5-1-2005

Differences in the Quality of Written Evaluation Recommendations of Master and Marginal Teachers

Michele L. Gehringer
University of Nebraska at Omaha

Recommended Citation

DIFFERENCES IN THE QUALITY OF WRITTEN

EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS OF

MASTER AND MARGINAL TEACHERS

An Educational Specialist Field Project

Presented to the

Department of Educational Administration

and the

Faculty of the Graduate College

University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment

of Requirements for the Degree

Educational Specialist

University of Nebraska at Omaha

by

Michele L. Gehringer

May 2005

UMI Number: EP74124

UMI®

Dissertation Publishing

UMI EP74124

ProQuest®

EDUCATION SPECIALIST
FIELD PROJECT ACCEPTANCE

Acceptance for the faculty of the Graduate College.
University of Nebraska, in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree, Education Specialist.
University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Committee

Laura Schulte

Nancy A Edick

_____

Chairperson _Leon Dappen_

Date _7/6/05_

Abstract

DIFFERENCES IN THE QUALITY OF WRITTEN

EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS OF

MASTER AND MARGINAL TEACHERS

Michele (Micky) Gehringer, Ed.S.

University of Nebraska, 2005

Advisor: Dr. Leon Dappen

The purposes of this study were to identify the elements of quality written feedback given by an evaluator and to determine if there was a difference between the quality of feedback given to master teachers and marginal teachers in their summative appraisal evaluations in a large, Midwestern, suburban public school.

A holistic rating instrument was used to determine the quality of feedback on final recommendations given to teachers. The design of the rating instrument measured the quality of written feedback in four areas (specific, clear, achievable, student-centered). Administrators from outside of the school district were asked to rate the feedback recommendations given both to master and marginal teachers.

The mean score of the feedback ratings (1-4) for both master and marginal teachers was calculated. A determination of quality was based on a mean score of 3.0 or higher. A t-test was also used to determine the difference between the quality of feedback given to master and marginal teachers. The difference between the quality of feedback given to elementary teachers and secondary teachers of the district was also determined using a t-test.

The results of the study indicated that the feedback given to teachers in their evaluations was quality feedback, and there was no significant difference in the quality of feedback given to master or marginal teachers. Feedback given to elementary teachers overall was of significantly higher quality than feedback given to secondary teachers. The information gained from this study was useful in that it further defined quality feedback. The information gained from this study was useful to school districts to enhance the feedback given to teachers.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents   Page

LISTING OF APPENDICES

Chapter 1

Introduction

Teachers are evaluated throughout their careers in most school districts. There are many reasons why these evaluations occur including following state law, district policy, or school procedures. One purpose of teacher evaluation is to improve the practice of teaching (Peterson, 2000).

Traditionally, a teacher was evaluated only through classroom observations by the principal or other such evaluator. The evaluator would summarize the occurrences in the classroom and then include a recommendation for the teacher. Although business and medicine are professions that focus on the training of evaluators and their use of quality feedback for their staff, there is very little research showing such training for principals (Weiss, 2004).

Literature suggests an effective evaluation system for teachers includes a cycle of formative (professional growth process) and summative (observation process) phases. Both master and marginal teachers would rotate through the various phases over a period of years (Heller, 2004;

Howard & McColskey, 2001). Even with such a system of evaluation in place, quality feedback is still a part of an effective evaluation.

A school district that incorporates an evaluation system that includes formative and summative phases still might not being doing all it can for the development of its teachers through evaluations. Evaluation systems that allow teachers to grow as professionals need to allow them to look at their strengths and weaknesses (Howard & McColskey, 2001). Are evaluations providing teachers with quality feedback in order to allow such growth? Are there significant differences between the recommendations given to master and marginal teachers by the principals who evaluate them?

Purposes of the Study

The purposes of this study were to identify the elements of quality written feedback given by an evaluator and to determine if there was a significant difference between the quality of the written recommendations given to master teachers and marginal teachers in the summative appraisal evaluations of a large, Midwestern, suburban public school district's evaluation model.

Research Questions

The research questions guiding this study were:

1. Do the written recommendations on master and marginal elementary and secondary teacher evaluations include quality feedback?

2. Are there significant differences in the quality of feedback ratings for master and marginal teachers?

Definition of Terms

The following terms are used throughout the study.

Summative evaluation is a phase of an evaluation process that judges a professional's competency through an observation process (Heller, 2004).

Formative evaluation is a phase of an evaluation system that provides a structure for individualized growth through such things as self-assessment, portfolio development, peer review, and goal setting (Howard & McCloskey, 2001).

Master teacher is one who is knowledgeable in the subject area and is able to foster learning and thinking skills in even reluctant learners (Peterson, 2000).

Marginal teacher is one who lacks content area knowledge and/or skills in classroom management and instructional practice (Tucker, 2001).

Summative Appraisal Report is the end of the year summary of the observations made by an evaluator over the school year for a large, Midwestern, suburban school district. Included in this report is a written recommendation section that contains written feedback from the evaluator for the teacher.

Quality feedback is defined as feedback that is: (a) stated specifically using facts, (b) stated clearly with requested actions explained, (c) achievable, and (d) related to student behavior and/or achievement (Boyd, 1989; Lawrence & Wiswell, 1995; Mavis, 1994; Peterson, 2000; Weiss, 2004).

Delimitations of the Study

The study was delimited to analyzing the feedback given to teachers from one large, Midwestern, suburban school district during the 2003-2004 school year. Even though the district incorporates a three-year evaluation cycle, only the summative appraisal cycle written feedback found on the summative appraisal report's recommendation section was used. Only the feedback given by evaluators with at least 3 years of experience was used in the study.

Limitations of the Study

Even with definitions of master and marginal teachers given to evaluators, selection of such teachers was open for interpretation by the participants. Another limitation of the study was the fact that participation of administrators is voluntary. This may result in the responses identified not being a true picture of the overall recommendation given teachers.

Significance of the Study

The intent of this study was to provide information useful in improving the quality of recommendations given to teachers during evaluations. This study was significant for several reasons. Areas of strength of a district's evaluation system are identified through research. Elements of quality written feedback were described through research. Further training for evaluators on how to provide quality written feedback should be incorporated in order to improve the teaching of both master and marginal teachers and the overall evaluation system of a school district.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

The literature review of this study will be presented using the following format. First, the purposes of teacher evaluations will be described followed by the description of different evaluation systems used in schools today. Characteristics of purposeful evaluation systems will be listed. Then, the qualities of master teachers will be discussed. Traits of marginal teachers will be reviewed. The importance of written feedback, regardless of the format of evaluation, will be explained, along with the elements found in effective written feedback. Other factors that effect the quality of evaluations will be reviewed. Finally, the summary of this review will reinforce the use of a holistic rating instrument to determine if there are any differences between written feedback given to master teachers and that given to marginal teachers in a summative evaluation.

Purposes of Teacher Evaluations

The evaluation of teachers is as complex as teaching itself. Research shows evaluations should support the growth and enhance the professionalism of a teacher (Bernstein, 2004). Overall, the purpose of teacher

evaluation is to improve the practice of teaching (Peterson, 2000). Yet this statement is an oversimplification of the teaching evaluation process.

Teacher evaluations should be used for many reasons. Evaluating teachers may lead to more effective teaching and improved student outcomes. Teacher evaluations may also serve to reassure teachers that they are doing a good job. The public, too, is reassured that quality teaching is occurring. Based on teacher evaluations, administrators may use information to make staffing decisions. Finally, teacher evaluations improve the profession through guiding teacher training programs and enhancing individual teacher growth (Iwanicki, 2001; Peterson, 2000, 2004). The effective teacher evaluation process should result in improving student learning and student achievement (Iwanicki, 2001). Ideally, teacher evaluations document the teacher fostering increased student intellect, imagination, service, and search for happiness (Peterson, 2000).

Teacher Evaluation Systems

A teacher evaluation system is a means to improve overall instruction (Conley, 1987). Teacher evaluation takes on many forms. An evaluation system should acknowledge the differences between novice and experienced

teachers and allow teachers a more active role in the system of evaluation (Danielson, 2001). Many systems now incorporate a cycle of both *formative* (individualized professional growth process) and *summative* (observation process) phases (Heller, 2004; Howard & McCloskey, 2001). The formative evaluation is more a process of supervision by which people help each other with professional growth. The summative evaluation is an evaluation process that judges a professional's competency (Heller, 2004). Comprehensive evaluations cover the various stages of a teacher's career, from novice to experienced. This sort of comprehensive evaluation has been used in several states to provide a method of salary increases for teachers (Scherer, 2001).

Typically, evaluation was something done to teachers. Administrators would visit the classroom then provide feedback to the teacher during the post observation conference. Recently, teacher evaluations take this sort of summative phase and are expanded into a multiyear cycle consisting of many types of evaluations. After completing a summative phase of evaluation, teachers take an active role in a formative phase of evaluation. An example of a type of individualized professional growth would be the compiling

of a teaching portfolio. Creating a teaching portfolio is one method that enables teachers to grow and reflect on their teaching. Portfolios promote teacher learning and sharing with other instructors (Painter, 2001).

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS)(1996) promotes the use of a reflective process, portfolio assessment, and peer review as elements of an assessment system. Darling-Hammond (1996) believes these NBPTS principles should become the corner stone of evaluation of teachers. Whether the evaluation system of a school district follows the NBPTS principles exactly is not as important as the district using a variety of evaluation means. The most accurate measurement of teacher effectiveness requires input from many sources (Flowers & Hancock, 2003; Peterson, 2000).

Characteristics of Effective Evaluation Systems

Whatever format is used, teacher evaluations should assess the growth of teachers and provide information for personnel decisions. Research concludes that there is a collection of critical characteristics found in effective teacher evaluation systems. In such systems, all individuals accept the validity of the evaluation process, and participants understand the mechanics of the system.

Also, the criteria used must have a consistent and clear

rationale. Evaluators should be trained in the procedures.

Within an effective system, there are distinct levels of

evaluation. The difference between the formative and

summative dimensions of the evaluation is obvious, and a

variety of methods are used to evaluate teachers. Finally,

the overall effectiveness of an evaluation system is

dependent on evaluation being a priority of a school

district (Conley, 1987; Peterson, 2000).

Master Teacher Qualities

Evaluators can see a difference between marginal and

master teachers (Peterson, 2000). Defining a master or

marginal teacher is not easy, though. NBPTS (1996)

describes an accomplished teacher as one who is: (a)

committed to student learning; (b) knowledgeable of the

subject matter; (c) responsible for the learning of the

students; (d) able to learn from experiences; and (e) part

of a learning community. A good teacher is defined as one

who believes he or she is able to foster learning and

thinking skills in even reluctant learners (Peterson,

2000). A master teacher's personal characteristics are

different than a marginal teacher's characteristics. A

master teacher is depicted as outgoing, sensitive, generous

and warm-hearted. These teachers promote an encouraging, student-centered atmosphere when teaching (Sparks & Lipka, 1992). Master teachers take on many forms, and evaluators need to acknowledge the variations found in good teaching (Cruickshank & Haefele, 2001).

Marginal Teacher Qualities

Research indicates that 5% of the teachers in public schools could be called marginal. These teachers lack content area knowledge and/or skills in classroom management and instructional practices (Tucker, 2001). These teachers have a high number of office referrals, student failures, colleague and parent complaints, and transfer requests (Lawrence, Vachon, Leake, B., & Leake, D., 1993; Peterson, 2000). A marginal teacher is one who is losing faith that all students can learn and is boring, ineffective, and uninspiring (Lawrence et al., 1993). The personal characteristics of a marginal teacher include being rigid, inhibited, shy, cool, and insensitive (Sparks & Lipka, 1992). If a school is committed to maintaining high standards, evaluators of the school must address the marginal teachers.

Importance of Feedback

Feedback is a critical piece in the evaluation of both master and marginal teachers. Written feedback is clearer and more effective than verbal recommendations when used to improve the performance of teachers (Tucker, 2001). Feedback containing specific recommendations to teachers following an observation improves the instruction of those teachers (Peterson, 2000).

There are many ways to collect data on teacher performance. It is extremely difficult to translate this data into effective feedback for either master or marginal teachers, and too often the teaching profession does not provide much credible feedback to teachers (Peterson, 2000). Providing effective feedback is difficult for evaluators for many reasons. Feedback should be fact based. Evaluators are often more certain of their judgments than their facts, but do not want to take responsibility for their judgments (Mavis, 1994). Another reason for lack of effective feedback is that such feedback takes time and effort. It is no surprise to review the past evaluations of incompetent teachers and find they have satisfactory performance reflected in the feedback given them. For many evaluators, this sort of feedback is easier to give than

dealing with the unions and an angry teacher (McGrath, 1995).

The purpose of constructive feedback is to tell people where they stand in relation to the behavior that is productive and/or expected. An evaluator should collect, evaluate, and share specific data within written feedback that describes a specific situation whether good or bad (Lawrence & Wiswell, 1995).

Elements of Quality Feedback

Quality feedback should be written specifically using facts that describe specific behaviors. The desired actions of the one receiving the feedback should be achievable and clearly explained by the evaluator. Such feedback is key to an evaluation that provides growth (Boyd, 1989; Lawrence & Wiswell, 1995; Mavis, 1994; Peterson, 2000; Weiss, 2004). Recommendations, as part of productive teacher evaluations, should enhance student learning and the quality of teaching provided to the student (Iwanicki, 2001).

An evaluator should collect, evaluate, and share data within written feedback that describes a specific situation. Stating, "You did a good job," or "You did a bad job," is not specific and not useful (Lawrence & Wiswell, 1995). Good feedback should contain neutral facts or

occurrences obtained through observations. Facts, not personalities, should be addressed (Lawrence & Wiswell, 1995; Mavis, 1994).

Feedback should offer ideas and changes that make sense to the teacher (Boyd, 1989). If an evaluator cannot explain a desired behavioral result, then the evaluator has no right giving the feedback. Actions necessary to change and improve should be clear. A plan that includes desired results, the steps to achieve them and a timeline are part of effective feedback. These actions should be achievable. An evaluator needs to provide feasible remedies to a situation (Mavis, 1994).

Other Factors

Even with quality written feedback, teacher improvement, as the result of such feedback, is not guaranteed. Duke and Stiggins (1990) found that teacher growth through feedback in evaluations is dependent on the teacher's perception of the evaluator. Growth will occur if the teacher believes the evaluator has skill, integrity, and concern for the teacher.

Summary

Teacher evaluations have many components, purposes, and formats. Evaluators of teachers should be able to

provide effective written feedback to teachers as part of an evaluation. Effective feedback, in the form of recommendations, is necessary for both master and marginal teachers even though these teachers have distinctly different characteristics. Such feedback should be stated specifically using facts. Plans of action for the teachers within the written feedback should be clearly stated, achievable, and student-centered. The purpose of this study was to determine if the quality of written feedback given to master teachers was significantly different than that given to marginal teachers.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The purposes of this study were to identify the elements of quality written feedback given by an evaluator and to determine if there was a difference between the quality of feedback given to master teachers and marginal teachers. The methods used to conduct the study are described in this chapter, including the research design, sample, instrumentation, collection of data, research questions, and data analysis.

Research Design

Involvement in the analyzing of the recommendations given to teachers in the school district began as a practicum assignment. Written recommendations given the teachers of the district at the end of the 2003-2004 school year were compiled on a spreadsheet. By the end of the summer of 2004, the feedback of the teachers had been organized into the categories of the Indicators of Effective Teaching (planning, instruction, assessment, management, collaboration, and personal). The information was given to the associate superintendents of the district. To further study the feedback given to teachers a quantitative study was then begun. The study included

determining the elements of quality feedback. The study focused on determining if the feedback given on the final summative appraisals was quality feedback and if there was a difference between the quality of feedback given master teachers and marginal teachers. Authorization to conduct research was secured from the Institutional Review Board (see Appendix A).

Sample

Requests for master and marginal teacher summative appraisal recommendations were mailed to the 33 schools of a large, Midwestern, suburban school district (see Appendix B). Evaluators, principals, and assistants were asked to participate if they had experience in evaluating teachers for at least 3 years. The letter requested each administrator to submit the feedback given to 3 master teachers and 3 marginal teachers they had evaluated. The recommendations were compiled on the data collection sheet (see Appendix C) and mailed, faxed, or emailed back to the researcher. Recommendations were submitted with no teacher name or school name attached. The recommendations were collected and then coded in order to combine master and marginal recommendations without identifying them as such.

Instrumentation

After reviewing the current literature on written feedback, it was determined that an existing survey was not available that would serve the purpose of this study. Therefore, the researcher designed the holistic rating instrument to rate quality of feedback given on written recommendations (see Appendix E).

The instrument was based on the four elements of quality feedback, which include that it is: (a) stated specifically using facts, (b) stated clearly with requested actions explained, (c) achievable, and (d) related to student behavior and/or achievement (Boyd, 1989; Lawrence & Wiswell, 1995; Mavis, 1994; Peterson, 2000; Weiss, 2004), which provide evidence of content validity.

Collection of Data

The holistic rating instrument provided a means of measurement of the quality of the feedback given to teachers. A letter of request and explanation (see Appendix D), along with the rating instrument and recommendations, was sent to 25 administrators from outside of the school district.

Ten administrators responded and completed the rating instrument. The administrators volunteering to fill in the rating instrument were charged with rating the quality of 25 examples of feedback given to teachers. They had no indication that half of the recommendations were those of master teachers and half those of marginal teachers.

Twenty-five elementary recommendations with rating instructions were placed on one form sent to elementary administrators (see Appendix E). There were 13 master teacher and 12 marginal teacher recommendations on the form. The recommendations were coded so the researcher could disaggregate data after the rating was completed. The same process was followed using 25 secondary recommendations with 13 marginal and 12 master recommendations included (see Appendix F).

The participating administrators rated the 25 recommendations collected using the 4-point rating scale. The administrators rated the quality of feedback in the recommendations. A "1" rating indicated the administrator strongly disagreed that the recommendation was an example of quality feedback to a "4" rating that indicated the administrator strongly agreed that the recommendation was an example of quality feedback. Five of those completing

the rating instrument were elementary administrators, who rated the feedback given to elementary teachers. The other 5 were secondary administrators, who rated the feedback given to secondary teachers. The rating results were faxed, emailed, or mailed back to the researcher.

Research Questions

The research questions guiding the study were:

1. Do the written recommendations on master and marginal elementary and secondary teacher evaluations include quality feedback?

2. Were there significant differences in the quality of feedback ratings for master and marginal teachers?

Data Analysis

Calculating the mean score of the rating system (1-4) for master and marginal teachers indicated if, overall, the recommendations written on the evaluations were examples of quality feedback. A determination of quality was based on a mean score of 3.0 or higher. A *t*-test was used to determine if there were significant differences at the .05 level between mean scores for master and marginal teachers.

Chapter 4

Results and Interpretation

The purposes of this study were to identify the

elements of quality written feedback given by an evaluator

and to determine if there was a difference between the

quality of feedback given to master teachers and marginal

teachers. This chapter will review the research questions

and examine the data that were collected.

Research Question 1

Do the written recommendations on master and marginal

elementary and secondary teacher evaluations include

quality feedback?

Calculating the mean score of the rating system (1-4)

for master and marginal teachers indicated if, overall, the

recommendations written on the evaluations were examples of

quality feedback. A determination of quality was based on a

mean score of 3.0 or higher. A total of 50 examples of

feedback were rated, 25 elementary and 25 secondary. Five

administrators rated the 25 elementary recommendations and

5 rated the 25 secondary. This resulted in a total of 250

ratings. The data indicated that the written

recommendations given on the evaluations were examples of

quality feedback (n = 250, M = 3.04, SD = 0.71) because the mean score was at least 3.0.

Research Question 2

Are there significant differences in the quality of feedback ratings for master and marginal teachers?

To determine if there was a significant difference between the feedback ratings for master and marginal teachers a t-test was used to determine the differences at the .05 level between mean scores for master and marginal teachers. The data showed the quality of feedback given to master teachers (M = 3.02, SD = 0.68) is not significantly different than feedback given to marginal teachers (M = 3.05, SD = 0.74), t (248) = -0.27, p < .05 (two-tailed).

The data did show that there was a significant difference between the quality of feedback given to elementary teachers (M = 3.15, SD = 0.62) than that given to secondary teachers (M = 2.92, SD = 0.77), t (248) = 2.62, p < .05 (two-tailed). Elementary teacher feedback was of significantly higher quality than the feedback given to secondary feedback.

Examining the Data

The study did show that the feedback given to teachers on their recommendations were examples of quality feedback. The study did not show any statistically significant difference between the quality of feedback given to master teachers and the quality of feedback given to marginal teachers. Feedback given to elementary teachers was of significantly higher quality than that given to secondary teachers. A discussion of the research findings is included in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5

Conclusions

The purposes of this study were to identify the elements of quality written feedback given by an evaluator and to determine if there was a difference between the quality of feedback given to master teachers and marginal teachers in their summative appraisal evaluations in a large, Midwestern, suburban public school. This chapter will provide a summary of the study, along with recommendations for practice and future research.

Summary

Research indicated that written feedback is effective if it contains four elements. The four elements of quality feedback include that it is: (a) stated specifically using facts, (b) stated clearly with requested actions explained, (c) achievable, and (d) related to student behavior and/or achievement (Boyd, 1989; Lawrence & Wiswell, 1995; Mavis, 1994; Peterson, 2000; Weiss, 2004).

Recommendation for Practice

This research should be the basis of a part of the evaluation training provided to administrators. Administrators should be able to identify the four qualities of effective feedback and utilize effective

feedback in their evaluation of teachers. The summative appraisal form should reflect the elements of quality feedback in its format. This would focus the evaluator on providing the best possible written feedback to the teachers.

The data showed that the quality of feedback was not significantly different between that given to master and that given to marginal teachers. It is encouraging to find that feedback does not differ in quality depending on the qualifications and abilities of a teacher. All teachers need effective feedback.

Even though, overall, the feedback examined was rated as quality feedback, the data did show that the feedback given to elementary teachers was of significantly higher quality than that given to secondary teachers. Because of the lower quality found on the secondary evaluators' feedback, written feedback should be emphasized more in the training of secondary evaluators.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study was a rudimentary effort to analyze the feedback given to teachers. Further research is necessary concerning this topic. In order to provide more effective feedback, a more sophisticated instrument of measurement

needs to be created and utilized. The instrument should be able to rate feedback given to teachers in each of the four identified areas of quality written feedback. This would provide evaluators specific information on where improvement in feedback could be made.

Another adjustment in research involves the collection of feedback given to the master and marginal teachers. Administrators were asked to select 3 master and 3 marginal teachers and then submit the *Recommendation* portion of those teachers' evaluations to the researcher. This protected the individual teachers from being identified by others outside of the school as a marginal teacher, but did not ensure a true picture of the type of feedback given by evaluators. This method provided no control over an administrator selecting examples of their best feedback, rather than examples of all of the feedback given to teachers. This method also did not restrict administrators from adding information on the *Commendation* portion of the final summative appraisal along with the *Recommendation* portion.

Since the compiling by the researcher of recommendations given to teachers during the summer of 2004, changes have been made on the district's Summative

Appraisal Report. Before the 2004-2005 school year, the form included the section entitled *Recommendations*. It was in this section that administrators provided feedback to the teachers. Because of concern about the quality of feedback given to teachers, the 2004-2005 Summative Appraisal Report form *Recommendation* section has been changed to *Recommendation and/or Reflective Questions*. This change alone has resulted in administrators providing more effective feedback to teachers.

Conclusion

This study identified the elements of quality written feedback given by evaluators to teachers. Identifying the elements of quality feedback is an important step in providing essential training of evaluators. The data from this study showed that the feedback given to teachers of this district was quality feedback. Both master and marginal teachers received quality feedback from their evaluators. Even though the elementary administrators gave better feedback than the secondary administrators did, it is encouraging that the evaluations given were examples of quality feedback.

A similar research project should be pursued with a few alterations. The project should be started after

evaluators receive training focused on what makes up quality feedback. A holistic rating instrument that measures feedback in each of the four areas of quality should be developed and utilized in the research. The measured level of quality could and should be raised after focused training of evaluators is completed.

References

Bernstein, E. (2004). What teacher evaluation should know

   and be able to do: A commentary. *NASSP Bulletin, 88,*

   60-79.

Boyd, R. T. (1989). Improving teacher evaluations.

   Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation, 1, 7-10.

Conley, D. T. (1987). Critical attributes of

   effective evaluation systems. *Educational Leadership,*

   44, 60-64.

Cruickshank, D.R., & Haefele, D. (2001). Good teachers,

   plural. *Educational Leadership, 58,* 26-30.

Danielson, C. (2001). New trends in teacher evaluation.

   Educational Leadership, 58, 12-15.

Darling-Hammond, L. (1996). What matters most: A competent

   teacher for every child. *Phi Delta Kappan, 78(3),*

   193-200.

Duke, D. L., & Stiggins, R. J. (1990). Beyond minimum

   competence: evaluation for professional development. In

   L. Darling-Hammond & J. Eillman (Eds.). *The new*

   handbook of teacher evaluation (pp.116-132). Newbury

   Park, CA: Sage.

Flowers, C., & Hancock, D. (2003). An interview protocol and scoring rubric for evaluating teacher performance. *Assessment in Education, 10,* 161-167.

Heller, D. A. (2004). *Teachers wanted: Attracting and retaining good teachers.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Howard, B. B., & McColskey, W. H. (2001). Evaluating experienced teachers. *Educational Leadership, 58,* 48-51.

Iwanicki, E. F. (2001). Focusing teacher evaluations on student learning. *Educational Leadership, 58,* 57-59.

Lawrence, C. E., Vachon, M. K., Leake, B. H., & Leake, D. O. (1993). *The marginal teacher: A step-by-step guide to fair procedures for identification and dismissal.* Newsbury Park, CA: Corwin.

Lawrence, H. V.,& Wiswell, A. K. (1995). Feedback is a two-way street. *Training and Development, 49,* 49-52.

Mavis, M. (1994). Painless performance evaluations. *Training and Development, 48,* 40-44.

McGrath, M. (1995). Effective evaluation. *Thrust for Educational Leadership, 24,* 1-5.

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS)

   (1996). *NBPTS standards for accomplished teachers.*

   Retrieved September 14, 2004, from

   http://www.nbpts.org.

Painter, B. (2001). Using teaching portfolios.

   Educational Leadership, 58, 31-34.

Peterson, K. D. (2000). *Teacher evaluation: A comprehensive*

   guide to new directions and practices (2nd ed.)

   Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Peterson, K. D. (2004). Research on school teacher

   evaluation. *NASSP Bulletin, 88,* 80-88.

Scherer, M. M. (2001). Getting better everyday. *Educational*

   Leadership, 58, 5.

Sparks, R., & Lipka, R. P. (1992). Characteristics of

   master teachers: Personality factors, self-concept,

   locus of control, and pupil control ideology. *Journal*

   of Personnel Evaluation in Education, 5, 303-311.

Tucker, P. (2001). Helping struggling teachers. *Educational*

   Leadership, 58, 52-55.

Weiss, G. G. (2004, June). Keep employee feedback

   constructive, consistent. *Urology Times, 32,* 10-11.

Appendix A

N UNIVERSITY OF
Nebraska
Medical Center

NEBRASKA'S HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER

February 17, 2005

Michele Gehringer
6612 S. 110th Street
Omaha, NE 68137

IRB#: 005-05-EX

TITLE OF PROTOCOL: Difference in Quality of Written Evaluation Recommendations
of Master and Marginal Teachers

Dear Ms. Gehringer:

The IRB has reviewed your Exemption Form for *Exempt Educational, Behavioral, and
Social Science Research* on the above-titled research project. According to the
information provided, this project is exempt under 45 CFR 46:101b, category _2_. You
are therefore authorized to begin the research.

It is understood this project will be conducted in full accordance with all applicable
sections of the IRB Guidelines. It is also understood that the IRB will be immediately
notified of any proposed changes that may affect the exempt status of your research
project.

Please be advised that the IRB has a maximum protocol **approval period of three
years** from the original date of approval and release. If this study continues beyond
the three year approval period, the project must be resubmitted in order to maintain an
active approval status.

Sincerely,

Ernest Prentice, PhD/MOK

Ernest D. Prentice, Ph.D.
Co-Chair, IRB

EDP/gdk

Appendix B

Dear Administrator/Evaluator,

I am working on a field project for an educational specialist degree from the University Nebraska at Omaha. I am conducting a study on the written feedback given to teachers on a summative appraisal form used in the Millard Public Schools. I am requesting your assistance.

In order to study feedback given to teachers, I am requesting examples of feedback you have given to your teachers during the 2003-2004 school year.

Included is a yellow paper I am requesting you fill out and return to me. *(Elementary principals will receive green sheets of paper in order to disaggregate findings.)*

1. Identify three master* and three marginal teachers** from your 2003-2004 staff.

2. Locate the Summative Appraisal Report Form for the teachers you selected. (If the teacher was not on the appraisal level of the district's evaluation system during that year, either select another teacher or write in NA.)

3. Use the **Recommendations** portion of the form, only. If nothing was written in that area of the summative appraisal form, write *None.*

4. Use **no teacher names** or school names in completing the attached form.

5. Once completing the form, please mail it back in the addressed and stamped envelope provided within seven to ten days.

Confidentiality of the teachers, the schools and the evaluators is primary. Please, do not include any teacher or school name in the paper you return.

Thank you for your time and cooperation. I appreciate your help.

Sincerely,

Michele (Micky) Gehringer

*A master teacher is defined as one who is knowledgeable in the subject area and is able to foster learning and thinking skills in even reluctant learners (Peterson, 2000).

** A marginal teacher is one who lacks content area knowledge and/or skills in classroom management and instructional practices (Tucker, 2001).

Appendix C

Using the 2003-2004 final summative appraisal forms, rewrite the *recommendation* section only for three master* and three marginal** teachers from your building.

No teacher <u>names</u> or school names should be included in this document.

Summative Appraisal Recommendation of **THREE MASTER TEACHERS**

1.

2.

3.

Summative Appraisal Recommendation of **THREE MARGINAL TEACHERS**

1.

2.

3.

*A <u>master teacher</u> is defined as one who is knowledgeable in the subject area and is able to foster learning and thinking skills in even reluctant learners (Peterson, 2000).

** A <u>marginal teacher</u> is one who lacks content area knowledge and/or skills in classroom management and instructional practices (Tucker, 2001).

Appendix D

Dear Administrators,

I would like to request a small amount of your time and expertise. I am working on my field project for an education specialist degree through the University Nebraska at Omaha. I am conducting a study on the written feedback given to teachers on a summative appraisal form used in a large school district. In order to research the quality of written feedback given to teachers from their evaluators, I am requesting your help.

The attached document is a rating instrument that contains written recommendations from summative appraisals of teachers. The survey will ask you to determine if you believe the written recommendation is an example of quality feedback. Four elements of quality feedback include (a) whether the recommendation is stated specifically using facts, (b) whether it is stated clearly with requested actions explained, (c) whether these actions are achievable by the teacher, and (d) whether the stated feedback is related to student behavior and/or achievement.

This field project will be conducted in a manner that guarantees the confidentiality of the teacher recommendations used, along with the teachers selected. No teacher names, names of schools, or names of administrators will be used at any time.

The completion of this rating instrument will take approximately twenty minutes. After completing the rating instrument, please place it in the enclosed pre-stamped envelope and mail within seven to ten days. Thank you for your participation. If you have any questions, please call me at 402-895-8500 or 402-592-6997.

Sincerely,

Michele (Micky) Gehringer

Appendix E

Please complete the following survey.

Feedback in the form of a written recommendation is effective for the teacher if it:
- is stated specifically using facts
- is stated clearly with specific actions explained
- is containing descriptions of actions that are achievable by the teacher
- is related to student behavior and/or achievement

Read each of the following twenty-five written recommendations given to teachers by their evaluator. **According to the criteria described above determine if the written recommendation is effective.** After reading the recommendation circle the number following the recommendation that best describes what you believe about its effectiveness.

Using the four point scale, ———▶ please indicate if you believe each of the recommendations below is an effective recommendation	4. Strongly Agree 3. Agree 2. Disagree 1. Strongly Disagree

WRITTEN RECOMMENDATION	SA	A	D	SD
1. Try some additional strategies to engage the less eager students in group discussions. Don't be too quick to explain or reiterate a concept for students. Draw more out of then even if you have to slow the pace.	4	3	2	1
2. Strengthen the approach to developing consistently appropriate attention and response to classroom expectations. Make sure that students comply when behavior is redirected. Use waiting as a strategy rather than talking over students who are still being noisy.	4	3	2	1
3. XXX is to be commended for taking on a rather ambitious focus given the needs of her students and the difference in skill levels between her paraprofessionals. The system she was able to devise was effective and a good model for others in similar positions. I would encourage XXX to share her information with colleagues.	4	3	2	1

Recommendations	SA	A	D	SD
4. Establish and maintain a positive classroom environment through teaching and reinforcing appropriate routines and student skills of independence. Plan effective classroom structure to include effective planning of appropriate instructional activities.	4	3	2	1
5. Next focus in your professional growth plan should be integrating technology into your lessons.	4	3	2	1
6. Next year's focus should be implementing all components of the new reading program.	4	3	2	1
7. Continue to take on leadership activities in the building and the district. I appreciate your input and questions when building changes are discussed. Keep modeling high achievement expectations for all students.	4	3	2	1
8. I will work with you to ensure that all parent communication is positive and constructive. Use the intervention process effectively, applying and keeping data on strategies implemented.	4	3	2	1
9. XXX is encouraged to do some professional reading (perhaps in the area of guided reading and/or the area of research related to differentiation goal.)	4	3	2	1
10. First grade is a pivotal year in a child's education. Feeling and achieving success early sets students up for success in the many ensuing years of school. As with every new class, XXX needs to appropriately task analyze individual strengths and weaknesses as students beginning their year with her. This analysis will make determination as to where XXX needs to begin instruction and will help her to set a plan to help students meet/exceed first grade outcomes.	4	3	2	1
11. As the differentiation point person, XXX will assist her administrator in the follow up with staff involved with their home-based team as part of the differentiation phase. XXX has also agreed to become a peer coach.	4	3	2	1

12. As you move forward, XXX, be reflective about how you come across to students at times. Teaching is a lot like being an actor. A script has been written, and it may

	SA	A	D	SD

be an excellent script, but the actor's manner of delivery will determine how the audience responds. Sometimes, you allow your frustrations and stresses show to students. The tone of your instructional voice becomes a little hard and even harsh at times.   **4**   **3**   **2**   **1**

13. Keep working on your technology goals. Incorporating technology skills is becoming more and more important. Continue to work on your efforts to adapt content, process, product and assessments based on the needs of your students.   **4**   **3**   **2**   **1**

14. Continue to focus on the areas of planning, using diagnostic information to develop and revise instruction and your development of a variety of organizational patterns for instruction. Remember to share with your peers as they could benefit from what you have learned.   **4**   **3**   **2**   **1**

15. I know in your own assessments of your goals, you mentioned you would like to improve in the areas of facilitating student thinking and developing more effective learning experiences. I encourage you to do this. In addition, you may want to take a look at the technology indicators and begin to incorporate more technology in the classroom.   **4**   **3**   **2**   **1**

16. Consider how to incorporate small group instruction when appropriate. Examine how to include reteaching activities in the future. Keeping the students motivated and faithful in meeting assignment/project deadlines will continue to be an area to address.   **4**   **3**   **2**   **1**

17. I would like to see you conduct at least one in-service next year to explain how you organize your room for differentiation of reading instruction. You really are proficient in this area and your knowledge and expertise would be beneficial to many members of this staff.   **4**   **3**   **2**   **1**

18. I want you to work on organizing your lessons to allow yourself to provide more individual instruction to those students who need it while you give extension activities to your students who understand the material.   **4**   **3**   **2**   **1**

Recommendations	SA	A	D	SD
19. XXX's professional focus for the upcoming year is in the area of reading. She will lead the kindergarten team to ensure that the new reading series does not conflict with the philosophy of the program. She will mentor her new teaching partner.	4	3	2	1
20. XXX is encouraged to become even more involved in the building. She has leadership qualities and now that she has her first year of adjustment behind her, should offer her skills in this area. She should continue to enhance usage of differentiation in the classroom.	4	3	2	1
21. XXX will focus on reading during the upcoming year. She wants to zero in on this skill through drills, the use of repetition, selected books, blackboard games, etc. Her focus will be on 4th graders for this skill development.	4	3	2	1
22. XXX professional focus for next year will be in the area of room management. She needs to work to ensure all materials are available to her as she begins each lesson and that students understand routines of the classroom.	4	3	2	1
23. XXX is to be commended for creating a warm, caring, fun, yet structured classroom environment. She is able to balance effective learning experiences with the needs of active second graders. Her humor and genuine child advocacy make her one of our best.	4	3	2	1
24. Continue to develop the use of visuals to highlight key concepts for students. Strengthen differentiation opportunities. Be careful about telling students the answers to questions too soon. Try drawing out more responses before rephrasing. Give students enough time to formulate responses. Look for opportunities to become involved in building committees.	4	3	2	1
25. XXX will find her challenges in the clientele she has coming up from kindergarten. It will take very accurate assessments to determine her case load as there will be more recommendations then the current model can accommodate. She should take her time getting started so that she is sure she has the right students. I welcome all of XXX's help in improving morale and cohesiveness.	4	3	2	1

Please complete the following survey.

Feedback in the form of a written recommendation is effective for the teacher if it:
- is stated specifically using facts
- is stated clearly with specific actions explained
- is containing descriptions of actions that are achievable by the teacher
- is related to student behavior and/or achievement

Read each of the following twenty-five written recommendations given to secondary teachers by their evaluator. **According to the criteria described above determine if the written recommendation is effective.** After reading the recommendation circle the number following the recommendation that best describes what you believe about its effectiveness.

Using the four point scale, ——▶ please indicate if you believe each of the recommendations below is an effective recommendation	4. Strongly Agree 3. Agree 2. Disagree 1. Strongly Disagree

WRITTEN RECOMMENDATION	SA	A	D	SD
1. Continue to monitor student learning. In the fall you will be asked to show ways that you have adjusted the monitoring of student learning.	4	3	2	1
2. As you look to next year please look at ways to build process and procedure into field trips, immersion experiences, and scheduled events that take students out of other classes. These procedures are important when communicating with students, parents, and staff members.	4	3	2	1
3. As you look at next year what expectations, procedures and transitions can be put in place to maximize student listening and participation?	4	3	2	1
4. Continue to find more and more ways to differentiate for all learners in math and social studies.	4	3	2	1
5. Continue to find ways to infuse technology into teaching.	4	3	2	1

Recommendations	SA	A	D	SD
6. The diversity of learners will continue to grow. As you work with lesson planning, continue to find more ways to differentiate.	4	3	2	1
7. Assessment has come to mean many different things. How can you work on assessing student performance without the need for pencil and paper tests? As you work towards developing your support plan please consider ways that you can implement different ways to measure student work.	4	3	2	1
8. Continue to work with other social studies teachers planning for instruction. The work you have done this year has improved learning for all of our 7th graders.	4	3	2	1
9. Continue to work at the implementation of the new social studies curriculum. With one year to go until full implementation, your subject area expertise is imperative for our students.	4	3	2	1
10. With the new curriculum next year, I encourage you to continue to meet regularly with your department. The saying "All of us are smarter than one of us" comes to mind as you work to maximize the talents of your science teachers to meet the needs of the students.	4	3	2	1
11. Continue to work ways of monitoring student achievement, including on weaknesses of individual students. Twenty-three percent of your students earned a grade of 4 or 5 during the first semester. What role can monitoring course assessment play in working with student achievement?	4	3	2	1
12. As you consider the development of 2-3 professional growth plans for the 04-05 school year, you are directed to select at least one of the following indicators that are included in the "Indicators of Effective Teaching" Teacher Evaluation process.	4	3	2	1
13. Thank you for meeting earlier in the year to discuss your future aspirations/goals in the field of education.	4	3	2	1

Recommendations	SA	A	D	SD

You definitely possess much knowledge about the
social sciences. This comes through in some of the
things you say and do. Continue to actively seek ways
to inject a passion about your teaching responsibilities.
It is important to constantly seek ways to promote
social studies, address the diverse needs of students,
and learn more about the cognitive process of learning.
Consider ways to differentiate, deepen learning, integrate
technology, and enhance collaboration with your
department and your team. You are encouraged to
continue to enhance your repertoire about this complex
process. Consider course work, attendance at
conferences, the joining of professional organizations,
the reading of professional literature/journals, and the
sharing of information and ideas with other teachers.
This is a challenging quest.

14. Continue to be consistent with the routine in your   4   3   2   1
classroom and that students understand your expectations.

15. Continue to become more familiar and comfortable   4   3   2   1
with the English curriculum. XXX completed two
"polished" unit plans for this year. I encourage you to
complete more units for the next school year.

16. Remain positive as you work with our students and   4   3   2   1
your teaching team to continue to find ways to address
students' academic and social needs.

17. Work to make your professional growth plan   4   3   2   1
meaningful for you and our students.

18. You have many fine leadership qualities. Consider   4   3   2   1
ways that we can capitalize on your strengths. Continue
to seek ways to integrate technology into the FCS
curriculum. I am also supportive of your efforts to
enhance the career class so feel free to approach me
about workshops, materials, visitations, etc. It has been a true
pleasure getting to know you and working with you this
past year. Thank you for your fine efforts to support the
successful learning of our students.

19. Continue to work on connecting the community with the   3   2   1
the traditional program at our building. We are all part of the
school's community. The more naturally we can connect
with each other the better off our community will be.

Recommendations	SA	A	D	SD
20. As you encounter circumstances that concern you, learn to pick the battle that you think is the best one to fight. Change will take time and your ability to be a change agent is admirable. However, not everybody can make the leap as fast as you can.	4	3	2	1
21. Continue to work on developing long range planning so that Montessori can secure the necessary resources. This includes following the budget process as outlined. You will need to work on finding supplies, etc. and making requests via electronic purchase orders.	4	3	2	1
22. XXX is recommended to pursue a job in administration. She has all the skills, talent, experience and education to tackle this new challenge. XXX will be an extremely successful instructional leader. In fact, XXX is one of the top instructional leaders we have in our building now.	4	3	2	1
23. We will continue to implement our Behavior Management Plan next year. Take some time and reflect over what went well and what could go better. During fall conferences we will ask each teacher to provide an updated version of their Individual Classroom Procedures. We will also be asking teams to develop new plans for managing students.	4	3	2	1
23. XXX continue to look for other methods to share your leadership skills with the building and district. You obviously are very involved in all areas of special education and in working with the special needs students. Your expertise in reading will greatly assist us as we move to more specialized reading opportunities for students in our building.	4	3	2	1
25. Remember to take time for yourself and not stretch too thin. We all have to learn to say "no" and not take on too much. Thanks for all you do.	4	3	2	1