator that is intended to promote reflective practices that will result in authentic professional growth. The change plan may provide a vehicle for the district to further examine the current practices that result in recommendations that can shape the system we want "to be" in the future. It has the potential to be the cornerstone for establishing a culture of trust that encourages reflection and professional growth. Working within the constructs of Illinois School Code, the idea of a videotaped model for the formal observation may be implemented outside of the required in-person observation to begin to shape what the experience could be if the state were to consider this model a valid alternative. The New York Department of Education (2017) has set precedent for videotaping as an alternative model with the implementation of their

Advance Teacher Development and Evaluation System (see Figure 1). In implementing this change model, there is the potential for the advocacy of policy change at the state level in Illinois should the results affirm the research behind the suggested improvements to the current system.

Figure 1. Guidelines for videotaping and photographing (New York Department of Education, 2017).



Guidelines for Videotaping and Photographing

- ✓ All observations will be conducted in person. However, a teacher may consent to have his or her observations videotaped. The teacher and evaluator may mutually consent to evaluators not being present when videotaping. Teachers will indicate whether they consent to be videotaped on their [MOTP Observation Option Selection Form](#).
- ✓ If a teacher chooses to have his or her observations videotaped s/he shall select among the following options:
 - The evaluator will choose which observations, if any, will be videotaped; or
 - The evaluator shall videotape the observations in the following manner:
 - For Observation Option 1, the formal observation shall be videotaped;
 - For Observation Option 2, two of the informal observations shall be videotaped (at the evaluator's option);
 - For Observation Option 3, one of the informal observations shall be videotaped (at the evaluator's option);
 - For Observation Option 4, one of the informal observations shall be videotaped (at the evaluator's option).
- ✓ Evaluators who take photographs during *Advance* observations, should, to the extent practicable, be unobtrusive (for example, photographs may be taken at the end of the observation).

The process for this adaptive change has major implications for the school district. Applying the 4C Diagnostic Tool described by Wagner and Kegan (2006) will be critical to the success of the change process. This approach will provide a systemic framework for outlining the change process. In this framework, there are four components to consider related to implementing change. The first is the district context that surrounds the change. The second is the culture within the district, along with the conditions and competencies that may play a role in implementing the change. With respect to Century School District, the proposed change impacts a variety of stakeholders. It directly impacts certified staff and the administrators that supervise them. The change will also be relevant to the Superintendent and the Board of Education as it relates to supervision policies and procedures. Ultimately, this change will also have a direct impact on students and their instruction, with the intent to improve teaching and learning. An additional outcome will be the ability to cultivate a culture of collaboration and trust

across buildings, as we shift from a system of schools to a school system through the changes in our process.

To create a collective commitment to the proposed shifts, examining change theories will provide insight to potential challenges for implementation. A first important step will be to diagnose the system before initiating any element of change. I had the ability to sit on what is described as “the balcony” in the research because of my entry into the district at a time when the system was mandated to completely revise the entire evaluation system (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009). I began my work in Century School District in July 2015 as the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction. As part of my role, I oversee teacher evaluation and professional development. At that point, the district had not yet aligned their evaluation plan to the new mandates as outlined by PERA. When guiding the initial design work, I had to ask many questions and quickly establish relationships to learn about the history and culture in the district. Coming off a troubled two years under the previous leadership, the stakeholders demonstrated a readiness for change. The evaluation committee (PERA Action Team, also known as the PAT Committee) made up of a group of eight certified staff members and two administrators immediately empowered me to facilitate and educate them around best evaluation practices. They were about to roll out a plan without any knowledge or professional development around the framework they chose as the basis for the plan. The unspoken gaps in knowledge and training (elephants in the room) were quickly identified and there was the ability to share ownership and develop leadership capacity with this group (Heifetz et al., 2009).

Having this kind of support for pursuing a change, also allowed me to leverage the historical lack of leadership and to build momentum around the idea of reinventing our system within and beyond this committee. Their enthusiasm for pursuing a system that is designed to move teacher evaluation to something that is valued spread to others throughout the organization. Collins (2009) described the concept of a flywheel and how incremental steps towards a desired outcome builds momentum to achieve the goal. The “flywheel” as described by Collins (2009) is in motion and as I conducted my program evaluation gained interest among teachers and administrators alike. As the district considers the possibility of change, it will be important for me to mobilize the system to be ready to consider further refinements to the process through the formal observation process, and the ways in which we collect evidence regarding teacher performance. I am going to have to audition my ideas and seek a variety of perspectives with respect to the formal observation process and how to shift the ownership for generating reflections and evidence of practice to teachers from administrators. The PAT Committee will be the vehicle through which the proposed change will be processed. I will engage additional stakeholders through interviews with both teachers and administrators. The PAT Committee will also need to set up two-way communication loops to keep the Superintendent, the leadership team and the Board of Education apprised of the recommendations for change as they are developing. The self-assessment components as refinements to the initial plan provide a platform for mobilizing the system in this direction (Heifetz et al., 2009).

Since this change has the potential to be perceived as high stakes and is anticipated to be welcomed by many, but feared by some, it will be important for the

culture to be nurtured in the process. Reeves's (2009) work suggested attending to some essentials with respect to cultural change to support a smooth transition. Identifying what will remain the same is an important step in reassuring stakeholders that the change is manageable. As we modify structures related to observations and collecting evidence, we will maintain the framework for the overall process related to the evaluation plan. We are also continuing to evaluate the work in relationship to the chosen Framework for Teaching authored by Charlotte Danielson (2011). In addition to identifying those elements that will not change, the building leaders will need to be willing to demonstrate the commitment to supporting teachers with the change through their behaviors and attitudes. One example of how they might do this will be through the flexible design of the formal observation processes based on teacher identified needs and preferences. Customizing the feedback process as it relates to the formal observation will help to promote a more productive experience for both teacher and administrator.

Goals

The intended goal of the change plan is to create a collaborative evaluation process with the teacher sharing the ownership for his or her own professional growth. The structure of the formal observation process will be the focus of the change providing options for executing the process that focus on the teacher as reflective practitioner and the evaluator as coach. Surrounding the formal observation process will be additional options for collecting evidence providing multiple indicators that will lead to an overall summative rating. By making these shifts, the process should become one that fosters trust and collaboration among stakeholders, leading to a more positive building climate and culture that will positively impact student learning.

As discovered in the review of the literature during the program evaluation (Brownlow, 2016), the formal observation process is perceived as anxiety provoking and threatening leading to a feeling of apprehension and mistrust. The observation's historical role in the overall evaluation process prevents it from being a fundamental authentic coaching experience. If attempting to create a culture of trust through an evaluation model that encourages reflection and a growth mindset, then the reliance on the traditional and historical structure for this process will need to change. Creating a more collaborative framework with the teacher driving the reflections related to the formal observation experience will reduce the perceived positional power of the administrator and help foster the trust between teacher and supervisor (Danielson, 2016; Marshall, 2012; Myung & Martinez, 2013; Ness, 1980). In my current role, my primary responsibility is to create constructs around curriculum and instruction that will ultimately improve student learning. Having a teacher evaluation process that shifts ownership to teachers and promotes growth mindset and reflection on instructional practices is an actionable opportunity to improve teaching and learning outcomes. The change in conditions and competencies is expected to impact the culture and lead to changes that will ultimately address the problem to support the organization that we want to become (Wagner & Kegan, 2006).

Setting

Century School District is a Pre-K through eighth grade suburban school district in the Chicago area. The district has a student enrollment of approximately 1,700 students. The racial composition of the district is 63% White, 29% Hispanic, 3% Black, 2% Asian and 3% Multiracial. The percentage of low-income students is 15% and 14%

of the students are identified as students with disabilities. While the student population is 29% Hispanic, only 5% of the students qualify as English Learners. The district has a low mobility rate of 4% as compared to the state's rate of 12%. Examining the Illinois School Report Card, Century School District reported 56% of students meeting or exceeding standards as compared to the state average of 34%. Century School District is in a strong financial position with local sources accounting for 90% of the total revenue as compared to the average of 66% across the state. Class sizes are relatively small in Century School District with pupil to staff ration being 16 to 1. There is an 87% retention rate among staff and a low rate of staff absences with less than 5% of the staff absent ten days or more throughout the school year. The staff is also well educated with 66% having earned advanced degrees (Illinois State Board of Education, 2016). Based on the demographics of Century School District, there are no indications that there will be any demographic barriers that impact the proposed change model.

SECTION TWO: ASSESSING THE 4 C'S

Arenas of Change

Implementing change needs to be a strategic and thoughtful process. To diagnose the system as suggested by Heifetz et al. (2009), it is important to understand the current “as is” (Appendix A) of the four arenas of change (context, conditions, culture and competencies) as outlined by Wagner and Keegan (2006). Context refers to the cultural, political, economic and educational factors outside of the school system that may influence what happens within the organization. They are often perceived to be things beyond the control of the organization, yet profoundly impact the work. Structural, cultural, economic and symbolic factors that may support or constrain change are what Wagner and Keegan (2006) referred to as the conditions in the organization. These factors are more tangible than cultural influences and impact how stakeholders make perceive the functionality of the system. Examples of conditional factors may include but are not limited to the organizational chart, leadership structures, financial issues, contractual parameters. Unlike the more tangible nature of the conditions that describe the “what” in an organization, the culture of a system is the reality around the way things play out across the system. While the conditions may dictate the systems or processes that are intended to guide the organization, the culture is what dictates the reality. Culture embodies the shared beliefs and interpretations that shape the behavior and interactions within the system. In addition to the context, conditions, and culture of the organization, there are competencies that also impact any change initiated within the system. The people that make up the organization have various skill sets across technical, social, leadership and knowledge arenas. These skills need to be considered in any change plan

to anticipate gaps. In the absence of the needed skills, even a well-designed change plan may fail. The competencies encompass both the specific skills and knowledge to carry out tasks and the social-emotional dispositions that impact leadership and communication styles and the way members interact with one another (Wagner & Keegan, 2006). The context, culture, conditions and competencies require examination prior to executing any change plan.

Context

Century School District has experienced a lack of leadership stability over the last five years. Within that time all district and building leadership positions have turned over. The most veteran administrator in the district is a principal in his fourth year. In addition to the building leaders being in their roles four years or less, only one had prior experience as a building principal. At the district level, two cabinet members are in year three with the district, I am in year two and the superintendent was hired this past school year. The prior administration faced challenges from the school board and were not positioned to provide support to the three building principals hired during those two years. The culture of fear that existed under the prior administration and school board contributed to the lack of trust that exists in the current district context. These factors have created a system structure that is not set up to promote and support the development of reflective practitioners, particularly with respect to the teacher evaluation model which can be the primary vehicle for creating systemic change.

The inexperience at the building leadership level, coupled with the lack of support or coaching from previous district administration, has led to principals who can be described as managers versus leaders. The difference as described by a Wallace

Foundation Report (2013) is a shift from a focus on adhering to district rules, carrying out procedures and being sure everyone is abiding by those expectations to a leader of learning who can support teachers in delivering effective instruction. This report suggests that effective school leadership cannot happen without support from district administration. Linda Darling-Hammond served on the board of the Wallace Foundation and shared that there is a direct link between effective teaching and good principals (2013). In Century School District, prior to this past year, the principals were not provided with opportunities for coaching or mentoring. As Drago-Severson (2009) suggested, there is a critical need for district and building leaders to be mentored because of the increased complexity of the role and changing expectations that has led to higher levels of accountability. Drago-Severson identifies mentoring as a foundational pillar of practice that is as important for school leaders as it is for the teachers they serve. The idea of shifting the formal observation process and teacher evaluation to a collaborative process that supports teacher ownership and reflection may require that a principal reframe the way they approach their leadership and supervision within this context. As I examine the current context around the principals as managers versus leaders, it will be important for me to also examine the adult ways of knowing described by Drago-Severson (2009) to help move the organization forward in improving the value of the formal observation and the teacher evaluation process.

The lack of leadership capacity in the current context of Century School District has had a direct impact on the lack of opportunities for teachers to share ownership for their own professional learning. The idea of cultivating leadership in others has been identified as a factor in school success (Drago-Severson, 2009; The Wallace Foundation,

2013). In Century School District, the context is not organized with systemic mechanisms for teacher ownership of professional learning. The research has suggested that when leaders share leadership and build capacity within an organization it leads to teacher growth, increased morale and improved student achievement. Creating an organization where authentic collaboration between teachers and administrators exists is dependent upon a culture of trust and respect to minimize organizational fear (Danielson, 2016; Darling-Hammond, 2013; Drago-Severson, 2009; The Wallace Foundation, 2013).

Given the stability of the teacher population in Century School District and the willingness to learn and grow, the current teacher context is positioned to examine ways to expand the organization's capacity to share leadership. Upon arriving at Century School District, I learned that they had no exposure to professional development related to best practices and instructional shifts over the last ten years. As I began to roll out training on teacher evaluation, the new Illinois learning standards and assessment literacy, it became apparent that the teachers were frustrated with the notion that they were "left behind" in evolution of professional learning. Through professional development feedback mechanisms, there was a call from staff for bringing them up to speed with the current best practices in teaching and learning. With a teacher retention rate of 86% and an administration that had not supported professional development, there has not been the influx of new hires or exposure to the shifts in teaching and learning that would have brought about a recognized need to move practices forward. Being the educated (66% of teachers with Masters Degrees) and dedicated professionals that they are, the staff has expressed an openness to continuous improvement and a strong desire

for professional growth opportunities. Given these dispositions, the staff context is one that would welcome shared leadership and a more collaborative culture for adult learning.

Overarching all the contextual factors described is the fact that Illinois mandated the implementation of PERA. That act required that systems shift to a model of professional practice for teacher evaluation (Smith, 2015). As the staff learned about the standards for professional practice as outlined in Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching (2011), there was the recognition that the lack of professional learning opportunities over the last ten years had left them behind. The expectations in the framework have a direct correlation to the current best practices in teaching and learning that have evolved over the last ten years and are reflected in the various revisions Danielson has made to the framework over the years. It is important to note that the framework was initially developed as a tool for continuous improvement and professional growth for teachers, providing a platform for coaching conversations between teachers and administrators. As the framework evolved to become a tool for teacher evaluation, the potential for its misuse in a higher stakes manner is a concern (Danielson, personal communication, July 15, 2016).

Conditions

As mentioned previously, Century School District is in its first year of implementation of the new teacher evaluation system grounded in standards for professional practice. This implementation has increased awareness around best practices in teaching and learning. However, in its infancy, the conversations between teachers and administrators based on formal or informal observations has not shifted from the evaluative administrative driven dialogue to one where teachers own the intended

reflective nature of those conversations. Given that condition, the current professional goals that staff identify are typically generated by administrator observations and feedback versus self-identified areas for growth on the part of the staff. As I worked with the PERA Action Team in the district, it became clear that they did not recognize the value and importance of self-assessment as a part of the shift to using the new framework and standards for professional practice. Due to the implementation mandate for the Fall of 2016, there was not time to adjust to incorporate intentional self-assessment components within the overall evaluation plan. The goals for this change plan are focused on the importance of developing these self-assessment opportunities to promote the development of reflective practitioners and to shift more shared ownership and collaboration of the continuous improvement process to staff. In a May 2017 review of the initial evaluation plan implementation, the PERA Action Team did recognize the value of self-assessment for teachers and incorporated revisions that allow for those opportunities in the formal observation process, as well as, the summative evaluation process.

Culture

In the context of Century School District under the conditions described, the culture remains one where there is a lack of shared ownership for teaching and learning between administrators and teachers. The administration has functioned systemically in a model that has not created those mechanisms to shift the culture. This coupled with the context of administrative management versus leadership creates a culture where relational trust is difficult to develop across the organization. This is true of the cultures within the buildings and true of the culture across the organization. A lack of leadership stability

across the organization has not provided a context where a culture of trust could be nurtured. Since relationships are a critical element of trust in schools (Danielson, 2016; Drago-Severson, 2009; Heifetz et al., 2009), the turnover in administration over the last seven years has suppressed the ability for trusting relationships to build across the organization. Instincts of survival have permeated the organization resulting in a climate of competition rather than collaboration.

Competencies

Based upon the culture, conditions and context described, it should be no surprise that there is a lack of competency around many of the best practices related to teacher evaluation. The district did not engage in any professional development over the last ten years during a time when best practices shifted to a focus on collaboration, reflection on teaching and learning practices and the need to create higher levels of student ownership in the classroom. This lack of exposure to the evolution of teaching and learning created many gaps in technical skills and knowledge around collaborative protocols and structures for promoting and supporting reflective practice to improve teaching and learning. The concepts of growth mindset and how to align systems for continuous improvement were not understood in Century School District until I introduced them into the system at the start of the 2015-2016 school year. This was the first time the staff had been introduced to the standards for professional practice, the idea of professional learning communities and the power of reflection and collaboration in the teaching and learning process. The development of these competencies is addressed and embedded as part of the change plan in improving the teacher evaluation process, with an emphasis on the nature of the formal observation structure.

As the strategies and actions are explored as part of the change plan, there is an expected shift that should occur in the context, conditions and culture of the district that will support then intended outcomes. By improving the evaluation system, it is the hope that the building principals will be viewed as leaders versus managers and be able to create constructs for promoting shared ownership of professional learning with staff. This is anticipated to move Century School District from the “as is” described to the “to be” envisioned (Wagner & Keegan, 2006). As with any change plan, staying aware of the vulnerabilities that may exist in the process will be important. As we shift the system to promote shared leadership among teachers and administrators, it will be important to remain aware of the insecurities that may develop from a perceived loss of power by principals. It will also be important to monitor the staff’s response to new opportunities for growth and reflection and to be sure we are scaffolding the steps leading to shared responsibilities. Teachers have been used to administrators driving the processes around reflection, professional development and evaluation. It is recognized that there may be a hesitation for teachers to take ownership for these processes with this shift Thus, getting up on the balcony to monitor the response from various stakeholders will be a very crucial strategy when mobilizing the system for this adaptive change (Heifetz et al., 2009).

SECTION THREE: METHODOLOGY

Research Design Overview

Century School District is small by comparison to most Illinois school districts. With less than 1,700 students, the district is comprised of five schools that employ less than 160 certified staff members. The administrative team at the building level all have four or less years of experience in their current positions. Four of the five principals have less than five years of experience as building principals. The leadership styles and building dynamics represent unique cultures and climates in each of the buildings. The relative newness of the administrative team at the building level presents an opportunity to share our beliefs and values with respect to teacher evaluation. We have a new Superintendent who began her tenure in July 2016 and under her leadership there is opportunity to collectively refine the new evaluation system with an emphasis on professional growth and continuous improvement, particularly with how we shape the formal observation experience.

In evaluating the Century School District's readiness for change, my methodology required an interpretive approach. Within this approach, I engaged in a district-wide study of staff perceptions around the formal observation process and its role in teacher evaluation based on the findings in my program evaluation (Brownlow, 2016). The district represents a diverse population of staff with respect to experience, supervision models and building cultures. My change model was intended to enhance the evaluation process and create a system focused on growth mindset that promotes and supports the development of reflective practitioners. The change plan was also intended to be developed within a culture and climate of trust to improve teaching and learning.

Stakeholders impacted by the change model included the administrative team and certified teachers they evaluate. The utilization-focused approach to the change model allowed me to involve stakeholders, consider relationships and design a methodology that matches the needs of the organization in which the change will be executed (Patton, 2008).

Having examined the 4 C's as described by Wagner and Keegan (2006), I extended the findings from the program evaluation to identify next steps for the change model. Through my research, I brought together the perspectives of teachers and administration to determine how to shift the evaluation system to promote professional growth through reflective practice. Through the findings in the program evaluation and additional stakeholder feedback resulted from the data collection during the change model, the shared understandings will continue to inform a transitional approach that will ultimately improve the teacher evaluation process, particularly with respect to the formal observation (Patton, 2008).

To collect and interpret the data for the change plan, I revisited the findings from the certified staff member survey and interviews that were conducted during the program evaluation and conducted additional semi-structured interviews (Brownlow, 2016). The data from the interviews in the program evaluation also informed this change plan by reviewing the data within and through the lens of change. The interviewees from the program evaluation were selected based on identified patterns in the data that led to a perceived value or lack thereof with respect to the role of the formal observation process in supporting the development of reflective practitioners. The semi-structured interviews were conducted in a one on one setting and were designed to get at the perceptions of the

staff members regarding their formal observation experiences. Their responses addressed the questions in the program evaluation, but also provided some data relevant to the change plan that triggered the desire to conduct additional interviews with the teachers regarding a change in format for the formal observation process.

To add to the data collection, administrator and teacher interviews were conducted to compare their perceptions of the formal observation process and its role in promoting professional growth among those groups. By exploring the perspectives of both administrator and teacher, the goal was to establish the contextual factors that lead to perceptions of perceived value in the observation process. The interview structure and questions for administrators and teachers are outlined in Appendix D. As suggested by the participatory action research model, using the survey in the program evaluation (Brownlow, 2016) was a way to establish a theoretical framework from which to identify the interview subjects to carry out the research based on the related questions (James, Milienkiewicz, & Buckman, 2008). This approach allowed the interview structure to provide a context for gaining a more complete picture of how the formal observation process impacts stakeholders of varying contextual demographics across the district. The data collected during the semi-structured interviews with teachers and administrators was utilized to design and implement the outlined strategies and actions (Appendix C) that set the course for mobilizing the change process. The goal was to improve overall instructional leadership through the evaluation process, with specific emphasis on the formal observation component.

Participants

For the purposes of the change plan, the survey responses from the program evaluation, the semi-structured interviews with teachers from the program evaluation and the additional semi-structured interviews conducted for the purposes of the change plan with teachers and administrators provided the foundation for the data collection. The interviewees from the program evaluation included nine staff members with demographics representative of those surveyed. For the change plan, I conducted the additional semi-structured interviews with three building principals whose staff members were surveyed and/or interviewed for the program evaluation (Brownlow, 2016). I also conducted semi-structured interviews with three teachers who volunteered to participate in an experience implementing the alternative model to the traditional formal observation as a part of the research for the change model. Finally, I also interviewed 15 additional staff members regarding their perceptions of the proposed videotape alternative as compared to the traditional formal observation process.

In recruiting participants for the program evaluation (Brownlow, 2016) and the change model, it was made clear that participation in the survey or interview was strictly voluntary and that choosing not to participate in the research would not result in any negative consequences. Since there was no identifier with respect to building or grade level, the survey responses had a high degree of anonymity. For the selection of interviewees, I used the demographic patterns to identify appropriate staff members and contacted those individuals directly to solicit their participation. For the change model selection of interviewees, I examined those same demographic patterns to select three teachers with different levels of experience in Century School District. The three teachers

included a veteran staff member of over 15 years of experience in the district, a mid-career teacher with ten years of experience in the district and a new hire with only one year of experience in the district. When I contacted the potential interviewees, I provided each with a written invitation to participate and emphasized that the participation in the interviews was voluntary. By providing a written invitation, it reduced the pressure of responding in a face to face context, which made the decision to decline easier if individuals were uncomfortable participating in this phase of the research. In the invite, it stated that participants had the option to decline with no negative consequences associated with choosing not to participate. When approaching principals for data collection related to the change plan, they were also provided with a written invitation emphasizing that participation is voluntary to reduce the pressure of responding face to face. The administrator invite also indicated that the principals had an option to decline participation and no negative consequences will be associated with choosing not to participate.

Data Gathering Techniques

Survey

As mentioned in the design overview, data that was gathered from the initial survey administered to all certified staff in the district during the program evaluation was revisited for the purposes of the change plan. One of the goals of the survey was to gather perception data related to the formal observation process. As part of the survey, respondents were asked some questions related to the value of the formal observation process in informing instruction for professional growth and about their perceptions of the post conference experience based upon those observations. The participants

responded using a Likert scale of 1 to 5. For the purposes of the change plan, the survey responses (questions 19, 20 and 21) were analyzed for patterns related to the interactions between the teacher and administrator with respect to the formal observation process and its impact on promoting reflective practice and professional growth.

In addition to the analysis of the survey data, I had three teachers volunteer to implement the proposed alternative model of the formal observation process as a data collection tool. I treated the interviews and results of the data collection from this trial experience as a case study. The experience included the three teachers identified above and their three principals. All participants initiated the change model in each of three buildings and then participated in follow-up semi-structured interviews. The data from the interviews was qualitatively analyzed to examine patterns and the impact of the alternative model on both teachers and administrators. In this case examining the model in the context of Century School District is relevant as an action research case study (Patton, 2008). Given the standardization of the evaluation model in Illinois with respect to professional standards of performance, the results from the trial of the alternative model may have enough generalizability to support examining this construct beyond Century School District to gather further data on the perceptions of its value as an option for formal observation processes within the teacher evaluation system. It is suggested that the model be replicated in districts of with varying contexts to examine its potential in varying school organizations across Illinois.

Interviews

A semi-structured interview protocol for teachers was administered in the program evaluation (Appendix D). Two additional semi-structured interview protocols

were developed to gather additional data for the change plan. The second set of protocols was developed to be administered to two groups of teachers. One group consisted of three teachers who volunteered to participate in an alternative formal observation experience representing the proposed alternative to the traditional observation model. Their interview protocol can be found in Appendix D. The other group of teachers were administered a second interview protocol to examine perceptions of the idea of the proposed alternative model to the traditional formal observation process, apart from those that participated in the case study experience. To gain clarity or expand on the perspective of the interviewees, probing questions were asked as a follow up to the predetermined interview questions during the interview process. The intent was to conduct similar semi-structured interviews with building administrators. An interview protocol was developed (Appendix D) that provided the ability to compare perceptions of administrators and teachers related to the alternative formal observation process (the use of videotape to replace the in-person observation). The data gathered through the analysis and comparison of these perceptions informed the strategies and actions planned to mobilize the system. Once the data was analyzed, any necessary adjustments to the strategies and actions were addressed to support the intended outcomes for the context, conditions, culture and competencies in the organization (Wagner & Keegan, 2006).

Data Analysis Techniques

The initial survey was distributed to 81 staff members across four elementary buildings in Century School District. Of the 81 potential respondents, 38 staff members completed the survey. The demographic breakdown included 15 classroom teachers, seven specialist subject teachers, 15 small group instructors and one school psychologist.

The demographic breakdown of respondents including years of experience and number of evaluators of the respondents is documented in Tables 1 and 2 below. These two demographic indicators were considered relevant for investigating patterns relative to perceptions related to the formal observation experience. The survey was analyzed for patterns in the perception data around the value of the formal observation process. Relevant survey data is discussed in more detail below.

Table 1. Years of experience.

Answer Choices	Responses
0-3 years of experience	15.79% 6
4-6 years of experience	10.53% 4
7-10 years of experience	13.16% 5
11-15 years of experience	28.95% 11
16-20 years of experience	15.79% 6
21+ years of experience	15.79% 6
Total	38

Table 2. Number of evaluators.

Answer Choices	Responses
Onlymy current administrator	2.63% 1
Two administrators	26.32% 10
Threeadministrators	15.79% 6
Four or moreadministrators	55.26% 21
Total	38

Examining the Likert scale used in the study, scores of four and five indicated that the staff member values the components of the formal observation process with respect to promoting reflection and professional growth. Those responding with a one or two see little to no value in the formal observation process for reflection and growth. The survey results did not yield any significant demographic patterns with respect to the role of the formal observation process in promoting the development of reflective practitioners.

Therefore, for the purposes of the interviews, a representative group of years of experience and the number of administrators they were evaluated by was chosen for the additional interviews that would be the focus of the change model research.

For the purposes of the case study, three staff members agreed to participate in a formal observation experience applying a videotaped model as a proposed alternative to the traditional formal observation process. After experiencing the alternative model, the three teachers were interviewed to compare their perceptions of this experience to that of the traditional formal observation experience. To enhance the data collection regarding the proposed alternative, 15 additional teachers were interviewed to solicit their perceptions based upon the hypothetical suggestion that the alternative model become a replacement for the traditional formal observation process. The three administrators participating in the alternate model experience were also interviewed to capture their points of view related to this model versus the traditional formal observation model.

The responses from all interviews coupled with the survey responses to those questions related to the structure of the formal observation process were qualitatively examined for patterns in perceptions related to the formal observation process. Specifically, I was looking for patterns in the data to compare the traditional formal observation process to the alternative videotaped formal observation experience. I was also looking to interpret the data from the various stakeholder perspectives. The data was synthesized to determine if there was a greater perceived value in the videotaped formal observation model versus the traditional in-person observation model for promoting the development of skills as a reflective practitioner, improving instructional practice or promoting professional growth.

SECTION FOUR: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Linking the Program Evaluation and the Change Model

A recent policy paper on teacher evaluation as a tool for professional growth emphasized that the intent of federal policies was to improve teacher quality through a supportive approach and not just to serve as a measure of accountability (Connally & Tooley, 2016). Teacher evaluation, with a specific emphasis on the formal observation process, was the subject of the program evaluation leading to this proposed model for change (Brownlow, 2016). In Brownlow's (2016) program evaluation, the intent was to provide more specific insights on how the role of the formal observation can be promoted as an instrumental tool in fostering continuous improvement on the part of teachers, ultimately increasing student achievement. In the review of the literature for the program evaluation, the role of reflective practice was an important element to examine because of the evidence surrounding its value in improving teaching practices (Aseltine, Faryniarz, & Rigazio-DiGilio, 2006; Danielson, 2016; Fendler, 2003; Jay, 2003; Zepeda & Kruskamp, 2012; Stuhlman et al., n.d.). From examining the role of reflection and the overall evaluation system, the program evaluation literature review led to a specific focus on the formal observation process. In studying the literature on the formal observation process, the lens that framed that research was the impact of the observation experience on teachers and their perceptions of the process with respect to professional growth. The review for this change plan included research on the constructs of the formal observation process, current successes and challenges and implications for improvements with respect to improving teacher practice.

Improving the Formal Observation Process

As districts have transitioned to the more sophisticated evaluation systems based on standards, there is an increased burden in collecting evidence during the formal observation. As we strive to create structures where teachers have ownership to increase the impact on improving performance, the literature has suggested constructs that may support districts in that work. Providing constructs where the teacher owns the reflective practice process is the foundation of what is referred to as a Performance Based Supervision Model (Aseltine et al., 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2013). Performance based models ask educators to individually and collectively reflect on and analyze student work and to use that evidence to create a plan for improvement. This type of model gives teacher ownership of the reflective practice process.

Research suggests that teacher effectiveness, as measured by improved student achievement, is evident in performance based assessment measures such as National Board Certification, the Connecticut BEST assessment and the Performance Assessment for California Teachers. These models all promote the collection of evidence through videotapes, student work samples and teacher reflections about the decision making with respect to instruction. The process of licensure for pre-service teachers known as edTPA is also based on the principals of performance assessment. This process embeds the use of student work and videotaped lessons as a major component of the self-analysis. Performance assessments are self-led with guidance and feedback from outside observers. These methods have been found to lead to improved performance and positive changes in teaching practices (Darling-Hammond, 2013).

The evidence from the program evaluation literature review with respect to the formal observation process and reflective practice, led to additional research for this change plan. The primary goal of the program evaluation was to investigate how the teacher might play an active role in becoming a self-reflective practitioner in the formal observation process to maximize the opportunity for improving student learning (Aseltine et al., 2006; Danielson, 2016; Myung & Martinez, 2013; Towndrow & Tan, 2009). The change plan seeks to improve the formal observation process in Century School District and capitalize on the opportunity for this process to significantly improve instructional practices and ultimately increase student achievement.

Formal Observations: Current Challenges

Illinois Administrative Code 50 (2014) outlines the state regulations regarding the formal observation process and its role in the overall teacher evaluation system. According to the code, the formal observation is defined as a specific window of time that is scheduled with a qualified evaluator to directly observe professional practices in the classroom or in the school. The code further identifies the formal observation as a means for collecting evidence of professional practice around planning, instructional delivery and classroom management. The formal observation is stated in the code to be an observation of the teacher in his or her classroom for a minimum of 45 minutes in length; or an observation of a complete lesson; or an entire class period. Formal observations are required once every two years for tenured staff in good standing and once annually for non-tenured staff. The formal observations require that a pre-conference be held between the qualified evaluator and the teacher preceded by the sharing of evidence of planning for instruction for the upcoming observation. The

evaluator is required to discuss the planning and any areas of focus for the observation, if appropriate. Following the observation, the evaluator is to meet with the teacher to discuss the evidence collected with respect to the standards for professional practice. The code further states that the evaluator is to provide written feedback following the formal observation process. After this outline of the formal observation, there is a point of reference stating that the teacher will reflect upon the instruction and, “if applicable”, may provide additional information or explanation about the lesson presented.

Continuing to identify how evidence is collected on the standards for professional practice, the code also states that the evaluator will share with the teacher any evidence collected or judgments made during the post conference following the observation.

Federal policies directing states to adopt new evaluation systems based on professional standards was always intended to improve teacher quality through support, not just to serve as a measure of accountability (Connally & Tooley, 2016). When examining the language of the code, it appears to be accountability driven. It is no surprise that the literature, both recent and past, identifies significant challenges related to the current structure of the formal observation process (Acheson & Gall, 2011; Danielson, 2016; Jay, 2013; Marshall, 2012; Myung & Martinez, 2013; Ness, 1980). The Illinois code is written in a way that implies that the responsibility for identifying and evaluating evidence as it relates to professional practice during the formal observation process lies primarily with the evaluator. The language stating that the teachers’ own information or explanations may be shared “if applicable” may create the perception that the teacher’s role in sharing reflections is optional. Given the emphasis on the importance of teacher reflection on practice for improving student learning (Brownlow, 2016), the

current formal observation structure is not positioned to support the development of reflective practitioners in the classroom.

Danielson (2016) affirmed the notion of teachers playing a passive role in the formal observation, describing the typical process as the teacher listening to the supervisor providing suggestions resulting the experience being of little value to the teacher. The recognition is that the administrator is doing the work. Marshall (2012) described the formal observation process as one where the principal owns the feedback, not the teacher resulting in an experience that minimizes the opportunity for professional growth. In addition to the administrators doing the work, another challenge with respect to the formal observation process as designed is the limited knowledge of the evaluators in content areas outside of their own personal disciplinary training (Connally & Tooley, 2016; Darling-Hammond, 2013).

Beyond the challenges related to the structure of the observation process, there are also challenges that exist related to the role of the formal observation in the overall summative evaluation of teachers. The nature of the perceived positional power of the administrator and the role they play in the formal observation can lead the process to produce anxiety and fear limiting its impact as a professional growth opportunity (Acheson et al., 2011; Connally & Tooley, 2016; Danielson, 2016; Marshall, 2012; Ness, 1980; Zepeda & Kruskamp, 2012). While these challenges exist, there are those that believe that classroom observation has great potential to improve teaching and learning and that poor implementation is what undermines its benefits (Wood et al., 2014). The work by Wood et al. through the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation MET Project (2014) states that the ultimate measure of success of an observation system is the degree to

which it improves teaching and learning. For the purposes of this change model, the question becomes how to redesign the observation process to create a protocol that is trustworthy and will be perceived as one where the teacher owns the process and values it as an exercise for reflection and professional growth.

A Model for Improvement

Performance assessment has been identified in the literature as a model for improving the teacher evaluation process (Aseltine et al., 2006; Danielson, personal communication, July 15, 2016; Darling-Hammond, 2013). The argument for a performance based assessment model is that the teacher is an active participant and owns the process (Aseltine et al., 2006). Darling-Hammond (2013) explored the attributes of an effective evaluation system with respect to improving student achievement. Her research identified some common elements across such measures such as National Board Certification, the Connecticut BEST assessment and the Performance Assessment for California Teachers. In all these systems, videotaped observations play a key role providing teachers with an opportunity to reflect and analyze their own teaching with respect to its impact on student learning. These experiences in comparison to traditional observation experiences supports a focus on the impact of the instruction on students versus focusing solely on teacher behaviors. These types of reflective experiences for teachers enables them to better evaluate their actions and supports them in identifying when to adjust instruction. When strategies like those embedded in National Board Certification have been used system-wide for improving performance, it has successfully transformed performance across the system for both students and staff (Darling-Hammond, 2013). Evidence acknowledging this potential comes from the state of New

York where the Department of Education recently amended the teacher evaluation process to allow for a videotaped protocol as an option for the formal observation process of teachers (New York Department of Education, 2017).

The change model proposed for Century School District is one grounded in the idea that videotaped lessons may be a way to transform the formal observation process to a tool valued for promoting reflective practice and supporting professional growth. The Danielson Group (n.d.) identified videotaping as a method to enhance the observation process. A videotape allows you to revisit a lesson when there is disagreement between an evaluator and a teacher on how a lesson should be evaluated. Since observer notes and teacher memories can be inaccurate, a videotape provides the opportunity for a look back at the lesson. The idea of videotaping a lesson is thought to be a better option for an authentic look at instruction (Archer et al., 2015; Frontline Technologies, 2016; Harvard University Center for Educational Policy Research, 2015; Marshall, 2012; Rosaen, Lundeberg, Cooper, Fritzen, & Terpstra, 2008; Stuhlman et al., n.d.). A recent report by The Center for Educational Policy Research at Harvard University (2015) provided evidence of the advantages of using videotaped observations over the in-person observation model, which is currently mandated in the state of Illinois (Illinois State Board of Education, 2014).

The use of a videotape in the formal observation process can provide teachers with specific and constructive feedback. In viewing the videotape together, teachers and evaluators can have an objective conversation about the observed behaviors. This can lead to stronger reflective practices on the part of the teacher, as they can view the instructional sequence prior to reviewing it with the evaluator (Stuhlman et al., n.d.). In

this model, the post conference becomes focused on actual events that occurred during instruction, rather than relying just on notes and the recall of the teacher and evaluator. It allows the teacher to build habits of self-analysis by being able to see firsthand how students are responding to instruction. Teachers own the reflective responsibility to find evidence of good teaching making it highly effective in improving practice (Archer et al., 2015). As Myung and Martinez (2013) pointed out, a teacher's own insights and reflections can and should affect an administrator's interpretation of what was observed. In the work from the MET Project, Archer et al. (2015) found that despite some reservations around the anxiety that videotaping might produce, the advantages outweigh the drawbacks as an opportunity for close study of teaching and learning experiences.

Videotaped Observations: Exploring the Benefits

There are several studies that have focused on the use of videotaping as a means for promoting reflective practice (Baecher, McCormack, & Kung, 2014; Harvard University Center for Educational Policy Research, 2015; Mercado & Baecher, 2014; Pellegrino & Gerber, 2012; Rosaen et al., 2008; Tripp & Rich, 2012; van Es & Sherin, 2006). In these studies, it was found that the benefits for teachers in honing their skills as reflective practitioners outweighed any of the hesitations related to feelings of self-consciousness from the videotaping process. Results indicated that teachers arrived at a more in-depth understanding of their own performance as compared to a traditional memory-based recall model. Videotaped experiences resulted in more explicit reflections, deepened skills as reflective practitioners, allowed for focused coaching with tenured staff, provided the opportunity for a more comprehensive look at student classroom

behaviors and were more likely to result in changed instructional practices than traditional feedback.

The authors of the report by the Harvard University Center for Educational Policy Research (2015) noted that administrators found teachers to be more open to feedback in the context of a videotaped observation post conference. As Tripp and Rich (2012) reported, teachers trust their own ability to view the need for change more than they trust other feedback mechanisms and they are more willing to accept the need to change when seeing it for themselves. They also found that the videotaping fostered the notion of continuous improvement in teachers and led to better suggestions in the evaluator conference from being able to understand the context in the moment. From this research, teachers continually talked about trusting the video analysis feedback more than previous feedback mechanisms they had experienced. The report from the Center for Educational Policy Research (2015) also found that teachers perceived supervisors to be more supportive and the observation process to be perceived fairer. In that study, it was also noted that there were fewer disagreements between evaluators and teachers on ratings related to the formal observation. Tripp and Rich (2012) suggested that there might be merit to researching whether the combining videotaped observations with other feedback methods may increase teacher trust in all forms of feedback.

Aside from promoting reflective practice and professional growth, Tripp and Rich (2012) also suggested that videotaping raised accountability for the staff to implement changes to instructional practices. In the initial report from the Harvard University Center for Educational Policy Research (2015), the study on the use of videotaped observations resulted in teachers and administrators being able to identify more specific changes in

practice that resulted directly from post observation conferences. The study by van Es and Sherin (2006) reinforced the fact that videotaping enhanced the teacher skill of noticing by providing teachers with the time to reflect. The skill of noticing is the ability of a teacher to identify what is important in a teaching situation and to draw on knowledge and experience to analyze that situation. The use of videotape for self-assessment can help support the development of a coaching relationship between supervisor and teacher, thereby supporting a climate of trust and support.

Video can serve as a mechanism for bringing evaluators and teachers together in a mutually beneficial way that serves the interests of students (Mercado & Baecher, 2014). In a recent study commissioned by the Illinois State Board of Education to evaluate the Performance Evaluation Review Act (PERA), it was found that the whole evaluation process can depend on the quality of the conversation between the teacher and the evaluator and how well that leader embodies the role of instructional leader. The report stated that conversations that are not one-sided lectures are considered high quality, specifically those where the evaluator allows the teacher to guide the conversations and identify the evidence to support their own reflections. The report did find that being able to point to artifacts and additional evidence in a post conference aligned to the professional practice standards did improve the conversations between teachers and administrators (Milanowski et al., 2016). In addition to instructional benefits, the videotaped model seemed to enhance the administrator's ability to be the instructional leader (Harvard University Center for Educational Policy Research, 2015). The videotaped model was found to increase the amount of time administrators had available to be in classrooms. Two thirds of administrators in the study from The Center for

Educational Policy Research reported that they watched the videotaped segments outside of instructional hours and freed themselves from the paperwork that comes from traditional scripting of observations. Administrators in Century School District have reported a shift in administrative responsibilities related to the implementation of PERA and the new teacher evaluation model. There has been an increase in paperwork and reporting that has resulted in less time in the classroom. So, in our school district, finding efficiencies that also improve processes is extremely timely and relevant.

The Center for Educational Policy report (2015) also addressed anticipated administrator and teacher concerns regarding video-taped observations. On the teacher end, the idea that videotaping might produce anxiety or create more stress if the recorded lesson did not go as planned was a potential concern. In the study, the authors found that allowing teachers to self-select the video submitted alleviated that concern. Additionally, the self-selection of video resulted in increased instances of teachers videotaping themselves, which resulted in an unintended consequence of increased opportunities for self-reflection. On the administrative side, the anticipated concern of teacher self-selected video observations resulting in inflated ratings was also addressed. After reviewing the ratings of the teachers in the study, it was found that the process only slightly impacted outcomes for teachers; teachers ranked as lower performing in the traditional in-person model were also ranked lower than their more capable peers in the videotaped model. Given the findings in these reports and the compelling evidence from a review of the literature, the “to be” vision for Century School District appears viable through a transformative change in the formal observation process as it relates to teacher evaluation.

SECTION FIVE: DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

Data Analysis

The successful implementation of the change plan requires a deep analysis of the patterns surrounding the context, conditions, culture and competencies of the district that are evident in the data. The change plan is focused on the creation of an evaluation system that embodies a growth mindset and promotes and supports the development of reflective practitioners. A climate and culture of trust is also required to achieve this goal and improve teaching and learning. Given the emphasis in the literature on the lack of perceived value placed upon the traditional formal observation process and the program evaluation data (Brownlow, 2016) that confirmed the same sentiment in Century School District, this component of the evaluation process is key in implementing successful change. The analysis of my data examined potential opportunities in the formal observation process for increasing its impact on professional growth and improving instructional practices. While the formal observation process embodies the conditions that are the focus of the change plan, the proposed improvements to the process ultimately touch the contextual and cultural elements of change, as well as the necessary competencies to be developed, that will lead to a successful change process. The survey and interview data also provide insights for envisioning and enacting the systems change this model is seeking to execute (Wagner & Kegan, 2006). The interviews conducted with teachers and administrators provided the opportunity for collegial, collective inquiry helping to build a culture of reflective practice. As Drago-Severson (2009) pointed out, this kind of inquiry leads to stronger reflective practices and professional growth. The process of data collection provided constructs for supporting the shift in culture around

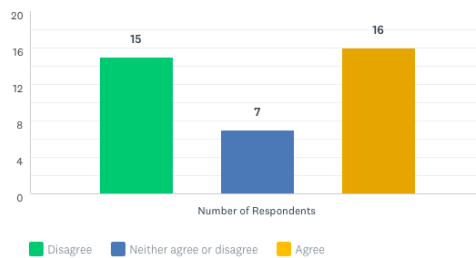
shared ownership and building trust between teachers and administrators. It developed competencies for the six staff members that participated in understanding how to use protocols for reflecting on practice and how you shape professional learning in the context of continuous improvement using a model like videotaping instruction as part of the evaluation process. In her work, Drago-Severson (2009) commented on the environmental support required to develop a culture and climate of professional growth embedded in reflection. The argument is that this type of culture will decrease isolation, improve leadership, facilitate learning and growth, and enhance student learning.

In going back to the survey data from the program evaluation, it was evident that while the teachers felt the traditional formal observation process promoted the idea of reflecting on your practice, only 16 of 38 respondents agreed that the current process was highly valuable in informing instruction for professional growth (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Value of formal observation process.

To what extent do you agree with the following statement: The formal observation process is highly valuable in informing my instruction for professional growth.

Answered: 38 Skipped: 0



	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE	AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Number of Respondents	39.47% 15	18.42% 7	42.11% 16	38	2.21

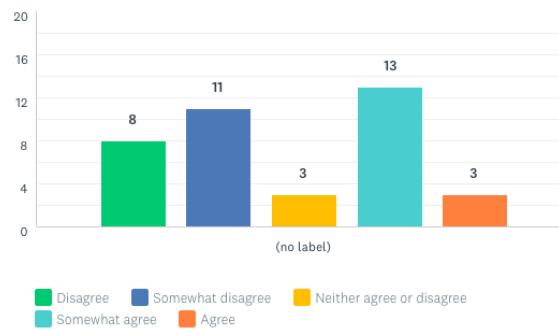
Examining the responses to the two subsequent survey questions led to the conclusion that the process is not valued as a professional growth opportunity because it is administrator driven with little to no shared ownership between teacher and administrator in the process. When asked if the post conference experience was guided by

the teacher and their reflections of the instructional experience (Figure 3), only three teachers agreed that this was the case with only another 13 indicating that they somewhat agreed. This left over 50% of the 38 respondents indicating that they did not feel they were guiding the conversation or that the post conference placed an emphasis on their own reflections of the experience. Similarly, and even more concerning, 36 of the 38 survey respondents indicated that the post conference was guided by the administrator and his/hers notes and suggestions regarding the formal observation (Figure 4).

Figure 3. Opinions on whether post conference is guided by participants.

To what extent do you agree with the following statement: The observation post conference is guided by me and my reflections of the instructional experience.

Answered: 38 Skipped: 0



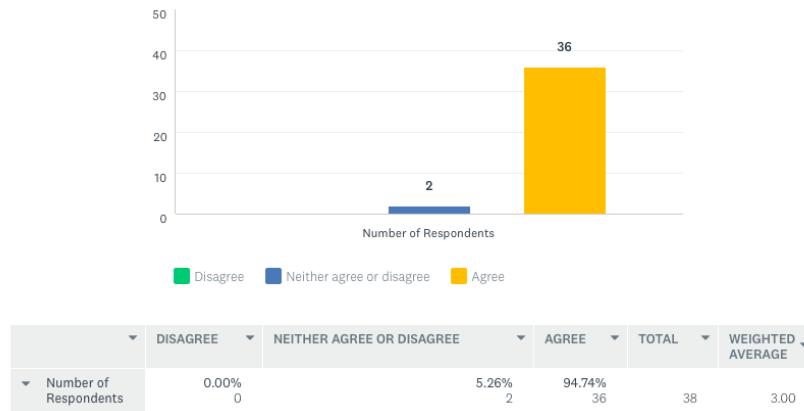
	DISAGREE	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE	SOMEWHAT AGREE	AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	21.05% 8	28.95% 11	7.89% 3	34.21% 13	7.89% 3	38	2.79

Knowing that there appeared to be minimal to no perceived role for the teacher in the post conference, the semi-structured interviews were intended to explore how the proposed videotaped model might influence the teacher-administrator dynamic as it related to the formal observation process, post conference and ultimately its value in promoting reflection and professional growth.

Figure 4. Opinions on whether post conference is guided by administrators.

To what extent do you agree with the following statement: The post conference is guided by the administrator and his/her notes and suggestions regarding the formal observation.

Answered: 38 Skipped: 0



Examining the recommendations from the program evaluation (Brownlow, 2016), this proposed change model was in response to the need for a more authentic evaluation process, with an emphasis on improving the formal observation process. The idea of a videotaped observation to replace the traditional in-person formal observation was explored to increase its value for promoting professional growth and supporting the development of teachers’ skills as reflective practitioners. The various interview responses (perception interview data and case study interview data) were analyzed for patterns related to the value of a videotaped formal observation experience as compared to a traditional formal observation process.

Interview Data Analysis

It was important to examine the interview data related to a change in the formal observation process based on perceptions of the 15 teachers that did not participate in the actual experience of executing the proposed alternative of the videotaped process. The notion is that the patterns from this larger group of teacher responses can be compared to what the three involved in the case study shared as their reflections of the actual

experience to identify outcomes that confirm or refute the perceptions of the larger body of interviewees. By doing so, it will be possible to identify potential challenges in the successful implementation of the change model in Century School District.

With a focus on an alternative to the traditional observation process as a component in restructuring the role of the teacher in the evaluation process, the data was analyzed relative to directly supporting this strategy, while also recognizing its impact on the other strategies related to developing greater teacher ownership for professional learning and supporting administrators in building their capacity to develop teachers' skills as reflective practitioners. The most powerful results from the perception interviews identify the videotaped experience as one that might provide a more authentic opportunity for professional growth, improve the quality of the instructional conversations with their administrators and give reflective ownership to the teachers in identifying strengths and opportunities in their instruction.

Ownership and Authenticity

Of the 15 teachers interviewed, 12 commented on the greater potential for authenticity with the use of a videotape. One teacher stated, "I think it would better inform my practice because I would be able to see myself teach. Sometimes I feel like the suggestions I am given are subject to opinion. If I were to see it myself, I could better make a judgement on if the suggestion is valid or not." Another teacher shared, "Watching yourself and seeing the lesson play out would give the teacher more insight into what the lesson looks like, which is rare to be able to view. The teacher would definitely be more aware of areas of growth that are needed since she is seeing it as an observer would." Five of the 12 teachers shared that by having the ability to re-watch a

videotape, they would have the opportunity to learn many different things and could focus more specifically on celebrating their own strengths and setting their own goals for improvement over time. The idea of the videotape was described as helping the teacher to “see” the instruction in action to internalize the next steps making it more authentic than an administrator telling them what to do to improve. As stated by one teacher interviewed, “I think teachers would grow from seeing themselves on video. You could pause, rewind and review the video to have discussions. You could also watch it several times; once to watch the teacher, another time to watch the kids, maybe a third time to observe something else.” This perception is affirmed by the literature indicating that videotaping may be a more authentic way for teachers to reflect (Archer et al., 2015; Frontline Technologies, 2016; Harvard University Center for Educational Policy Research, 2015; Marshall, 2012; Rosaen et al., 2008; Stuhlman et al., n.d.). This reflection on the part of these teachers also speaks to the idea of shared ownership and providing the teacher with the responsibility of reflecting, rather than the traditional administrator owned observation process that was described in the literature (Aseltine et al., 2006; Danielson, 2016; Marshall, 2012) and reflected in the program evaluation data (Brownlow, 2016).

This idea of increasing the authenticity of the formal observation was confirmed by the teachers and administrators who took part in piloting the videotaped experience. Ms. A. shared that the video allowed her to focus more on what students were doing versus what she was doing as the teacher. She compared this to the traditional model where the reflections were entirely focused on teacher behaviors because of the way the administrator captured the notes from the lesson. Ms. A. also commented on her ability to

see more of her classroom and noticing things that surprised her about the student engagement during the lesson. She commented the authentic nature of the experience of watching herself, rather than reading notes from someone else. Her administrator also commented on the ability to see more of the instruction. From his perspective, he shared that in trying to document everything happening in the moment, it is inevitable that he will miss things. He felt he noticed so many more things than when he observes in person. The article by Kim Marshall (2012) affirmed the feelings of this administrator as he also described the difficulty in capturing evidence in a traditional model causing you to focus more on teacher behavior, rather than student learning.

Mr. B. also commented on the videotaped experience describing it as “more meaningful to see things versus read things” about his instruction. His administrator commented on how she could provide a more authentic context during the discussion by having the opportunity to go to the video footage and watch it together. Mrs. P. also commented on the way video captured the entire instructional experience providing a broader context that is limited by the vantage point of the administrator during an in-person observation. Her administrator agreed and shared that the video captured more than he could ever capture in a traditional scripting model. The feedback captured in the interviews of these three teachers and administrators supports the findings from the Los Angeles Unified School District report (2012) and the findings from Archer et al. (2015) in the MET Project around the nature of the feedback from formal observations and the proposed solution of a recording device to capture the authentic evidence during the observation. It can be concluded from the perception interviews and the interview

feedback from the teachers and administrators experimenting with the videotaped model, that it has merit in improving the authenticity of the formal observation process.

Quality of Instructional Conversations

In addition to ownership and authenticity, the perception interview data also pointed to the potential for raising the quality of the conversations that happen between teachers and administrators in the post observation conference setting. Of the 15 teachers interviewed, 13 of them commented on the ways the conversations may be more valued in a videotaped model. The teachers shared the value of being able to go back and watch the instructional sequence to enhance the points being discussed. A teacher stated, “I think it would have a huge impact on the instructional conversations because it should allow for both of you to see the strengths and discuss areas that can be improved.” Two of the teachers commented on how it might broaden the context of the discussion since an administrator can never get everything from the observation down in notes.

Also, embedded in the responses from the perception interviews came the idea that the videotape provides common ground for the conversation, as the teacher and administrator are looking at the same thing and can more easily discuss the lenses through which they are perceiving the interactions between teachers and students. The teachers commented on the idea of concrete evidence for the conversation that would also provide them with more ownership in leading the conversation. It is important to note, that one teacher commented that she felt the current model is just as valuable as the idea of a videotaped option and that there would be little difference in the quality of the conversation. This teacher felt the current model provides her with a valuable opportunity to reflect. While this teacher shared that she can see the value in both models, she did

also report that the videotaped observation model is worth considering because it can diminish the perceived bias that some teachers have about the current feedback from administrators.

All three teachers and administrators implementing the videotape pilot had feedback to share related to the quality of their instructional conversations. Ms. A. shared that she could use the videotape in her conversation to go back and discuss questions from her administrator and provide the evidence for her instructional decision making in a collaborative way. Her principal felt he was also more easily able to express his thoughts by being able to use the video to illustrate the feedback. He also commented on the way the videotape enriched the discussion providing the teacher with the opportunity to revisit the lesson and to see things that she may not have recalled just trying to rely on his notes. This principal also stated, “This experience was much more collaborative, I wasn’t talking at the teacher, we were having a conversation.”

Mrs. P. also shared that she used the video to go back and look together at the instruction, rather than trying to remember. This platform allowed her to take the discussion further having a positive impact on the conversation. When asked about her role in the post conference, she stated, “I definitely drove the conversation more with the video.” Her administrator also felt that examining the video provided a more in-depth opportunity to study her instruction and led to a higher quality conversation that was more meaningful for him. He also shared that he felt the teacher contributed more to the conversation and had a lot more to talk about than what he typically experiences in the traditional observation post conference. Mr. B. commented on the conversation being more teacher led. He shared that in the traditional model, the administrator often led

because the conversation was based on their notes. Since Mr. B. watched the video, he led the conversation. He shared, “I definitely felt more ownership and even went back to the videotape after the post conference to reflect more on my instruction.” Mr. B’s evaluator commented on how he was able to identify the things that worked and the areas for growth and could more readily lead the conversation in this videotaped observation process.

The findings related to the way a videotaped model improved post conference instructional conversations between teachers and administrators can be corroborated by some of the research. The MET Project work by Archer et al. (2015) and the work by Myung and Martinez (2013) also concluded that video recordings supported teachers in taking the reflective responsibility and that these reflections should be the focus of those instructional conversations with administrators.

Promoting Reflective Practice

With respect to promoting reflective practice and professional growth, there were nine of the 15 teachers that commented specifically on the potential for the videotaping to promote positive instructional changes in their classrooms. The comments from these nine teachers included the idea that by watching themselves they can better judge the feedback from the observer, they could be more honest with themselves, they might observe things a human observation may not capture and it might provide a more valuable way to self-assess. In the interviews with the three teachers and administrators who engaged in the videotaped experience, the feedback on the impact on promoting reflective practice and professional growth dominated the way in which they saw the videotaped experience as a tool for improving the observation process. Ms. A., Mrs. P.

and Mr. B. all commented on the way the videotaping created a context for them to engage in constructive reflection of their teaching. Mr. B shared, “You can accept your own points of where you need improvement without being defensive about it.” When thinking about the impact on reflection, Mrs. A said, “The teacher’s full mental capacity can be used for reflection and evaluation of her own performance. Also, you could watch the video multiple times to see if you missed something, make sure you catch all the details.” She also shared that, “The video can be viewed with colleagues and have other people provide feedback or questions about the lesson.”

All three teachers shared that it was easier to reflect with ability to look back and see most of what was happening during instruction. From their lens, this was a vast improvement over trying to reflect on someone else’s written account of what happened during the lesson. The teachers shared that it is much easier to be critical of yourself when you can watch your teaching firsthand. An unexpected unanimous outcome was that all the teachers felt they could focus more directly on students and their learning by watching the video versus focusing solely on the teacher behaviors that an administrator typically annotates. The three administrators concurred with the teachers sharing that the video supported a whole new level reflection for the teacher. They described the videotaped process as increasingly more collaborative, with the teachers able to identify those strengths and opportunities more readily. All three principals commented on the increased teacher ownership for reflecting on the instruction. One administrator called it a “powerful reflective opportunity” for the teacher. Another stated, “I went into this videotaped experience with skepticism, but I came out of it feeling like it provided a much richer context for fostering reflection and professional growth.” The third principal

shared that this experience will take the teacher beyond a single conversation with her in supporting her teacher with his professional growth.

Examining the literature on the use of videotaping for improving reflection and promoting professional growth (Mercado & Baecher, 2014; Rosaen et al., 2008; Tripp & Rich, 2012), there is much to support the findings in this change model research around the potential for the positive impact on improving the skills of teachers as reflective practitioners and promoting professional growth. While the findings from the perception and case study interviews was overwhelmingly positive with respect to the potential for a videotaped process to improve the nature of the formal observation experience, there are some cautions that teachers and administrators identified in the implementation of its use. The main consideration shared by teachers and administrators for successful implementation is to be sure the videotaped experience captures as much of the classroom instruction as possible, so as not to miss any group of students and their responses during instruction. While a valid concern, there are new tools emerging that will directly address this concern.

There has been a great deal of recent literature published on the use of the videotaped model and its positive impact on teaching and learning with respect to its use in teacher preparation programs, as well as its implementation as an option in formal evaluation systems like New York City (Archer et al., 2015; Baecher et al., 2014; Mercado & Baecher, 2014; New York City Department of Education, 2017; Pellegrino & Gerber, 2012; Tripp & Rich, 2012; van Es & Sherin, 2006). In response to the interest in videotaping, companies have created the technology to address the stated concern. Using Swivl (2016) as one example, the company has developed a robotic recording device that

can holistically capture all aspects of a teacher's lesson. The technology allows the camera to travel the room with the teacher and provides an audio recording mechanism that can capture all student interactions during the lesson, including individual, small group and whole class. A feature of the system allows the teacher or administrator to listen to a series of audio tracks individually or collectively to study student responses during instruction. The system has the capability to mute various tracks and isolate the interactions of one small group from the recorded lesson. This allows all student responses to be captured, eliminating the concern that a videotape cannot capture all small group or individual work of students. This technology may support the advocacy of videotaping as an alternative as it continues to be refined with those implementing it.

The other aspect to videotaping that was examined in the data collection and analysis was the role anxiety might play in the implementation of a videotaped observation model. When asked about the role anxiety might play in a videotaped observation model, the responses were varied. Six teachers commented that they would feel less anxious because they view a video camera as a tool versus a threat. The in-person observation raises more anxiety for them because of human nature and the feeling of being "judged" in that moment. Three teachers also shared they felt the authenticity of a video would be less anxiety producing for them. Five of the 15 teachers felt it might be more stressful at first because while it provides the opportunity to see everything, there was the worry that the evaluator may only focus on mistakes. One of those five prefers the human interaction and felt she may be stiff with a video camera. Four of the five identifying potential anxiety as a challenge, recognized that the implementation process could prevent those worries if there were shared agreements about how the process would

be operationalized. Two of the five felt that the anxiety could be overcome as videotaping became a more familiar process to teachers.

For those videotaped, anxiety did not emerge as a significant concern for them as it related to this alternative experience. Mrs. P. specifically stated, “I didn’t feel any anxiety of you know hearing or seeing myself or the video camera being there.” Mr. B. shared, “I think there was anxiety but it was way less than having an administrator in your room with a computer open. When somebody of positional authority comes that always I think creates more anxiety whether we’ve recognized it or not; but the videotaping was different. It’s more authentic. If it becomes a normal practice, teachers would just see it as part of what we do.” The attention to the role that anxiety might play in this alternative model will be further addressed in examining the “to be” and strategies and actions for successful implementation of the change model.

Based on the data and findings derived from the interviews and survey, there is enough evidence that the videotaped formal observation process may play a significant role in addressing the goal of the overall change plan in improving the evaluation process to be one that promotes and supports the development of reflective practitioners with a focus on growth mindset leading to a climate and culture of trust that will improve teaching and learning. Given the feedback from the program evaluation on the perceived lack of value in the current model (Brownlow, 2016) and the findings from the change model data, it can be concluded that exploring the idea of a videotaped option as an alternative to the traditional formal observation process is worthwhile in Century School District and beyond.

SECTION SIX: A VISION OF SUCCESS (TO BE)

The change model I envision for Century School District goes well beyond the idea of shifting the model for the formal observation process. Providing an alternative to the traditional in-person observation will be an important step in improving the overall evaluation process. It is intended to lead to the goal of realizing an evaluation system focused on growth mindset that promotes the development of reflective practitioners within a culture and climate of trust to improve teaching and learning. While the research and data collection for the change model was focused primarily on the formal observation process, the findings have implications for all aspects of the organization including its context, culture, conditions and competencies in the successful implementation of change (Wagner & Kegan, 2006). As Darling-Hammond (2013) pointed out, there is a need for a conceptual framework around teaching and learning that identifies the teacher evaluation process as a part of a larger teaching and learning system focused on continuous improvement for the entire profession. The 2016 policy paper authored by Connally, et al. suggests that one of the intentions in adopting new teacher evaluation systems across the country was to create a tool for professional growth that improves teacher quality through support, not just to create a stronger measure of accountability. This paper also argues that the current Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) places the obligation at the state level for improving the quality of teaching. With that responsibility, the authors suggest that to truly improve student success, states should embrace the opportunity to refine their teacher evaluation systems with a lens focused on professional growth, in addition to the traditional accountability only construct.

Context

If the right conditions are established and systemic change is realized in Century School District, the context in the district will shift to allow for teacher ownership in professional learning and increase the capacity of the leadership to support that process. In describing the findings from the data on the proposed alternative formal observation process, it became clear that the videotaped experience would play a role in providing one avenue for increasing teacher ownership in the context of professional learning. As the strategies and actions related to promoting more shared ownership are explored with respect to the full implementation of the change model, this initial step will support this ultimate shift in context. The work by Zepeda and Kruskamp (2012) and Darling-Hammond (2013) emphasized that for a supervision model to create a context for professional growth, the evaluation, supervision and professional development must have a direct link to one another. Darling-Hammond (2013) and Aseltine et al. (2006) suggested performance based assessment in teacher evaluation systems will enhance the teacher opportunities for professional growth.

In the interviews conducted with the three pilot teachers, all of them mentioned the shift in focus from teacher behaviors to student behaviors when reflecting on a videotape versus the traditional administrator notes from the lesson. A videotaped observation experience provides the context for examining teaching and learning through a performance based lens. The literature also found videotaping to support teachers in focusing their reflections on student learning rather than on teacher behavior and to encourage individual and collective analysis of student work to plan for improvement (Aseltine et al., 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2013). Danielson (2016) also addressed the

importance of context within a system as a critical element to improving student learning. Her work emphasizes the importance of the teacher being the one to do the intellectual work and that the conversations about observed events have potential for stimulating deep reflection. However, she emphasizes that they must reference actual events that both parties have witnessed and that the teacher must manage the conversation. The Danielson Group website (n.d.) outlined the role videotape might play in improving the observation process giving teachers and evaluators a more accurate account of what transpired during a lesson. Many of the teachers in Century School District commented on the shared context a videotape might provide giving the teacher an administrator a common lens from which to reflect on the instruction.

Since the Century School District already has a group of committed teachers dedicated to continuous improvement, they are well positioned to make the additional contextual shifts necessary to successfully implement change. If Century School District fully embraced the change, the shared videotaped platform for the formal observation becomes the first step in building leadership capacity through collaborative practices that give the teachers ownership for their learning. All of this will happen in a context aligned to performance standards as required by the IL Performance Evaluation Review Act.

Conditions

Once teachers feel more ownership of their professional learning and administrators find ways to build their leadership capacity in supporting this process, the hope is that the Century School District will create conditions that emphasize a focus on professional practice with opportunities for teachers to identify their own professional goals for growth. As we learned from the findings related to the idea of the videotaped

observation process, teachers appreciated the opportunity to self-assess and to examine their own practices with the lens of exploring their opportunities for growth. In addition to being able to create this condition through the alternative formal observation process, there are additional strategies and actions that can be implemented to support the shift to the necessary conditions in achieving an improved evaluation system.

At the end of the 2016–2017 School Year, I brought the Century School District PERA Action Team together to begin to address the conditions that needed review to support an improved collaborative, reflective evaluation system. As the team examined our initial implementation of our PERA aligned system, the teachers and administrators recognized the lack of ownership the teacher had within all aspects of the process. Since the district’s Joint Committee maintains local jurisdiction over the components of the evaluation system, we came to consensus on some revisions that will increase the shared ownership between teachers and administrators. The committee created two opportunities for self-assessment. Beginning in the Fall of 2017, teachers will have the opportunity to self-assess their performance following a formal observation and provide their reflections to the administrator prior to the post conference. Adding this component will begin to shift ownership for the post conference discussion to the teacher. The conversation will be able to be driven from the teacher’s reflections, rather than solely from the administrator’s script of the lesson. While a videotaped observation will further enhance the reflective process for the teacher, adding a self-assessment component is a positive next step in establishing a more collaborative process.

A second opportunity for self-assessment was added to the summative component of the evaluation process. Once again, teachers will have the opportunity to complete a

self-reflection tool aligned to the performance standards prior to their summative conference with the administrator. This will provide the evaluator with insights to the teacher's reflections of their performance and to consider additional input from the teacher's perspective. While the research for the purposes of this change model did not focus specifically on the summative conference, the literature (Acheson & Gall, 2011; Aseltine et al., 2006; Danielson, 2016; Darling-Hammond, 2013) characterized that process in a similar vein with the evaluator maintaining the ownership creating a condition for high stakes and high anxiety that minimizes its impact on improving teaching and learning. As Zepeda and Kruskamp (2012) pointed out, for the supervision model to promote professional growth, teachers need to be at the center of the system and not bystanders in the process.

Culture

In the exploration of the videotaped observation model, there was an intentional eye on how this process might support the broader hope to develop a culture of trust and collaboration. In the interviews with the participants in the study of the formal observation model, many commented on the way the process provided an opportunity for collaboration with their administrators in examining the videotape together. Knowing that the goal of the change plan would be to shift the district from one of fear and competition to one of trust, the collaborative process in the use of a videotape for observation is a stepping stone to building that mutual trust among teachers and administrators. As Myung and Martinez (2013) suggested, teacher insights and reflections can and should affect an administrator's interpretation of what was observed. By honoring those reflections, credibility on both parts leads to higher levels of trust (Mercado & Baecher,

2014). Interviewees also discussed the transparency that the videotaping provided around what was observed, helping to build confidence in the feedback from their principals. All participants also commented on the increased ownership for the teacher in this alternative model. These indicators support the vision of a culture where professional learning is shared among teachers and administrators supported by a climate of trust and collaboration. Cultures build on trust and collaboration are better able to engage teachers in reflective practice (Zepeda & Kruskamp, 2012). The videotaped model of observation provides an initial opportunity to begin to shape the culture we hope to have in Century School District with additional actions to be explored that will further support the successful implementation of change. In realizing the “to be” for Century School District, the response of the PERA Action Team in seeking to include self-assessment opportunities for teachers in the evaluation process speaks to the commitment of teachers and administrator in mobilizing the change with respect to the current culture (Wagner & Kegan, 2006).

Competencies

Embedded in the work to achieve the stated goal of the change model is to recognize the needed competencies that must be developed for successful implementation of the change. The shift to a framework of professional standards for teachers is one of the actions that will be explored further. The use of a videotaped observation will also provide an opportunity to specifically examine teaching and learning behaviors as they apply to the standards for professional practice. The protocols implemented with the use of a videotaped model can provide a framework for linking the components of the standards in the evaluation model to the reflections the teachers provide in response to

viewing their instruction. By promoting reflective practices as described by the findings in the shift to a videotaped model of observation, the formal observation process can be a start to building a strong understanding of the impact of growth mindset and continuous improvement on student learning. The competencies that will be developed by the intended change will serve to support the goal to improve teaching and learning across the system. The literature discussed the overarching need for a strong understanding of standards for performance, the need for the use of more supportive protocols to foster more collaborative dialogue focused on improving teaching and learning and the need to establish a growth mindset across the system inclusive of a district's evaluation system (Danielson, 2016; Darling-Hammond, 2013). A learning system focused on continuous improvement for both teachers and administrators is critical as the conceptual framework for improved teaching and learning, inclusive of the teacher evaluation process (Darling-Hammond, 2013).

Having conducted the research on just one actionable test of the strategies and actions that may support the realization of an improved evaluation system, it is profound the impact that one component can have as it relates to all the aspects requiring consideration in a model of change. As I have envisioned the change for Century School District, I am reminded by Wagner and Kegan (2006) that as I go to enact the change, I need to tend to those elements that arose from my research with respect to the big assumption around breaking down the culture of fear within the district. I shared the response of one administrator in entering into the videotaped experience as being skeptical of the value of this approach at first. That spoke directly to what I identified as the potential for vulnerability among the administrators in the change process. The

structure of my actionable test in providing them with a structure and protocols to pilot the alternative observation model helped the administrator to overcome the vulnerability. This is something to stay focused on as I move forward with additional strategies and actions that will support the successful implementation of the change. As I begin to consider the operationalizing of the strategies and actions needed to achieve the intended goal of the change plan, these will continue to be considerations reminding me to get up on the “balcony” to be able to observe the various stakeholder responses across the organization in the adaptive change process (Heifetz et al., 2009).

SECTION SEVEN: STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS FOR CHANGE

As this study evolved from the program evaluation to the change model, Century School District has entered the adaptive change process with respect to creating an improved teacher evaluation system that will foster greater collaboration, shared ownership and trust across the system, while fostering the development reflective practitioners in a culture of continuous improvement. The framework for change described by Heifetz et al. (2009) has provided a structure by which to monitor the process as it unfolds. The program evaluation provided the opportunity to diagnose the system through an examination of the challenges, the political landscape and the qualities of the organization. The diagnosis of the system led to the identification of the context, conditions, cultures and competencies that exist in the arenas of change as it relates to teacher evaluation (Wagner & Kegan, 2006). Using Wagner and Keegan's (2006) model for change leadership, I developed three key strategies for supporting the transition from "as is" (Appendix A) to the "to be" in Century School District (Appendix B). The first key shift will be to develop constructs for greater teacher ownership for professional learning both within and surrounding the new teacher evaluation process. To support that shift in ownership, the second strategy will be to build administrative leadership capacity with a specific focus on the development of reflective practitioners when working with teachers to improve instruction. Lastly, restructuring the teacher role in the evaluation process will be a springboard for supporting both increased shared ownership for learning by teachers and the development of reflective practitioners.

Teacher Ownership

Embedded in these strategies and actions is the idea of developing greater teacher ownership for professional learning. Overarching this goal, is the implementation of Danielson's framework creating shared expectations for what accomplished teaching and learning look and sound like in a classroom (Danielson, 2011). As we align our practices with our school improvement plans and our district strategic plan, we can involve teachers in identifying those opportunities for continuous improvement based on a common understanding. This will provide focus and guidance for collaboration at the grade and department levels within and across buildings. As the administrators introduce protocols for collaborative conversations, these same structures can be implemented at the teacher level to promote shared ownership for learning focused on student work. As teachers are encouraged to reflect on their practices and identify areas for continuous improvement, there will be a natural opportunity for building leaders to encourage risk taking in supporting teachers in taking their practices to the next level. As administrators observe teachers taking those risks, they can establish recognition systems where those behaviors are encouraged. This will help the cultural shift from one of competition to one of trust and collaboration where teachers are respected for taking those risks to grow their practices.

The system has been mobilized and with the PERA Action Team acting as the facilitators of change, the district is examining ways to improve and refine the current evaluation system working through the process of building an adaptive culture. One of the key strategies in building an adaptive culture is to build leadership capacity and create shared ownership across the organization (Heifetz et al., 2009). Within the change model

presented, Century School district has engaged in several actions related to this effort. Since the inception of the work related to the change model (Brownlow, 2016), the district has implemented a new evaluation framework with shared expectations developed by a team of teachers and administrators. This framework has been approved and operationalized this past school year. Within the context of the plan and the need for ongoing professional development related to the standards for professional practice, the district also created opportunities for teacher leaders to take on shared responsibility for the professional development related to this initiative. Creating the structure for leadership is another key aspect of mobilizing the system for adaptive change (Heifetz et al., 2009). The next steps in continuing to promote teacher leadership is to create recognition systems within the district that promote risk taking and lead to collaborative efforts to improve student learning through intentional conversations about student learning. Protocols will be shared that can be implemented by teacher leaders to guide these collaborative conversations at the team and department levels, ultimately leading to school improvement planning shared by all stakeholders.

Developing Reflective Practitioners

As the district creates the structures for shared ownership among teachers and administrators, the administrators will need to simultaneously work on building their capacity to lead this change process. A way the district can build this leadership capacity is through the development of reflective practitioners as administrators work with teachers to improve instruction. To meet this adaptive challenge, the district can look to the work of Drago-Severson (2009) to establish protocols that can support the various readiness and roles among the stakeholders. Since the idea of sharing student work as a

platform for reflection and professional growth can generate anxiety in a system that has not yet developed the necessary culture to support the work, it will be important to meet people where they are as we identify those growth opportunities, provide leadership roles and engage in shared dialogue and reflection on practice.

By supporting administrators in learning how to foster collaborative conversations with and among teachers, the quality of the dialogue in the evaluation process will be further enhanced. Danielson (2016) provided strong guidance in helping administrators to promote reflective practice on the part of teachers in her text, *Talk About Teaching*. Using the text as a book study for administrators is a way to model the facilitation of a team collaborative conversation, while also providing principals with strategies to enhance their coaching conversations with teachers. During the book study, the principals will also have an opportunity to explore various protocols for implementing collaborative conversations with staff focused on examining student work. The protocols can be utilized to promote collegial inquiry that will engage teachers in shared dialogue and reflection on practice (Drago-Severson, 2009). These conversations can support the development of individual skills as reflective practitioners that will help to inform continuous improvement, expanding it beyond simply the evaluation model.

Century School District had the opportunity to reflect on its initial implementation of its new evaluation system at the close of the 2016–2017 school year. The configuration of the PERA Action Team in leading the adaptive change around teacher evaluation created natural opportunities for teacher leaders to take the initiative in moving the organization forward. Since the committee is comprised of more teachers than administrators, the teacher ownership and perceived voice is strongly supported by the

entire membership of the district. This group as already initiated the work of restructuring the teacher role in the evaluation process; a strategy paramount to the success of the change model. The self-assessment tools discussed were constructed and presented to the teachers at the end of the school year with the intent of training and implementation on how to utilize them at the start of next school year. Aligning goal setting with the standards for professional practice is another action that speaks to the restructuring of the teacher's role in the evaluation process. As of the start of next year, the teachers will drive the process, identifying areas of growth as they relate to the standards of professional practice and present those goals to their evaluators. The evaluator role will shift to one of support and guidance in helping teachers to realize those goals. These actions support many of the pillar practices for growth described by Drago-Severson (2009) including the provision for leadership roles, collegial inquiry and supporting adult development through understanding the ways of knowing and how they embody the various stakeholders within the organization.

Restructuring the Teacher Role in Evaluation

The final action intended to support the successful implementation of the change model stems from the research conducted on the proposed videotape alternative to the formal observation process. The pilot conducted with the three teachers and three administrators generated positive responses to its potential impact on supporting the development of reflective practitioners and creating a culture rooted in continuous improvement and growth mindset. It was noted that anxiety related to such an alternative is something to be mindful of in this type of model and can be addressed by applying ways of knowing to address those fears (Drago-Severson, 2009). For example, the system

could be structured to offer videotaping as an option for the formal observation process, rather than a mandate. Another consideration may be to create a system with a combination of platforms for observations, some in-person and others videotaped. There are several possibilities for how the idea of a videotaped observation might be operationalized to improve the overall teacher evaluation process. However, to take this action forward in support of a restructuring of the evaluation process for the benefit of improved teaching and learning, it will first be necessary to revisit the envisioning phase of the change process (Wagner & Kegan, 2006).

Illinois Administrative Code contains language that currently implies that an “in person” formal observation is required as part of the teacher evaluation process. It is the hope that the data from this study, combined with the compelling research from the review of the literature, can be synthesized for the purposes of advocating for a policy change around the specific language in this administrative code related to the format of the formal observation. The MET Project Policy and Practice Brief (2014) on building trust in observations and the current study underway at the Harvard Center for Educational Policy Research (2015) both support the consideration of videotaped observations as a viable alternative to the traditional formal observation model currently utilized in most teacher evaluation systems across the country.

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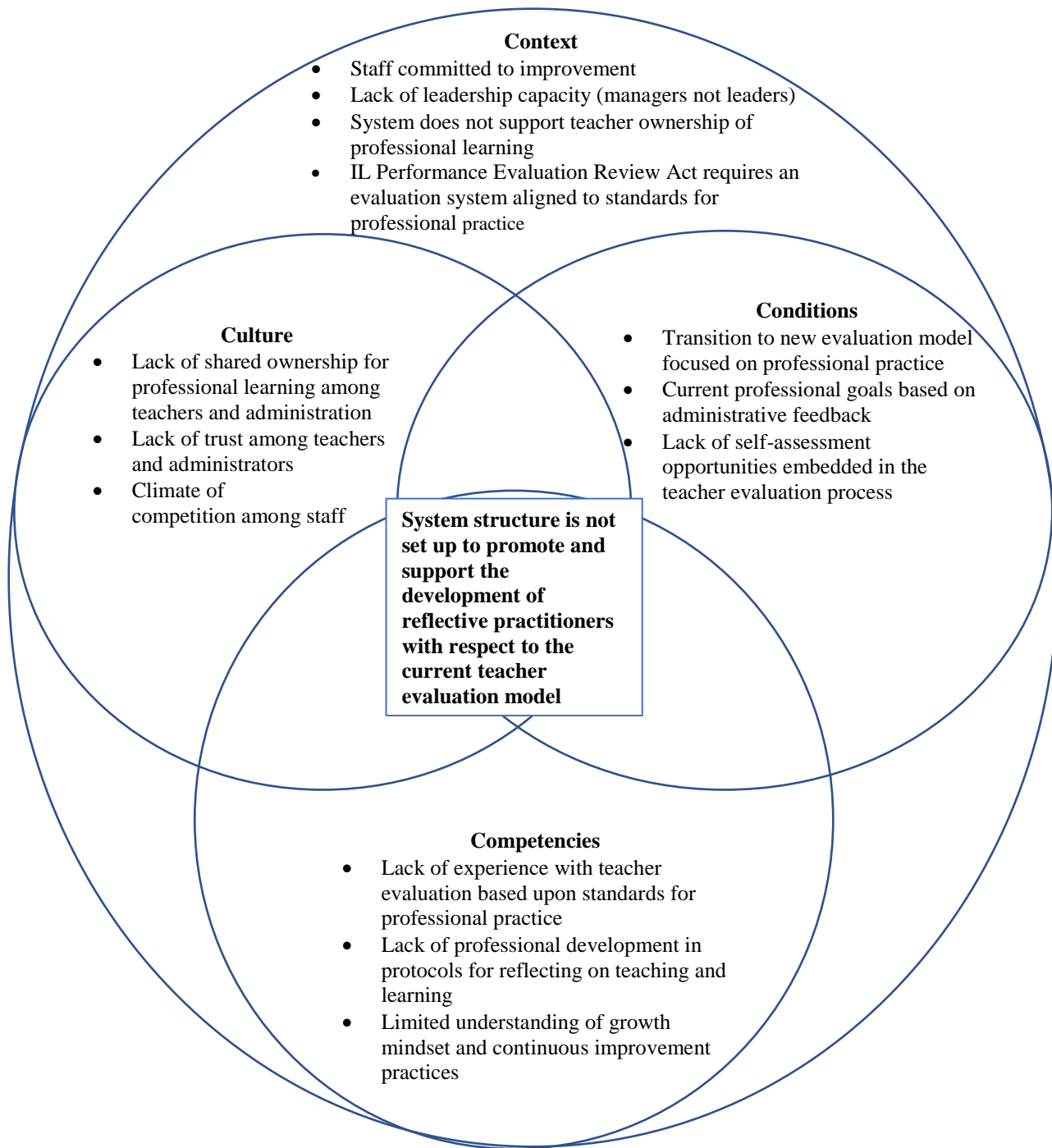
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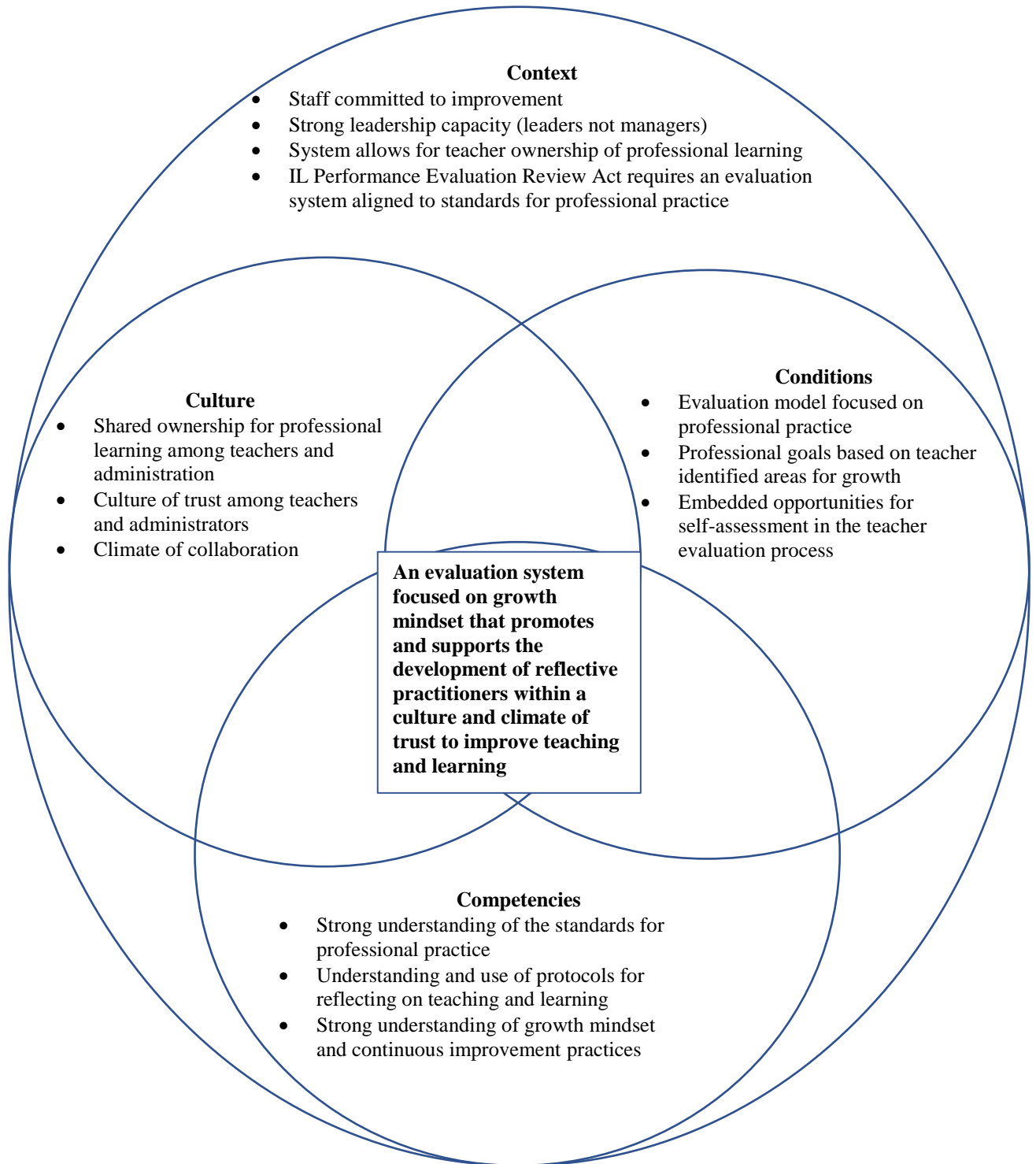
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APPENDIX A: AS IS 4 CS ANALYSIS



APPENDIX B: TO BE 4 CS ANALYSIS



APPENDIX C: STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

Big Assumption:

I assume if we move forward with cultivating a culture of growth mindset, then principals may feel vulnerable and lose confidence in my leadership based on the culture of fear they experienced in the past. Sharing ownership with teachers to promote reflective practice may feel like a loss of power and control for administrators

Actionable Test:

Work with a building administrator to offer an alternative model (videotape) for the formal observation as part of the tenured evaluation process to pilot the shift from administrator to teacher ownership in the process. Use protocols and templates for structuring the observation conferences with teachers using this model.

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS
Develop greater teacher ownership for professional learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implement Charlotte Danielson’s Framework for Teaching with shared expectations for teacher evaluation ● Create opportunities for staff-led professional development ● Develop teacher recognition systems for risk taking ● Involve teachers in school improvement planning ● Implement protocols to guide collaborative conversations at grade/department meetings focused on student work
Build administrative leadership capacity around the development of reflective practitioners when working with teachers to improve instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conduct a book study using <i>Talk About Teaching</i> by Charlotte Danielson ● Identify protocols for implementing collaborative conversations with teachers focused on student work
Restructure the teacher role in the evaluation process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop self-assessment tools for formal observation and summative evaluation conferences ● Design goal setting process aligned to professional practice to focus on continuous improvement ● Use guiding questions as a post conference protocol with teachers ● Provide alternative structures for the formal observation process to shift ownership for reflection to teachers

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Semi-structured Teacher Interview

Teacher Interview Questions

1. Tell me a little about yourself and what you have done prior to coming to Century School District*.
2. What is your current position in Century School District*?
3. What is your highest degree earned?
4. How many years have you been teaching in Century School District*?
5. How many total years of teaching experience do you have?
6. To what extent do you value the formal observation in developing your skills as a reflective practitioner? Why is that?
7. How does the formal observation process encourage reflection on your instructional practice?
8. To what extent does the formal observation process cause anxiety for you? How does this impact nature of the observation experience?
9. In your opinion, to what extent is the formal observation an authentic experience for professional growth? What about the process has you characterize it that way?
10. How do you feel about the formal observation process as a tool for measuring your effectiveness? What are the factors that impact this perception?
11. How does the formal observation process inform your practice?
12. How does the formal observation process impact the quality of your instructional conversations with your administrator?

*Century School District is a pseudonym used for anonymity.

Administrator Interview Questions

1. What is your current role in Century School District*?
2. How long have you been in that role?
3. Do you have any previous administrative experience?
4. How would you describe your administrative style?
5. To what extent do you feel the formal observation process is a useful tool for measuring effectiveness of teachers?
6. To what extent are you able to use the formal observation process to provide teachers with targeted support?
7. To what extent does the formal observation process encourage teachers in this school to reflect on their instructional practice? Can you share some examples?
8. To what extent does the formal observation process improve the quality of your instructional conversations with your teachers? How so?
9. How does the formal observation process promote or develop skills for teachers as reflective practitioners?
10. Is there anything else about the formal observation process that you would like me to know?

*Century School District is a pseudonym used for anonymity.