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2007-05-01

Teachers' Perceptions of a 360-Degree Feedback Process

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TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF A 360-DEGREE FEEDBACK PROCESS

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education
University of San Diego

May 2007

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, the 360° feedback process, which originated in the business world in the 1980s, has been increasingly used for the purpose of teacher evaluation. When this is done, feedback from peers, parents and students, as well as teacher self-reflection and student achievement data, are used in addition to more traditional evaluation strategies.

Despite its growing popularity, however, there have been very few published studies about the impact of the 360° feedback process in the business world and even fewer in the field of education. The overarching purpose of this qualitative study was to discover teachers' perceptions of a 360° feedback system. The following questions were used to guide the inquiry: (a) What are teachers' perceptions of 360° feedback? (b) What sources and kinds of feedback do teachers find helpful? (c) How do teachers use feedback to improve instruction and student performance? (d) How do teachers deal with the emotional aspect of receiving critical feedback on their performance? The focus was on the perceptions of ten teachers who worked in an American school in Asia.

Data were gathered primarily through interviewing. In addition, a focus group discussion with an additional eleven teachers was used to triangulate the initial findings. The focus group procedures entailed presenting the findings in a Reader's Theater format and asking participants to comment on what they had seen and heard in the performance.

The findings suggest that: (a) students are considered the most valuable source of feedback on a teacher's performance with parents perceived as the least valuable, primarily because they have not observed the teacher in the classroom. (b) Working with a peer in a collaborative environment appears to be the most desirable situation for sharing peer-to-peer feedback. (c) The cultivation of a non-threatening, non-competitive

school culture encourages teachers to reflect critically on their teaching. (d) Using a

teacher evaluation process for both formative and summative purposes is problematic. (e)

The costs of implementing the system may outweigh the benefits. (f) Using a Reader's

Theater format was an effective method of presenting data for the purposes of generating

a focus group discussion.

Dedication

To the men I love:

To my husband, Gerry,

For being a great man and my companion for life;

and, for loving me unconditionally.

To my two beautiful boys, Jack and Tommy,

You have blessed my life!

Acknowledgements

I am truly grateful to Dr. Bob Donmoyer for being an incredible committee chair, a
mentor and a friend.

To Dean Paula Cordeiro for granting me the honor of serving on my committee.

To my other two committee members, Dr. Jo Hunsaker and Dr. Halyna Kornuta for
sharing their wisdom and expertise.

To USD Professors, Dr. Fred Galloway, Dr. Theresa Monroe, Dr. Mary Scherr, Dr. Ed
DeRoche and Dr. Mary Williams, thank you for your fine coaching along the way.

To members of my doctoral cohort group including Pat, Rebecca, Tiffany, Bob, Mauricio
and Jim, thank you. Special thanks to Candace for keeping me sane that last summer and
to Brian for your encouragement and support along the way.

To Beth Yemma, a special thank you for all of your incredible assistance; you went
above and beyond the call of duty!

To the teachers who participated in this study, I thank you for sharing your experiences
with me.

To the teachers who acted in the Reader's Theater performance—you were wonderful!

To Glenn Wolfe for taking time and effort to make my presentations look great.

To my administrative colleagues, Mark Ulfers, Eric Sands and Cathy Funk, thank you.

To my brothers and sisters in Ireland, you always had great faith in me!

To Mom and Dad, you taught me to aspire to greatness; I am what I am today because of
you!

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Over the last several decades, public school administrators have been pressured to improve the public education system and to increase the level of student achievement. The demand for greater accountability in terms of improved student academic performance is apparent in the increasing demand for school reform (Beerens, 2000). Implicit in this demand is the realization that, unless schools improve, it is unlikely that student achievement will improve. Schools will only improve, however, if those who deliver instruction improve as "instructional expertise is at the heart of the learning experience" (Tucker & Kindred, 1997, p. 60). And, as Darling-Hammond (2002) argued, "The single most important determinant of success for a student is the knowledge and skills of that child's teacher" (p.23).

The realization that improving the quality of instruction may be the most important factor in reforming schools, and in increasing student achievement, accounts for the increased emphasis on improving teacher appraisal and evaluation systems. Without quality instruction, there cannot be quality learning and without high quality teacher evaluation, we cannot be assured that quality instruction is occurring and intervene if it is not. According to McGreal (1990), there is no area in education that "has more potential impact on the improvement of instruction and hence on the improvement of schools than a successful teacher supervision/evaluation system" (p.149).

Background to the study

Over the course of the last eighty years, the form of teacher evaluation has evolved from focusing on holistic personality traits and characteristics considered to be desirable for effective teaching (Ellett, 1997), to the common practice prior to the 1970s of the use of observation instruments and strategies based on identified teacher behaviors considered effective in promoting student learning. An example of a well known behavior-oriented evaluations system is Hunter's effective instruction model of clinical supervision (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1998; Duke, 1995; Peterson, 2000).

Few today would defend the pre-1970s procedures, but even the validity and utility of evaluation systems focused on discrete behaviors have begun to be questioned. Peterson (1995), for instance, stated that the research on teacher evaluation over the last seventy years provides evidence that traditional evaluation practices, including the more behaviorally oriented practices neither "improve teachers …[nor] accurately tell what happens in classrooms" (p.14). Santeusanio (1998) reported that educators regularly use words or phrases like "useless ritual" and "waste of time" to describe evaluation procedures.

. Part of the problem with earlier evaluation models may have been that, often, they were used primarily for summative purposes, and, even if this was not the intent, teachers often saw the evaluations that were conducted in summative terms (Barber, 1990). A summative evaluation involves making a judgment about a teacher's performance for the purposes of making personnel decisions. Examples of personnel decisions that might be influenced by summative evaluation include whether or not to renew teachers' contracts, whether to grant a teacher tenure or, in some schools, whether to give teachers merit pay.

Formative evaluation, on the other hand, focuses on promoting teachers' ongoing growth and development. In a formative evaluation process, "evaluation information is collected and used to understand, correct, and improve ongoing activity" (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1998, p. 229). The intent of formative evaluation is to give teachers information that relates directly to student learning; the expectation is that teachers will reflect on that information and set goals for improved performance. Feedback from a formative evaluation, in short, allows teachers to make judgments about how they can best improve their teaching.

Formative evaluation methods include: peer review (Stiggins & Duke, 1988; McGreal, 1983; Beerens, 2000; Peterson, 2000), student-to-teacher feedback (Stiggins & Duke, 1988; Millman & Darling-Hammond, 1990; Peterson, 2000), parent-to-teacher feedback (McGreal, 1983), compilation and review of teacher portfolios (Danielson, 1996; Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Bird, 1990) and teacher self-evaluation (Duke, 1990; Beerens, 2000; Peterson, 2000). The literature suggests that all of these methods, when used as primary evaluation tools, have advantages and disadvantages (Duke, 1995; Peterson, 2000). The literature also suggests that evaluation models that incorporate a variety of techniques for collecting data are more reliable and helpful in capturing the complex acts of teaching and learning as "no single line of evidence...provides a total picture of what a teacher does" (Peterson, 1987, p. 312; see also McGreal, 1983).

A more recent approach to teacher evaluation, which incorporates many elements of previous evaluation systems, and which also adds elements not present in previous models, is the 360° feedback/evaluation process. The 360° feedback process (also known as multiple input process and multi-rater feedback) originated in the business world.

Three hundred and sixty degree feedback ®, in fact, is a trademark registered in 1978 by

Teams Incorporated, a Miami-based business consulting firm. The 360° feedback process

is based on the idea that an individual's skills may be seen differently by people who play

different roles and who, consequently, view the individual from different perspectives.

A person's skills should be viewed as being exemplary (or at least adequate) from

all the different vantage points that different roles within an organization provide

(Danielson & McGreal, 2000). In 360° feedback systems, a person's performance is rated

by a "range of co-workers, including supervisors, peers, subordinates, and customers;

these are fed back to the person and compared with self-ratings. After such comparisons

are made, developmental goals are set" (Center for Creative Leadership, 1998).

Organizations implement the 360° feedback process in an attempt to increase

employee performance and behavior. The underlying organizational assumptions are that

360° feedback will: (a) help employees better understand how others view them and will,

therefore, help them develop a more accurate sense of performance and behavior; and (b)

better identify employee strengths and areas needing improvement by receiving feedback

from multiple sources, rather than from only one source (Tornow, 1993b). The 360°

feedback system in education includes feedback from parents, students and peers, in

addition to the supervisor's evaluation, student achievement data and the teacher's self-

assessment.

One of the advocates of using 360° feedback in education, Manatt (1997),

suggested that appraisal of instruction requires that teachers "listen to their customers,

namely parents, students and other teachers" (p.10). Thus, when 360° feedback is used in

the formative evaluation of teachers, no single source of customer satisfaction data is privileged. Instead multiple sources and multiple evaluators are used.

Educators undoubtedly find the 360° process appealing for a number of reasons. Certainly one reason relates to the fact that educators have embraced a more constructivist view of knowledge. This view suggests that, because people construct knowledge somewhat differently, it is important to understand a phenomenon from different people's points of view. This evaluation model helps develop this sort of multiple perspective understanding because it incorporates data from a number of different sources. These sources include feedback from parents, students and peers, self-assessment data, student achievement data in addition to supervisors' observations (See figure 1).

Student
achievement

Student to teacher
feedback

Teacher
Growth
and
Development

Teacher
self-assessment

Teacher to
teacher
feedback

Principal or
supervisor feedback

Parent to teacher
feedback

Figure 1: Possible sources of feedback in 360° feedback - researcher's construction of sources of 360° feedback for teachers.

Scholars such as Santeusanio (1998) maintain that 360° feedback solves "some problems associated with single source evaluations, including lack of fairness, accuracy, credibility, and usefulness to the evaluatee" (p. 32). Others like Shulman, in his final report for the Carnegie Corporation's Board Certification Project, in 1991, argued that the judicious blend of assessment methods found in the 360° model is needed for effective teacher evaluation for reasons other than fairness. One can never understand as complex a phenomenon as teaching by looking at it from a single perspective Shulman (1991) and others have argued.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the widespread popularity of the 360° feedback process in business and growing enthusiasm for the approach in education (Dyer, 2001; Manatt, 1997; Prybylo, 1998), there have been few published reports about the effectiveness of the 360° feedback process in the business world and fewer in the field of education. Most of the literature regarding 360° feedback systems has been anecdotal. Organizations are "jumping on the 360° feedback wagon without examining what they have truly gained by the addition of multiple sources of feedback" (Twymon, 1997, p.3).

Many in the corporate world have expressed concern about the absence of empirical research on the 360° feedback process as evidenced by the Corporate Leadership Council (2000) statement, "Systematic assessments of the effectiveness of 360° feedback programs are rare, despite significant investment requirements, participant frustration and a lack of data linking feedback to positive behavior change" (p.1).

The problem of limited studies has been compounded by the fact that the studies that have been conducted in business have produced less than conclusive results about the

impact of the strategy (Hazucha, Hezlett, & Schneider, 1993; London, & Smither, 1995). Little is known about the effects of the process on either those providing or those receiving feedback (Atwater, Waldman, Atwater & Cartier, 2000). In part, this is because most studies have focused on aspects of the implementation process rather than on effects. The limited number of outcome-oriented studies that have been conducted indicate that 360° systems, when correctly implemented and administered, generally act as a catalyst for improved performance (Reilly, Smither, & Vasilopulos, 1996). Even among these studies, however, the results tell a somewhat nuanced story.

One study by Brett and Atwater (2001) suggested that both negative and discrepant feedback was seen by those studied as being less accurate and less useful than largely positive ratings. Negative feedback also tended to generate negative reactions rather than productive self-critique. At the very least, these findings have implications for feedback coaches and follow-up sessions with recipients.

A meta-analysis of the impact of feedback in a variety of evaluation systems suggests that the effects of feedback are variable and in one third of the cases, feedback had a negative result (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). The meta-analysis reinforced Brett and Atwater's findings (2001) about the way in which negative feedback has been treated in a 360° evaluation in business, i.e., that negative feedback tends to be seen as less accurate and thus it is less accepted by recipients than positive feedback (Ilgen, Fisher & Taylor (1979). Managers struggle with "the need to coach employees to improve their performance, on one hand, and the negative reactions and uncertain effects on performance that unfavorable feedback may engender on the other hand" (Steehmal & Rulkowski, 1990).

In summary, further research is needed in the business world in order to determine the effectiveness of the 360° feedback system in improving performance. The Reilly, Smither and Vasilopoulos (1996) study is an example of both the limited studies that have been done in the business milieu and the type of study that needs to be done in all contexts in which the 360° feedback process is used.

Studies of the 360° Feedback Process in Education

Schools are one of the non-business contexts that have begun to use the 360° feedback process to evaluate personnel. To date, however, there has been even less systematic study of 360° feedback process in school settings than in the business world. The limited studies that have been conducted in schools have focused almost exclusively on providing 360° feedback to those in leadership and counseling positions (Smith, 2000).

Of fifty nine studies focusing on feedback in general or 360° feedback systems in particular, I was able to identify seven studies involving K-12 educational institutions (Cain, 2001; Krenson, 2004; Ostrander, 1996; Smith, 2000; Twymon, 1997; Wilkerson, Manatt, Rogers & Maughan, 2000; Young, 2001). Of these seven studies, one involved school counselors, one involved a comparison between student, principal and teacher self-ratings and student achievement, another involved the initial implementation of a 360° feedback process in a school, and the other four studies involved school administrators. No other study was identified dealing with teachers in a K-12 educational setting.

Even the K-12 studies that were conducted often produced contradictory findings both within and across studies. Cain (2002) in his study, "Enhancing a Conventional Performance Evaluation System for Counselors with 360° Feedback" indicated that participants found the 360° feedback process to be a source of concern, especially in terms of implementation consistency. In general, those studied, i.e., administrators and counselors, found the process demanding and overly time consuming. Nevertheless, those who were involved in the process found that the additional perspectives led to a more holistic view of their work.

Similar sorts of contradictory findings can be seen when studies by Smith (2000) and Twymon (1997) are compared. Smith's study, "The Development and Implementation of 360° Feedback for Administrators of a K-12 Public School District," concluded that the 360° feedback enhanced the traditional supervision-only evaluation system for school administrators. In contrast, a study by Twymon's on school administrators, "Does 360° Feedback Add Value to the Performance Appraisal Process?" found that 360° feedback does not add any information to the performance evaluation process that could not have been gotten by examining managerial raters. She highly recommends further research on the use of 360° feedback systems before it continues to be used blindly.

Some of the other studies on the use of 360° feedback to improve the performance of school leaders appear to have been conducted by those with an a priori commitment to the concept and, perhaps, even a financial stake in having the results be positive (see, for example, Wilkerson, Manatt, Rogers & Maughan, 2000). Their results are generally

positive, but, given the potential conflict of interest, these positive results may need to be viewed with a certain amount of caution.

Despite this lack of conclusive data on its effectiveness in teacher growth and development, 360° feedback appears to be widely and enthusiastically embraced by educators just as it has been widely and enthusiastically embraced by people in the business world. The strategy, for example, has been endorsed by a number of well-respected scholars (Dyer, 2001; Prybylo, 1998; Manatt, 1997) who have considerable influence on practitioners.

This embracing of 360° feedback has occurred even though the evaluation system is very costly, both in terms of time and money: Teachers are asked to complete a survey for each of several colleagues; students' instructional time is used to complete surveys; and clerical time is required for mailing and collating surveys. In addition to the cost of time, implementation of the 360° feedback process involves an outlay of money to pay for the survey instruments and, if a school or school district opts to not use its staff time to score and report the findings, to pay a company to do these tasks. In one school of 220 teachers, the cost of hiring a company to process the survey forms amounted to USD 70.00 per faculty member during the 2003-2004 school year.

Thus, the costs associated with implementing the 360° feedback process are high and the evidence of its effectiveness in education, and even in business, is limited. Consequently, there is a need for a closer examination of how the 360° feedback process plays out in schools. There is a need to study whether teachers use feedback to improve their performance and student learning, and, if they do, how such feedback is used. We also need to begin to develop evidence about whether the benefits of using a 360°

feedback process are substantial enough to justify the costs associated with implementing such a system.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to discover teachers' perceptions of the 360° feedback process: specifically, the research sought to reveal the kinds of feedback that was helpful to teachers, how the feedback was used, and how the feedback contributed to their development as teachers. The study that was conducted attempted to respond to the needs identified in the previous section. As previously mentioned, there has been little systematic study of 360° feedback/evaluations systems in schools and even less on its use with teachers. Consequently, there was a need to examine the impact 360° feedback has on teachers. The study focused on teachers from one school that had made a major commitment—both in terms of time and money—to implementing the 360° feedback process. The study also explored the sources of data that were most frequently valued by teachers and whether teachers actually used the feedback provided to alter, and, hopefully, improve their teaching.

Research Questions

Thus, the specific focus for this study was on teachers' perceptions of 360° feedback; more specifically, the study focused on the kinds of feedback that was helpful to teachers, how they used feedback to improve performance and how the feedback contributed to their development as teachers.

The following questions guided the inquiry throughout the study:

1. What sources and kinds of feedback do teachers find helpful?

2. How do teachers use feedback to improve instruction and student performance?

3. How do teachers deal with the emotional aspect of receiving critical feedback on their performance?

4. What are teachers' perceptions of the 360° feedback process?

<div align="center">Significance of the Study</div>

This study begins to provide an empirical base for assessing the effectiveness of the 360° feedback process and for understanding teachers' perceptions of the process. The limited research on the 360° feedback process that has been completed has been conducted primarily in the business world. When research on the 360° process has been conducted in schools, it has focused almost exclusively on feedback to those in leadership positions. This particular research focused on the impact of feedback from the 360° feedback process in teacher growth and development.

This study, consequently, provides some insights into what *teachers* are likely to do with feedback, how they interpret it, how they go about identifying areas that might need improvement and what they are inclined to do to bring about improvements in those areas. This study also provides some insights into the sources of feedback that are most valuable to teachers.

In addition, this study may provide some guidance to administrators when working with teachers on processing data and how to deal with sensitive issues that arise. This study identifies the need to coach teachers in the interpretation of negative feedback and to provide help to them with processing emotions resulting from this type of feedback. Finally, this study emphasizes that the purpose of any teacher evaluation

system—summative or formative—needs to be carefully defined and clearly communicated.

In essence, this study adds to the body of knowledge on teacher evaluation in general and to an understanding of the 360° feedback process in particular. The resulting findings will be useful to the school studied and hopefully to other schools contemplating the adoption of the 360° feedback process in teacher evaluation.

Overview of Methodology

This qualitative study was conducted at the Far Eastern American School in Asia. Individual interviews were conducted with ten teachers, randomly selected from a purposefully selected population of middle and upper school teachers who had participated in the evaluation experience for three years or more. The goal was to understand their experiences with the 360°feedback process and their perceptions of its impact—or lack of impact—on their professional practice. An interview-guide was used to structure and regularize the interview process. Documents and artifacts (such as teachers' summary feedback forms and annual goal stetting plans) presented by the respondents were also reviewed for triangulation purposes.

In addition, a focus group discussion with a group of 11 additional volunteer teachers from the middle and upper schools was conducted in order to determine the generalizability of the findings within the sectors of FEAS focused on in this study. In order to display the data from the interviews, a Reader's Theater script was generated from the findings and this Reader's Theater script was staged and presented by a third group of teachers to succinctly summarize the interview data and to provide a basis for

the focus group discussion. Discussion was further stimulated by the asking of probing questions by the narrator and the researcher at appropriate times during the presentation of findings. The discussion from the focus group was recorded and transcribed.

Analysis of the interview data involved content analysis of each interview and a cross-case analysis of the ten interviews. Analysis involved grouping the responses according to the interview questions. The interview data were summarized in both narrative form and in matrices that displayed exemplary quotes from each of the ten participants on particular topics and/or issues. After the initial data were organized, a comparison was made between the categories and themes that emerged and the comments made during the focus group meeting.

Trustworthiness

In collecting and analyzing the data, I employed a variety of strategies (interviews, focus group discussion, review of artifacts) in order to heighten the trustworthiness of the research. Denzin (as cited in Patton, 1990) stated, "No single method ever adequately solves the problem of rival causal factors…because each method reveals different aspects of empirical reality, multiple methods must be employed" (p. 187). Consequently, I used a number of different methods to collect and triangulate data.

In addition, I provided the opportunity for respondents to review transcriptions of the interviews and the Reader's Theater script. Once interviews were completed, I allowed respondents to review their individual transcript so that they could have the opportunity to change, add, or delete. In addition, all interviewees reviewed the Reader's Theater script prior to finalizing. This final review also helped individuals to clarify

statements, to avoid confidentiality issues in addition to increasing the trustworthiness of the data.

Limitations of the Study

Glesne (1990) recommended that researchers acknowledge limitations in advance as this helps the researcher and the reader to understand the nature of the research and provides information about particular issues regarding the site and/or the participants. I identified three major limitations of the study that need to be acknowledged.

Some will be concerned that the researcher is part of the organization in which this research is being conducted. I acknowledge the potential legitimacy of this concern, as this is "backyard research". I was concerned that some teachers might view my role as principal as a reason to impress or avoid mentioning constructive criticisms arising from the 360° data. However, as none of the teachers were under my direct supervision and none were on probationary status, this limitation was minimized.

Secondly, I needed to be aware of my own subjectivity and biases. I bore in mind Patton's (1990) advice to researchers to be aware of and state their bias and juxtapose their bias with technical rigor and documentation of methods. Such rigor and documentation of methods allow others to review the research and methodology for bias. In this study, the researcher tried to minimize bias by extensive interviewing, reviewing of artifacts, and varied and informative documentation of data by providing for an extended discussion within the focus group setting.

In the methodology sections, I make the argument that FEAS can be readily compared to independent or private schools or suburban schools in the United States since parents' socio economic status and educational expectations closely match those of

parents of students in those schools. In addition, for the purposes of standardized tests,

students at FEAS are normed against independent and suburban norms in the United

States and the majority of students ultimately proceed to universities in the United States.

However, there is the possibility that there may be cultural factors or other factors in this

student /parent population or the teaching faculty that I may have over looked in the

study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter reviews literature related to the topic of the study, "Teachers' Perceptions of the 360° Feedback Process." The chapter is designed to help the reader situate the work reported later in this dissertation within a broader intellectual context and to highlight issues and distinctions that are important for understanding the findings that will be presented in the next chapters. The review focuses on four broad topics: (a) the purpose of teacher evaluation; (b) evaluation methods and practices; (c) the 360° feedback system, and (d) professional growth. In each section, a discussion of conceptual work is followed by a review of empirical studies relevant to the particular topic.

The Purpose of Teacher Evaluation

In this section, I will discuss what the literature says about the importance of quality instruction and the role played by teacher evaluation in improving instruction, teacher performance and student learning. Section one will be divided into two subsections: (a) the importance of quality instruction and the need for teacher evaluation and (b) the purposes of teacher evaluation: summative and formative.

The Importance of Quality Instruction and the Need for Teacher Evaluation

Darling-Hammond (as cited in Goldberg, 2001) stated, "My research and personal experience tell me that the single most important determinant of success for a student is the knowledge and skills of that child's teacher" (p.689). Darling-Hammond's claim is supported by Tucker and Kindred (1997) who posited that "instructional

expertise is at the heart of the learning enterprise" (p.60). Prybylo (1998) extended this thinking even further when he stated, "Without quality instruction, there cannot be quality learning; without instructional evaluation, quality instruction cannot be documented; and unless quality instruction can be documented, institutional goals cannot be evaluated" (p.559).

The literature on teacher evaluation demonstrates the need for quality evaluation in order to ensure quality teaching and learning. Improving student learning is described as a dynamic process requiring continual growth in teacher practice (Danielson, 1996) and, therefore, in order to foster individual teacher growth, there must be clear, specific feedback on current teaching practice. This feedback must be credible and based on a wide range of data (Haefele, 1993). Providing this sort of feedback is one well-established purpose for doing teacher evaluation (Peterson, 2000). In the next section, I will elaborate on the concepts of summative and formative evaluation as they relate to teacher evaluation.

Purposes of Teacher Evaluation: Summative and Formative

The specific purposes of teacher evaluation fall into two overarching categories: summative and formative (Millman, 1981). Summative evaluation, in a teacher evaluation context, involves summarizing and drawing conclusions from evaluation data at the end of the evaluation cycle (McCay, 2000) for the purposes of making personnel decisions. Examples of the sorts of personnel decisions that might be associated with summative assessment include whether to renew teachers' contracts, to grant teachers tenure or, in some places, whether to give teachers merit pay. A summative evaluation is often described as being administrator-directed with an emphasis on accountability

(Ogden, 1998). It is viewed as quality control for the protection of students and the public from incompetent teaching (Popham, 1988).

Formative evaluation focuses on promoting teachers' ongoing growth and development. In a formative evaluation process, evaluation information is "collected and used to understand, correct, and improve ongoing activity" (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1993, p. 229). The intent of formative evaluation is to give teachers information that relates directly to student learning; the expectation is that teachers will reflect on that information and set goals for improved performance. Feedback from a formative evaluation, in short, allows teachers to make judgments on how they can best improve their teaching. Formative teacher evaluation by design offers the opportunity for teachers to identify strengths and weaknesses; this identification process, in turn, leads to the improvement of instructional practice. This improvement process is considered by many as the most important function of evaluation (Haefele, 1993).

Other purposes for teacher evaluation are also articulated in the literature. Some of these fall under summative purposes and some under formative purposes. The list of purposes includes the following: (a) Screen out unqualified persons from certification and selection processes; (b) recognize and help reinforce outstanding service; (c) provide direction for staff development practices; (d) provide evidence that will withstand professional and judicial scrutiny; (e) aid institutions in terminating incompetent or unproductive personnel; and (f) unify teachers and administrators in their collective efforts to educate students (Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 1998).

Traditionally, teacher evaluation has emphasized the summative purposes of evaluation (Searfoss & Enz, 1996). Yet, the trend towards teacher professionalism and participatory school improvement has sparked growing interest in providing teachers with feedback and in using assessment for the purpose of stimulating reflective thought (Glatthorn, 1997). McConney, Schalock & Del Schalock (1997) cite Stufflebeam (1983) when he wrote that the purpose of evaluation as "not to prove but to improve." To state this another way: teacher evaluation must "weigh heavily in favor of providing authentic opportunities for diagnosis (needs assessment), improvement, professional development, and capacity building in teachers" (McConney, Schalock & Del Schalock in Stronge, 1997, p. 186).

Teacher evaluation is viewed by many as a double-edged sword: "One side purports to prod professional growth, and the other side is poised above the practitioner demanding accountability for use in an employment or licensure decision" (Annunziata, 1997, p.288). Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon (1998) asserted that "unless the procedures for direct assistance (supervision and professional growth) are made clearly distinct and separate from evaluation (formal contract and renewal and judgment of competence), one can talk until one is blue in the face about supervision as a helping and formative process but teachers will not believe in it" (p. 312). Consequently, what remains to be resolved is the age-old dilemma of how a school or district is to ensure that teachers are both held responsible for satisfactory performance and, at the same time, engaged in professional growth and classroom-based assistance that "allows them to open their hearts, souls and minds to another, thinking critically and actively planning improvements to their teaching" (Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon, 1998, p. 312-313).

McConney, Schalock & Del Schalock in Stronge (1997) argued that, despite a possible conflict in purpose, formative and summative evaluation "can and...must support each other" (p.174). They argue, in fact, that a well thought out and effective evaluation system will address both purposes. Iwanicki (2001) agreed that teacher evaluations

> Must analyze teaching or the basis of what students are learning as well as effectively integrate the teacher evaluation and staff development processes with school improvement. Schools that use teacher evaluation in these ways make good progress in their quest to meet high student learning standards (p. 57).

Even if there is a clear intent to integrate the formative and summative goals of evaluation, certain other conditions must be met as schools strive to encourage and support teacher growth and development by designing effective teacher evaluation systems. Escrow (2000) defined these conditions as: (a) Integrating evaluation structures with reform and restructuring initiatives; (b) increased understanding of how adults grow, develop and learn; (c) increased awareness of the importance and complexity of teaching; (d) increased focus on the development of teacher expertise; and (e) new understanding of adult education. (Mezirow & Associates, 2000, p. 26). When all of these conditions are in place, teacher evaluation systems are more likely to be successful.

Evaluation Methods and Practices

In this section, I will discuss what the literature says about specific evaluation methods and practices. Section two will be divided into two subsections: (a) classroom observations as a traditional model of evaluation and (b) emerging evaluation systems.

For each evaluation model presented, a short description will be included in addition to a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages that the literature associates with each particular method that is discussed.

Classroom Observations As a Traditional Model of Evaluation

Formal teacher evaluations have been a component of education systems since at least the turn of the century (Prybylo, 1998) and, more often than not, evaluation practices have been built around formal observations conducted in teachers' classroom. The first classroom observations focused on lists of personality traits thought to be responsible for effective teaching (Ellett, 1997). Over the years, these check lists have evolved based on the desire for more objective, research-based means of assessing teaching, to include lists of teacher behaviors considered effective in promoting student learning. An example of a well known and behavior-oriented appraisal system is the Madeline Hunter's effective instruction model of clinical supervision (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1998; Duke, 1995; Prybylo, 1998; Peterson, 2000).

The traditional models of evaluation, based on the supervisor's (usually the principal's or vice-principal's) observation of the teacher's performance in the classroom, frequently employed a pre-observation, a classroom observation, and a post-observation conference during which the evaluator presented his/her perception of the class based on a checklist with a rating of observed teacher behaviors. The process is frequently a one-way communication vehicle between the evaluator and teacher. In this process, all teachers are typically evaluated with a common instrument and fixed procedures (Haefele, 1993).

A classroom observation can provide valuable data and feedback to the teacher, but it may not provide an adequate view of the total teaching performance. A review of recent literature on teacher evaluation reveals significant shortcomings that are associated with classroom observation as the sole source of data on a teacher's performance (Peterson, 1995). Since these observations occur generally two or three times a year, there is limited contact with the teacher on which to base a judgment. Secondly, teachers being observed often change the way they teach in order to suit what they believe the observer wants to see (Searfoss and Enz, 1996). In addition, because of its very nature, there is no process for evaluation of teacher performance on any other dimension but instructional presentation within the classroom setting.

Root and Overly (cited in Stronge & Ostrander, 1997) described direct teacher observation as a "bureaucratic requirement that is conducted perfunctorily and does little to improve teacher performance" (p.35). Scriven (1990) described this model as nothing more than reports from occasional visitors to the classroom that "suffer from samples that are inadequate in size and not representative... (and) usually vulnerable to personal bias" (p. 91). Further disadvantages found in traditional methods of evaluation include: a) The teacher must rely almost exclusively on data collected by an observer during a discrete time period; b) the quality of instruction observed is closely linked to the accuracy of the observer's perceptions; and c) teachers often view these practices more as threats than benefits (Mertler, 1999).

Peterson (2000) claimed that seventy years of empirical research on teacher evaluation shows that current practices do not improve teachers or accurately tell what happens in classrooms. Stronge (1997) stated that traditional evaluation is flawed for the

following reasons: (a) The limited sample size; (b) the limited focus of any given observation; (c) the artificial nature of scheduled observations; and (d) its failure to reflect teacher responsibilities outside the classroom (Stronge, 1997).

Glatthorn and Coble (1995) believed that even clinical supervision, a more detailed form of the traditional classroom evaluation strategy that involves more interaction between the evaluator and those being evaluated about what the focus of the evaluation should be and what the data signal, is ineffective because "two or three perfunctionary evaluations followed by 'good news/bad news' conferences are a waste of everyone's time" (p. 35). Again, they use the term 'perfunctionary' to describe this process.

The formal classroom observation as the sole method of teacher evaluation has also been criticized on validity and reliability grounds. It has been noted that principals are inclined to rate teachers rather high. Where the ratings of parents, students, principals and teacher self-assessments were compared, the findings indicated that the students gave the teachers the lowest ratings of all, parents gave the second lowest ratings, and, in practically all subcategories, the principals rated the teachers higher than any of the other raters (Stronge & Ostrander, 1997). Bridges (cited in Stronge & Ostrander, 1997) speculated that one explanation for the high ratings principals commonly give teachers is that they are unable to devote enough time to do the job adequately and thus are reluctant to be critical of teachers' performance.

These findings are also supported by Wilcox's (1995) study of the relationship of the teacher's self-assessment to the ratings of students and supervisors. She conducted her study at all four levels (K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12) in three school districts and found that teachers and principals were much more lenient in their ratings than were students. It was

her conclusion, therefore, that if, in most schools, there is no plan or vehicle, which is designed to give feedback to the teacher on performance other than the principal, "teachers do not receive honest and realistic feedback" (p.92). This conclusion was supported by Manatt and Benway (1998) who noted that single-source assessments may suffer from a suspicion of favoritism, insufficient data, and principals' difficulty in confronting poor performance. The process also places the teacher's fate in the hands of a single judge (Petersen, 1995, Stronge & Ostrander, 1997) and, consequently, is a model that no longer reflects the way American schools operate (Stronge & Ostrander, 1997).

Emerging Evaluation Systems

From a review of the literature, it is apparent that new approaches to evaluation are emerging. These new approaches have been prompted by a number of factors including the following: (a) Dissatisfaction and deficiencies with the traditional evaluation system; (2) the less than positive picture portrayed by research on evaluation practices and the effects of teacher quality on student achievement; and (3) the political era of education accountability which requires that teachers do a better job of teaching. In addition, a more constructivist philosophy of education has been embraced by educators. This constructivist approach to education profoundly changes the way teachers view learning and instruction and, therefore, the traditional checklist with "nary a mention of integrated teaching approaches has become a conspicuous dinosaur in American schools" (Searfoss & Enz, 1996).

Although exact evaluations procedures vary, some common elements exist in the emerging approaches to teacher evaluations. First, these emerging teacher evaluations are focused on student learning and performance. Under the traditional evaluation system,

the focus was on the process of teaching rather than the outcome of teaching. Emerging evaluation systems, by contrast, place a heavy emphasis on the teaching outcome of student learning while also focusing on the teaching process.

Second, modern evaluations employ multiple criteria rather than relying solely on administrator observations to evaluate teachers. Finally, emerging teacher evaluation systems are generally based on a defined set of standards of exemplary teaching such as the National Board for Professional Teaching standards (NBPTS) (Weiss & Weiss, 1998).

In addition, considerable discussion is found in the literature on the need to provide a differentiated system to meet the needs of a diverse group of teachers at varying stages in their teaching careers. Egelson and McColskey (1998), for example, emphasized that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to develop one evaluation system that addresses purposes appropriate for beginning, probationary, tenured, and expert teachers. They noted that accountability and judging readiness for tenure are more important purposes of evaluation for beginning teachers. However, formative assessments may be particularly appropriate for experienced teachers who have already demonstrated their competence, as noted by Blake, Bachman, Frys, Holbery, & Sellitto,1995). This call for a differentiated system of evaluation is supported by other scholars such as Manatt (1993, 1997).

The following emerging evaluation practices are discussed below: peer coaching, parent feedback, student feedback, teacher portfolios, and teacher self-evaluation. For each of these evaluation models, a short description will be presented in addition to discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of the approach.

Peer coaching. Peer coaching, the concept of teachers coaching teachers in order to improve teaching and learning, was developed by Showers and Joyce in the 1980s (Showers & Joyce, 1996). Their model has five major functions, including: (a) providing companionship, (b) providing feedback, (c) analyzing application, (d) adapting to students and e) personalizing facilitation. Showers (1985) noted that one of the purposes of peer coaching is to build communities of teachers who continually engage in the study of their craft, an interactive, reciprocal relationship among professionals" (p.4). This development of collegiality is believed to be associated with a variety of desirable outcomes: "better decisions and implementation of those decisions, a higher degree of morale and trust among adults, and continuous adult learning–all outcomes that should lead to improved student learning" (Egelson & McColskey, 1998, p.3). In addition, peer collaboration offers the possibility of a more balanced and more accurate interpretation of practice" (Danielson & McGreal, 2004).

Showers and Joyce (1996) distinguished between peer coaching (technical coaching, team coaching) and cognitive coaching (collegial coaching). Peer coaching, in their minds, at least, focuses on innovations in curriculum and instruction whereas cognitive coaching focuses on improving existing practices. Duke and Stiggins (1986) presented a positive view of peer coaching, stating that "teachers take their colleagues' views to heart and learn from them" (p.31). They went on to note that "teachers who want to improve their teaching are eager to know how other teachers and their students view them" and as these are "the people who interact with the teacher everyday, their perspective should not be ignored during the evaluation process" (Duke & Stiggins, 1986, p.31).

In her study on peer coaching at Shiloh High School, Snellville, GA, Arnau (2001) studied fourteen veteran teachers who volunteered to participate in peer coaching. Her focus was on the following questions: (1) What motivated you to participate in peer coaching? and, (2) What meaning does peer coaching have for you? Arnau found that "peer coaching, presented as a voluntary, professional growth program, and guided by adult learning principles, will serve to increase not only teachers' perceptions of their own professional skills but also respect and morale among teachers" (p. 1). She also found that teachers want to receive this feedback from someone "they trusted, someone they considered expert, and someone that they felt would be honest with them" (Arnau, p.159). However, it should be noted that Arnau was an administrator at the school where the research was conducted. She acknowledged that she had a strong belief in the peer coaching system and, in fact, she and three teachers established the peer coaching program in 1999.

Firestone and Pennell (1993) stated, "Feedback is central to maintaining high motivation and commitment to both organization and activity" (p. 503). Arnau, Kahrs and Kruskamp (2004) maintained that "voluntary peer coaching, as a form of supervision, motivates veteran teachers as adult learners to achieve higher levels of trust, empowerment, and efficacy, resulting in greater risk-taking and a movement toward self-supervision" (p.40).

However, not all views presented in the literature on including peer coaching in teacher evaluation are positive. Glickman, Gordon and Ross-Gordon (1998) noted that "peer coaching" and "peer supervision" have become synonymous in the literature and that peer supervision is not universally embraced. Some believe that peer supervision

suffers from the same flaws as administrator observation: class disruption, inadequate sample size, personal bias and inadequate training (Peterson, 2000). Moreover, peers cease to be peers when they leave the classroom to become peer evaluators (Peterson, 2000).

On the other hand, a deterrent to professional growth is professional isolation (Senge, 1994) and therefore, the development of a community of professionals engaged in ongoing professional dialogue with peers is a desirable situation for adult development (Routman, 2002). In education, many teachers develop their pedagogical style and curriculum in isolation without feedback from peers or supervisors. Setting a favorable school climate for successful peer coaching and peer collaboration seems to be key to its success. Even Showers and Joyce (1996), who introduced the idea of "coaching" with their well known model emphasizing the importance of feedback, now, omit feedback from their model altogether. Showers and Joyce (1996), stated, "When teachers try to give one another feedback, collaborative activity tends to disintegrate" (p.12).

Student feedback. Some advocates for school change argue that the students' perspective is the key missing element in attempts to reform teacher evaluation (Porter & Allen, 2001). Rodgers (2002) claimed that teachers can be assisted in becoming more aware of the complex shades of teaching and learning by involving students in an ongoing dialogue and that the focus of this dialogue should be student learning within the classroom. Cook-Sather (2002) maintained that when teachers listen and learn from students, they cultivate the ability to see the world through students' eyes, which can then enhance teacher effectiveness. Another argument for including students as evaluators is

that they are "the primary consumers of teachers' services" (Stronge & Ostrander, 1997, p.145).

However, the majority of the research in the use of student feedback has been conducted in higher education institutions. Nevertheless, even though the research at elementary and secondary level is limited, studies that have been conducted at the elementary and secondary levels suggest that student reports are relatively reliable (Darling-Hammond, Wise & Pease, 1983; McGreal, 1983). Omotani (1992) and Weber (1992) found that students in grades K-12 can effectively serve as one important source of information for the rating of teacher performance. Weber (1992), whose work involved students in grades K-5 using 20-item rating forms, concluded that the findings supported the involvement of young students in the teacher evaluation process. Omotani's (1992) study supports the role of student raters in grades 6-12. However, it should be noted that both Weber's and Omotani's research was conducted through Iowa State University, where the School Improvement Model (SIM) was developed. The SIM advocated a multiple appraiser system for the evaluation of teachers.

Scriven (1995) supported the use of student ratings as a valuable component in evaluating teachers and proposed several strong arguments for their inclusion in the evaluation process. These arguments included: (a) The positive and statistically significant correlation of student ratings with learning gains; (b) the unique position and qualifications of the students in rating their own increased knowledge; (c) the unique position of the students in rating changed motivation toward the subject taught and toward a career associated with that subject, and perhaps also with respect to a changed general attitude toward further learning in the subject area or more generally; (d) the

unique position of the students in rating observable matters of fact relevant to competent teaching, such as punctuality of the instructor and the legibility of writing on the board (Scriven, 1995).

Price (1992) and Wilcox (1995) indicated that student feedback (a) serves as a proxy measure for students' achievement gains and (b) stiffens the principals' resolve to do a more discriminating job of teacher evaluation. In his 1992 study of the relationship between a number of factors (ratings from the principal, students and peers, growth plan and student achievement data) perceived to be influential in the placement of teachers on a K-12 career ladder, Price (1992) found that of five factors, student feedback (or ratings) was the most powerful factor in differentiating high performance from low. He recommends the inclusion of student feedback in the teacher evaluation process since it is the "group that it [the teacher] serves" (p.91). It is one means of gathering information based on daily observations over an extended period of time (Stevens, 1987) and therefore, the use of student feedback allows for information to be collected on both outcome and process related aspects of teacher performance (Price, 1992).

The literature indicates that educators are not unanimous in their support of using student feedback in teacher evaluation noting disadvantages such as the concern that students could "reward teachers they like and punish teachers that they do not like" (Price, 1992, p.34). Another concern outlined in the literature relates to the perceived purpose of including student feedback in the evaluation process. Shaw (1973) found that teachers cooperated if the purpose of student feedback was solely for improving instruction but that there was great resistance if the feedback was to be used as a component of the formal (i.e. summative) evaluation process. In summary, the literature

indicates that student feedback is best viewed as one means of gathering information for instructional improvement. Ideally, additional sources of evaluation information provided by peers and administrators would be used to supplement information garnered from students (Stevens, 1987).

Parent feedback. According to a 1988 study conducted by the Educational Research Service, only one percent of schools in the United States use parents as a source of feedback data on teacher performance. However, as more and more companies adopt the 360° feedback process, where feedback is presented to employees from all clients, the popularity of parents as a source of teacher performance feedback appears to be increasing. The literature reveals that teachers are concerned about inaccurate and unfair feedback on their performance from parents (Peterson, 2002; Grandjean & Vaughn, 1981). The concern is expressed that, although parents may be expert at raising their own children, they are not expert at classroom teaching (Peterson, 2000). Teachers also criticize parent feedback because it is not based on a direct view of the classroom. However, the literature indicates that, although parents may not be able to speak directly about what happens in the classroom, parent feedback does provide a direct view of a teacher's dealings with parents (Scriven, 1988), in addition to students' reactions to the teacher expressed outside of the classroom (Peterson, 2000).

It is also argued that parents' perceptions of teachers are based directly on their children's opinions. Grandjean and Vaughn (1981) stated that "a parent and his or her child are mutually significant others" who influence each others' attitude development (p.275). Ostrander (1996) also found that there exists a "significant degree of agreement between students' and parents' rank ordering of teachers on teacher performance." She

concluded that parents form opinions toward teachers on the basis of information supplied by their children.

Manatt (1997) noted that teachers know that parents and students are not going to treat them as kindly as the educators with whom they work; he also claimed that this is the reason that most attempts to add parent voices to the evaluation process have been resisted. As a result, Manatt pointed out that adding parent feedback to the evaluation system gets adversarial almost right away. Manatt's concerns about an adversarial reaction were supported by Mathews (2000). He maintained that "teachers get paranoid and parents get paranoid" (p.8) when participating in a parental feedback process. In an attempt to respond to this reaction, Manatt has tried, through the School Improvement Model System at Iowa State University, to develop assessment techniques that will reduce teachers' fears.

Teacher portfolios. Another emerging evaluation tool is the teacher portfolio. Teacher portfolios have been suggested as a way to obtain more authentic data regarding teacher effectiveness (Doolittle, 1994; Peterson, 1995). A teaching portfolio may be considered a collection of information about a teacher's practice. However, a teaching portfolio tied to a vision of reflection and improvement might be defined a bit more systematically as "the structured documentary history of a carefully selected set of coached or mentored accomplishments, substantiated by samples of students work and fully realized only through reflective writing, deliberation, and serious conversation" (Wolf, Lichtenstein & Stevenson, 1997, p.195). A teacher portfolio also provides a means for reflection, an opportunity for critiquing one's own work, for judging the

effectiveness of lessons or for evaluating the effectiveness of interpersonal relationships with students or peers (Doolittle, 1994).

Proponents of teacher portfolios contend that they offer a more complete and valid picture of what teachers do. In addition, in her study of elementary teachers in a Canadian school district who completed a portfolio project as part of a developmental supervision process, Kornuta (2001) found that the development of a portfolio "left lasting legacies, which included personal and professional affirmation, fulfillment, worthiness and competency, as well as the joy of learning" (p.v).

The literature does associate some liabilities with the use of portfolios however. Wolf, Lichtenstein and Stevenson (1997), for example, pointed out that portfolios can be "time-consuming to construct, cumbersome to evaluate, and difficult to score" (p.194). The construction of a portfolio is such that the resulting portfolio is unique and tailored to that individual. This is a very positive feature when it is used as a tool for professional development, but the lack of standardization could be an issue if used for personnel decisions where data comparability is desired (Doolittle, 1994).

Teacher self-evaluation. Teacher self-evaluation is described as "a process in which teachers make judgments about the adequacy and effectiveness of their own knowledge, performance, beliefs and effects for the purpose of self-improvement" (Airasian & Gullickson, 1997, p.215). Stufflebeam and Shinkfield (cited in Airasian & Gullickson, 1997) suggested that the most important evaluations of professionals are the ones conducted by the professionals themselves.

Schön (1987), and others have noted that teachers must reflect on their practice in order to understand, critique, and modify teaching as "reflection is a central process of

constructing knowledge and developing professionally" (Airasian & Gullickson, 1997, p.219). Schön suggested that we learn not so much from our experience but from our reflection on our experience. He proposed two ways in which teachers reflect on their practice: reflection in practice and reflection on practice.

Reflection in practice focuses on "the spontaneous and tacit reflections and decisions teachers make" (Airasian & Gullickson, 1997, p.220) when they are in the process of teaching. This involves reflecting on the activity in progress and making on-the-spot decisions on changes that may or may not need to be made. The informal, experiential trial and error nature of teachers' in-action activities is an important self-evaluation medium, which allows teachers to become learners and constructors of their own practices, knowledge and beliefs. Reflection on practice is "more conscious and reasoned" (Airasian & Gullickson, 1997, p.220) and involves reflection or consideration outside the activity or practice. Danielson and McGreal (2004) pointed out that many experienced teachers spontaneously engage in such reflections but few novice teachers do. However, even experienced teachers rarely devote sufficient time to the kind of sustained reflection that real learning requires.

The availability of external information can enhance teachers' reflection by providing them with explicit information about practice. Airasian ands Gullickson (1997) suggested that "One way to improve reflection of practice is to supplement teachers' personal perceptions and recall with formal evidence about practice" (p. 224). Fuller and Manning (cited in Airasian & Gullickson, 1997) stated:

> The intent is to confront teachers with external information about their
>
> practice so they will see it, reflect on it, compare it with their own personal

perceptions of practice, and evaluate it in a more objective light than when the only information about practice is self-generated. (p.225)

However, the impetus for involvement with self-evaluation must come from the teacher. Forcing teachers to self-evaluate "destroys its purpose and success" (Airasian & Gullickson, 1997, p.228). This notion is supported by Kornuta (2001) who found that motivation was recognized as a force from within by teachers whom she studied. These teachers used a portfolio as a reflective tool. Initially, the portfolio project required an imposing time commitment until it developed a "life on its own."

Finally, Airasian and Gullickson (1997) maintained that in addition to self-evaluation, the teacher must compare himself/herself to a set of standards or norms as without a comparative base "the teacher might overlook needed areas of improvement or misjudge areas of strength" (p.227).

In Summary

A review of the literature suggests that each evaluation method has advantages and disadvantages and that a blend of assessment methods is needed for effective teacher evaluation (McGreal, 1983; Peterson, 1987). Teaching is such a complex phenomenon that any single mode of evaluation fails to measure a teacher's performance (McGreal, 1983; Peterson, 1987; Wilkerson, Manatt, Rogers & Maughan, 2000). One evaluation method, the 360° degree feedback process, purports to provide a blend of evaluation practices and is increasingly portrayed in a positive light (Center for Creative Leadership, 1998; Manatt, 1997; Peterson, 1995; Santeusanio, 1998). The goal of such as system is to move towards a more open culture, where teachers, administrators, parents, students, and peer groups are working towards the common goal of improving learning.

Communication is encouraged and sought. Prybylo (1998) described it as opening

a dialogue and noted that "opening a dialogue between and among teachers,

administrators, students, parents and the community is surely an objective for which to

strive, and 360° feedback seems to fit comfortably within this framework" (p. 577). The

next section reviews literature related to the 360° feedback system.

The Three Hundred and Sixty Degree Feedback System

In this section, I will discuss the existing literature on the 360° feedback system as

used in business and education. Section three will be divided into six subsections: (a)

background information about the 360° feedback system, (b) a description of this system,

(c) the perceived advantages and disadvantages of this system in the business context, (d)

factors believed to be linked to the success of this strategy in business contexts, (e) the

use the 360° feedback system in education, and (f) studies that illuminate the use of the

360° feedback system in education.

Before proceeding, I should note that the literature on the use of the 360° feedback

system in the business world is somewhat extensive, but the literature on the use of this

approach in education is rather limited. The education-related literature that does exist

normally focuses on the use of 360° feedback with leadership and counseling positions.

One final point needs to be made before proceeding with this section of the

literature review. Most of the available literature regarding the use of 360° feedback in

business and in education is anecdotal in nature; little systematic empirical research has

been conducted in either the business or the education sector.

Background Information about the Three Hundred and Sixty Degree Feedback System

Lassiter (1996) noted that the term "360° feedback" comes from an analogy to a compass. The three hundred and sixty degree feedback process:

> Provides performance data from multiple points of reference, not just one, and it
>
> lets us know when we are on or off course. It can fill the gaps that invariably exist
>
> between how we see ourselves and how others see us. (Lassiter, 1996, p.12)

London, Tornow, and Center for Creative Leadership Associates (1998) described 360° feedback as individuals (a) receiving ratings on their performance from a range of co-workers (including supervisors, peers, and subordinates) and more and more frequently from customers, as well, and (b) using this information for developmental purposes. Confidential surveys are completed by a worker's subordinates, colleagues, supervisor and clients. Results of these surveys are tabulated and shared with the worker, usually by a manager. Interpretations of the results, including apparent trends and themes, are discussed as part of the feedback. From this feedback, the worker is able to set goals for self-development that will advance his/her career and benefit the organization (Linman, 2004).

In the three hundred and sixty degree feedback process, the number of data or feedback sources is increased, thereby, theoretically, offering a more comprehensive view of the worker's performance. See Figure 2 for a comparative illustration of the circle of feedback sources available to individuals participating in 360° feedback systems and the traditional, single-source form of performance appraisal.

Figure 2. Traditional, single-rater versus multirater performance feedback systems (Edward and Ewan, 1996).

The three hundred and sixty degree feedback system has a long history. It originated in the development of multisource assessment in a private company called the Assessment Center in the early 1940's (Edwards & Ewen, 1996). Multisource assessments in leadership and management in the business world became more and more popular in the 1980's and 1990's. By the end of this period, 360° feedback systems were used in almost 90 % of Fortune 500 companies (Ghorpade, 2000; Edwards & Ewen,

1996). Over time, the 360° feedback system has been adapted and used in other fields, including education (Danielson & McGreal, 2000).

Perceived Advantages and Disadvantages of the 360° Feedback Process in the

Business World

Various researchers outlined the advantages of the 360° feedback process (Lepsinger & Lucia, 1997, Manatt, 1998; Ghorpade, 2000; Manatt, 2000). The proponents of this process asserted that by gathering information from many different people, the process provides a complete portrait of behavior on the job, one that looks at people from many angles and a range of perspectives, including perspectives as evidenced from direct reports, team members, and managers of both internal and external relationships. Proponents claim that it is like having "a full-length portrait, a profile, a close-up shot of the face, and a view of the back all in one" (Lepsinger & Lucia, 1997, p. 9).

Edwards and Ewen (1996) asserted that feedback from these multiple sources has "a more powerful impact on people than information from a single source, such as a supervisor" (p.4). The enhanced self-awareness created by feedback is claimed to help employees to better understand their strengths and to improve their performance. Edwards and Ewen (1996) stated:

> By increasing the number of evaluations to offer a more balanced and comprehensive view, the 360° feedback process improves the quality of performance measures. Because the feedback providers are those with whom the employee interacts regularly at work, their assessments are reliable, valid, and

credible. This knowledge network of coworkers, who have firsthand experience with the employee, offers insight about work behaviors that a supervisor may not be able to observe. (p. 7)

However, although Edwards and Ewan (1996) have written extensively about the benefits of the 360° feedback process, I was unable to find any systematic research in this area conducted by them. This lack of systematic research limits any conclusions I may be able to make in relation to increasing the number of feedback sources based on Edwards and Ewen's assertions.

DeBare (2000) noted that companies using 360° feedback systems self report that it boosts productivity. Funderburg and Levy (1997) stated that the 360° feedback approach recognizes that, at best, minimal changes can be expected in a person's behavior without real and useful information from other constituents. DeBare, (2000) argued that this information can be obtained through the use of a 360° feedback system as workers are given a "more accurate sense of their personal strengths and weaknesses" (p.2). Edwards and Ewen (1996) also claimed that "supervisors rate more honestly and more vigorously when their ratings are supported by other informed sources, such as 360° feedback" (p.39).

However, the 360° feedback process is not without its critics. In her study, "Does 360° Feedback Add Value to the Performance Appraisal Process?" Twymon (1997) found that 360° feedback does not add any information to the performance appraisal process that could not be collected from simply gathering information from managerial raters. In this study, data collected from a 360° feedback effort in a Midwestern banking institution were analyzed to determine the value added by the 360° feedback. She found

that while peer, self, and direct report factors were not identical, none of them were significantly different from the factor structure for supervisor ratings. She highly recommended further research on the use of 360° feedback systems before it continues to be used blindly.

Other supposed disadvantages—the difficulty in implementation, the cost in undertaking this process, major time commitments and conflicting messages to users—are also discussed in the literature (Ghorpade, 2000). Ghorpade cautioned that "inaccurate, biased and even self-serving information can make its way into 360° feedback systems because of informational, cognitive, and affective causes" (p.143). This can lead to tension and low morale in an organization.

In addition to research on feedback from the 360° feedback system, research findings on receiving any kind of feedback on one's performance is relevant to this study. Research suggests, for example, that receiving negative or critical feedback on performance appears to be linked to negative reaction on the part of some recipients. Vinson (1996) stated that honest feedback can sometimes hurt. Indeed, feedback recipients may react with anger and discouragement when 360° feedback is negative or not as positive as expected (Brett & Atwater, 2001). In their study, "360° Feedback, Accuracy, Reactions, and Perceptions of Usefulness," Brett and Atwater indicated that negative and discrepant feedback was seen by managers as less accurate and less useful and often produced a negative reaction.

In their 1996 meta-analysis of the studies of impact of feedback in a variety of evaluation systems, Kluger and DeNisi suggested that the effects of feedback are variable; in fact, in one third of the cases, feedback had a negative result. This meta-

analysis reinforced the concern that negative feedback tends to be seen as less accurate and thus is less accepted by recipients than positive feedback. Ilgen, Fisher and Taylor (1979) suggested that the main strategy employees use to reduce the impact of negative feedback is to reject it. Brett and Atwater (2001) suggested that another defensive mechanisms used by feedback recipients is rationalization of the feedback. Such reactions cause managers to struggle with "the need to coach employees to improve their performance, on one hand, and the negative reactions and uncertain effects on performance that unfavorable feedback may engender on the other hand" (Steelman & Rutkowski, 2004, p.6).

The literature suggests that feedback can act as a motivator or as a demotivator depending on the individual giving the feedback, the individual receiving the feedback, and the context in which it is received. Smither, London and Reilly's (2005) research findings suggested that some feedback recipients are more likely to improve than others. They stated that improvement is most likely to occur:

> When feedback indicated that change is necessary, recipients have a positive feedback orientation, perceive a need to change their behavior, react positively to the feedback, believe change is feasible, set appropriate goals to regulate their behavior, and take actions that lead to skill and performance improvement. (Smither, London & Reilly, 2005, p. 33)

It was their conclusion, therefore, that "not all participants will benefit equally" (Smither, London & Reilly, 2005, p. 60). They recommended that further research should be conducted into what conditions are desirable for optimal implementation of the

360° feedback process and into what kind of recipients would benefit most from multisource feedback.

Landy, Barnes and Murphy (1978) indicated that at least two factors influence how feedback is received: (a) the employee's view of the feedback and (b) the timing of the feedback. Feedback interventions that occur frequently, are viewed as fair and accurate by the employee and are performed by those who are familiar with the employee's performance tend to be received more favorably. Secondly, the timing of the feedback greatly influences how employees receive the feedback; it is most effective when received soon after the observed behavior (Henderson, 1984).

Further literature suggests that certain variables in the contextual environment in which the feedback is received will have an influence on whether the feedback, even favorable feedback, is valued. Employees are more motivated to improve their job performance based on feedback when the contextual variables are right. Positive variables appear to be: (a) The feedback source is perceived as credible; (b) the feedback is of high quality; and (c) the feedback is delivered in a considerate manner (Steelman & Rutkowski, 2004).

DeNisi and Kluger's (2000) research on performance appraisal feedback suggested that feedback that highlights self-other comparisons focuses the recipient's attention on him or herself rather than on the performance task being evaluated. This type of comparative feedback, where individuals see themselves as not meeting the standard to being below the average causes employees to become "alienated and demoralized" (Atwater & Brett, 2002). A typical 360° feedback report includes numerical data on the employee's performance and normative data about the employee's performance in

relation to all others in the organization at the same level. Atwater and Brett (2002) argued that such comparisons help some employees to achieve increased self-awareness. However, they asserted that, with others, the comparison is detrimental as their ego and their self-esteem is threatened. Such affective reactions may interfere with the individual's capacity to use the feedback for growth and development.

Factors Believed to be Linked to the Success of This Strategy in Business

A supportive work context appears to be a crucial factor in the successful implementation of a 360° feedback process. In addition, Stump (2001) found that one factor that may increase the probability of implementation success is a high degree of employee receptivity to the 360° process. If employees are unreceptive to the process of 360° evaluation and are unwilling to consider data generated from 360° systems, the effectiveness of the appraisal system may be negatively impacted (Bernardin, Dahmus & Redmon, 1993).

Meurer, Mitchell and Barbeita (2002) conducted a study of 150 managers' attitudes toward a 360° feedback system. They deduced, from their findings, that differences in the context in which the feedback is given and characteristics of the feedback recipients themselves are just as important as attitudes toward the feedback system or development activities following feedback. This study indicated the importance of a work context that is supportive of skills development and beliefs by feedback recipients that improving skills is important and that they themselves are capable of improving and developing.

It is strongly recommended by Lepsinger and Lucia (1997) that any organization considering using 360° feedback in the appraisal process "begin by using it for development purposes only and gradually make it part of the appraisal discussions with a pilot group" (p. 213). Tornow (1993b) discussed the developmental use and the summative use (appraisal or evaluation) of 360° feedback. He noted that when 360° feedback is used for developmental purposes, awareness discrepancies between how we see ourselves and how others see us enhance self-awareness. This enhanced self-awareness, he suggested, is the key to development. Many scholars (Antonioni, 1996; Bernardin et al. (1993); Vinson, 1996) recommended that 360° feedback should never be used for summative evaluation purposes, such as to determine salaries or promotion, as this would interfere with the feedback system's developmental goals.

Research in the business world has identified the characteristics of the organizational culture that should support the successful implementation of the 360° feedback process. Lepsinger & Lucia (1997) described an ideal culture for implementing the 360° feedback process as an organizational culture which enables speaking openly, which stresses listening, which expects respect and understanding of differences, and which encourages reflection on and the challenging of one's own thinking and actions.

In Summary

There is a concern about the absence of empirical research on all aspects of the 360° feedback system in business (Stump, 2001). Much of the research on the implementation and outcomes of the 360° feedback process was conducted on those in leadership and administrative positions with particular focus on upward feedback. Existing research claims that feedback from multiple sources can increase self-awareness

and job performance (DeBare, 2000; Edwards Ewen, 1996; Manatt, 2000). However, others claim that this feedback can be received from managerial raters as easily as from multiple sources (Twymon, 1997). The effects of receiving negative or positive feedback are also well documented in the literature (Brett & Atwater, 2001; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996), and indicate that any kind of feedback can act as a motivator or a demotivator depending on the person and the circumstances. Some in the corporate world have expressed concern about the value of adding these multiple sources of feedback on an individual's performance (Corporate Leadership Council, 2000; Twymon, 1997). In summary, further research is needed in the business world in order to determine the effectiveness of the 360° feedback system in improving performance in that milieu. The next section will present the literature as related to the use of 360° feedback in education.

The Use of Three hundred and Sixty Degree Feedback in Education

Although the 360° feedback process has been used extensively in the business world, some educators have argued that "this approach [also] has much to offer educational evaluations" (Danielson and McGreal, 2000, p.51). When discussing evaluation and teaching, Duke and Stiggins (1986) stated, "When the purpose (of evaluation) is to promote teacher growth and development, we may want to expand the way we view evaluation. Many types of evaluation not permitted for accountability purposes are viable options for growth systems" (p.31).

With the 360° feedback process, no single source of data is used to develop an assessment of a teacher's performance (Prybylo, 1998). Instead, multiple sources and multiple evaluators are used and some have suggested that this process should have the

effect of enhancing the positive aspects and reducing the negative aspects of each (Stronge, 1997). Stronge espoused a number of advantages of using multiple data sources over single-source data collection, such as the production of a more complete and richly textured portrait of the evaluatee's performance, the integration of primary and secondary data sources in the evaluation; and, the assurance of greater reliability in the documentation of performance (p.11). He suggested that these factors combined lead to a more legally defensible basis for evaluation decisions. In education, the 360° feedback process helps develop a multiple perspective understanding because it incorporates data from a number of different sources, including supervisor's observations, self-assessments, feedback from parents, students and peers in addition to analysis of student achievement data.

Proponents of the 360° feedback system, such as Santeusanio (1998), maintained that 360° feedback solves "some problems associated with single sources evaluations, including lack of fairness, accuracy, credibility, and usefulness to the evaluatee" (p. 32). Others, like Shulman in his final report for the Carnegie Corporation's Board Certification Project (1991), argued that the judicious blend of assessment methods found in the 360° model is needed for effective teacher evaluation.

As noted previously, Danielson and McGreal (2000) indicated that the 360° feedback system had much to offer education. However, they stated that there were certain conditions that needed to be met in order for the method to be useful in education. For instance, they noted that the quality of the questions contained on the survey instrument is the key issue in the validity of the method. Student surveys had to be age appropriate and focused on the class not the teacher. Parent surveys had to contain

questions that the parents were qualified to answer. For example, parents couldn't comment on the instructional delivery methods implemented in the classroom but a parent could comment on a teacher's accessibility and communication.

The literature suggests clarity of the purpose of the feedback process is essential. It also suggests that when used in education, the 360° feedback process should only be used for developmental purposes. Dalton (1996, cited in Dyer, 2001) posited that using 360° feedback for summative purposes violates principles about learning, growth, and change (p. 36). In addition, Dyer (2001) claimed that "both leaders and raters may be reluctant to participate in the 360° feedback process if they know or even suspect that the data will be used for evaluative purposes" (p.36).

Detractors of the 360° feedback system such as Capper and Jamieson (cited in Prybylo, 1998) criticized the 360° feedback system primarily because it is a product of industrial theory and based on structural functionalist philosophy. Prybylo acknowledged the origin of this process but emphasized that this criticism is based on the assumption that the 360° feedback process is adopted 'as-is' from the industrial context and emphasized that any process adopted from the business or industrial world will need to be adapted to meet the specific needs of the education world.

Beerens (2000) also expressed reservations about the 360° feedback process. He noted that, although the 360° feedback process provides a number of sources of feedback on the teacher's performance, it does not allow for the teacher to have control over the process or to have choices within the process. He stated, "Possibly the biggest obstacle in the 360 system are the facts that teachers are still rated and lack control or choice in the process" (p.46).

Additional studies reveal further findings related to the 360° feedback process in education. These studies will be described in the next section.

Studies that Illuminate the Use of 360° Feedback in Education

To date, there has been little systematic study of 360° feedback in school settings. As mentioned previously, the limited studies in schools have focused almost exclusively on 360° feedback to those in leadership and counseling positions (Smith, 2000). In this subsection, I will report on a number of studies and explore themes emerging from these existing studies of the 360° feedback process in education.

In her study, "The Development and Implementation of 360° Feedback for Administrators of a K-12 Public School District" (Smith, 2000), Smith studied the development and implementation of a procedure to utilize 360° feedback for administrators in a K-12 school district. The 360° feedback process implemented in this district was "The School Improvement Model System" developed at Iowa State University by Richard Manatt. For the purposes of the study, administrators who used the multi-source feedback process and others who used a traditional evaluation system completed a perception survey. Smith reported that the 360° feedback system was acknowledged by the participants:

> As providing better feedback on the effective job responsibilities, on the match
>
> between the feedback system and the instrument, on the delivery of information
>
> by knowledgeable personnel, on the promotion of sound educational principles,
>
> and having reports that are practical. (Smith, 2000)

She noted that the addition of 360° feedback enhanced the traditional supervisor-only evaluation system. However, it should be noted that Smith's study was conducted under advisors at Iowa State University who were involved in the development of The School Improvement Model System and who were involved in the implementation of the feedback system in the school district being studied.

Young (2001) also used qualitative methods to study five superintendents and twenty K-12 principals in five California school districts using 360° feedback. Her study described the elements of 360° feedback that were perceived by these principals and superintendents to enhance the performance of school leaders. She found that 360° feedback (a) enhanced the leadership roles of principals to a greater degree than single-rater performance feedback; (b) principals valued honest, specific, meaningful, and constructive feedback when it was designed to help them improve; (c) the multirater performance feedback process could be hurtful if not carefully implemented; (d) principals valued time for dialoguing and mentoring with their superintendents; and (e) 360° feedback was more effective when used to foster professional growth rather than when used as a summative evaluation.

Interestingly, Young (2001) noted that superintendents in the study tended to believe that principals who feel hurt by negative feedback should develop "thicker skin" in order to be successful in their roles on a long-term basis. In addition, Young encouraged superintendents, wishing to implement 360° feedback, to use it for the purpose for which it was intended—which is "to foster communication, trust, and accurate data about one's performance for the purpose of continuous improvement" (p. 223).

Another qualitative study "Enhancing a Conventional Performance Evaluation System for Counselors with 360° Feedback" (Cain, 2001), involved elementary, middle level, and high school counselors in a K-12 school. Feedback to counselors from supervisors, students, parents and staff members revealed that elementary and high school respondents were more critical than middle grade level respondents. Students were the least positive respondent group followed by administrators, staff members and then parents. Specifically, elementary students were the least positive respondent subgroup, while middle grade level administrators were found to be the most positive.

Cain (2001) indicated that participants found the 360° process to be a source of concern, especially in terms of implementation consistency. In general, participants found the process demanding and time consuming. Despite these obstacles, feedback recipients found that the additional perspectives led to a more holistic view of their work.

Santeusanio (1998) reported that the process of using multirater feedback has had a positive impact on the Danvers Public School district, in Massachusetts, where teachers, principals and the superintendent receive 360° feedback. He considered that including the collective opinions of several stakeholders makes the performance appraisal conference "more meaningful." He also asserted that this system has stimulated collegiality and trust among administrators and teachers; created a shared vision of performance standards; shifted the administrator's role from judge and jury to coach and mentor; and identified and measured standards more precisely for the teachers, superintendent, and administrators. However, although the success of the feedback system in this school district has been widely reported, I was unable to find any systematic empirical research to support this claim.

I successfully located three studies which directly involved the 360° process with classroom teachers. The first of these studies, Ostrander's (1996) quantitative study, "Multiple Judges of Teacher Effectiveness: Comparing Teacher Self-assessments with the Perceptions of Principals, Students and Parents," involved students, parents, principals and teachers completing a common evaluation instrument to rate the performance of 93 teachers. She found that teacher ratings by parents and students, while quite high, were lower that those given by teachers and principals in each of the six areas rated on the evaluation instrument. She also found a significant degree of agreement between the parents' perceptions and the perceptions of the students and concluded that parents' opinions were heavily influenced by the opinions of their children. Overall, Ostrander concluded that "the use of multiple judges may provide unique perspectives on teacher performance" (p. 35).

Another study often cited by proponents of the 360° feedback process is "Validation of Student, Principal, and Self Ratings in 360° Feedback for Teacher Evaluation" which was conducted by Wilkerson, Manatt, Rogers and Maughan through the Iowa State University School Improvement Model (SIM) in 2000. This study involved 988 students, 35 teachers, and four principals in grades K-12 and compared student achievement data with ratings of teacher performance from administrators, students and self-ratings. Criterion-referenced tests in reading, language arts and mathematics generated student performance data. All three rater groups completed questionnaires using a five-point Likert scale. The results were analyzed to determine if any relationship existed between the three rating categories and student achievement.

This study concluded that student rating of teachers was the best predictor of student achievement on district-developed criterion-referenced tests when compared with the ratings of principals and the teachers themselves. These researchers cautioned the reader to be mindful of the fact that student achievement is but one category of teacher effectiveness and should not be considered the only determinant in the overall assessment of teachers. Feedback from peers and parents is still required to complete the cycle of perspective (Wilkerson et al., 2000).

The third study, "The Randolph School Resonance Program: New Paradigms For Teacher development, Evaluation, and Compensation" (Krenson, 2004), involved 82 faculty and administrators at a K-12 school in Alabama. This program involved the development and implementation of a teacher evaluation system tied to a faculty rank system and career ladder. Krenson found that the teachers studied indicated a willingness to be involved in the development of programs having a direct impact on their performance assessment, professional development, and compensation. He also found that the parent and faculty culture improved during the course of the program development. However, he recognized that there existed some skepticism regarding the validity of parent, peer and student feedback for teachers and some concern related to the use of the quantitative data in setting compensation. He also noted that since the previous teacher evaluation strategy, which had been used in the school "for some time, had grown in serious need of improvement, the readiness for change could have caused the resonance program to look better than deserved" (Krenson, 2004, p. 81).

Summary

A comprehensive review of the literature indicates that there is a considerable need for more research in the use of 360° feedback in both business and education. Despite a lack of conclusive data on its effectiveness in teacher growth and development, 360° feedback appears to be widely and enthusiastically embraced by many educators just as it has been widely and enthusiastically embraced by people in the business world. The strategy, for example, has been endorsed by a number of well-respected scholars (Prybylo, 1998; Dyer, 2001; Manatt, 1997) who have considerable influence on practitioners.

Despite the fact that researchers such as Smith (2000) and Wilkerson, Manatt, Rogers and Maughan (2000) used the School Improvement Model developed by Manatt himself and that the research was conducted under Manatt's supervision, these studies, in particular, are frequently cited as the rationale for implementing this process in schools. For this reason and because of the overall limited research in this area, further research is necessary in order to determine the effectiveness of the 360° feedback process in education.

Professional Growth

In this section, I will discuss adult learning as it pertains to teacher growth and professional development. This section will be divided into five subsections: (a) Adult learning; (b) Mezirow's theory of transformative learning; (c) the use of feedback and reflection in adult learning; (d) critically reflective teaching; and, (e) organizational learning. Instructional improvement takes place when teachers improve their decision

making about students, learning content, and teaching. The process of improving teacher

decision making is "largely a process of adult learning" (Glickman, Gordon & Ross-

Gordon, 1998, p.51). It follows, therefore, that research and theory on adult learning is an

important component of the knowledge base for teacher supervision and evaluation and

is, therefore, highly relevant to this dissertation.

Adult Learning

What is learning? Behaviorists define learning as "a change in behavior"

(Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p.265). Cognitivists, i.e., researchers working from the

perspective of cognitive psychology, focus on "internal mental processes" rather than on

external behaviors (Merriam and Caffarella, p.265). Others who approach learning from a

humanistic perspective believe that learning involves human nature, human potential,

human emotions and affect, that learning is a function of motivation and involves choice

and responsibility.

Researchers approaching learning from a constructivist perspective posit that

learners construct their own knowledge from their experiences. Much of adult learning

theory is grounded in humanistic assumptions and constructivism (Merriam & Caffarella,

1999). Merriam and Caffarella maintained that "teaching and learning, especially for

adults, is a process of negotiation, involving the construction and exchange of personally

relevant and viable meanings" (p.262). This meshes with Mezirow's (Mezirow &

Associates, 2000) definition of learning as "the process of using a prior interpretation to

construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience as a guide to

future action" (p.5).

However learning is defined, there is considerable literature suggesting that adults learn in ways that are different from those of children (Knowles, 1970). Andragogy was defined by Knowles as "the art and science of helping adults learn" (p.38). Knowles' theory of andragogy is still accepted as a broad guide to thinking about adult learning (Glickman et al, 1998). Knowles proposed five basic assumptions of adult learning: (a) Adults have a psychological need to be self-directing; (b) adults bring an expansive reservoir of experience that can and should be tapped in the learning situation; (c) adults' readiness to learn is influenced by a need to solve real-life problems often related to adult development tasks; (d) adults are performance centered in their orientation to learning– wanting to make immediate application of knowledge; and (e) adult learning is primarily intrinsically motivated (Knowles, 1970).

The concept of self-directedness is a well-debated aspect of andragogy. Self-direction includes self-teaching and personal autonomy. The role of the adult learner's experience is also an important focus area. Arnau (2001) maintained that, in comparison to children, adults may have more to contribute to the learning opportunity and more experiences upon which to draw. After all, adults have formed "habits and patterns of thought" (Knowles, 1970, p.44) which can both "help and hinder the learning process" (Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 1998, p.151). A number of other scholars support the idea that experience creates biases that can greatly impact new learning (Kolb, 1984; Mezirow, 1981). Argyris spoke about the difficulties and importance of overcoming the natural tendency to resist new learning that challenges existing mental schema resulting from prior experience. Daloz (1988) pointed out that there are many reasons for adults to

refuse to grow and "sometimes it is just plain simpler to stay right where they are, or at least appear that way" (p.7).

Adults tend to be more motivated toward learning that helps them solve problems in their lives or results in internal pay offs. The internal needs satisfaction appears to be a more potent motivator than external payoffs such as salary increases. Wlodkowski (1971) argued that adult motivation has four factors: success, volition, value and enjoyment. This was reinforced by Knowles, Holton & Swanson (1998) who stated that the learning that adults value the most is that which has personal value to them, therefore, "knowing why they need to learn something is the key to giving adults a sense of volition about their learning" (p. 149).

Habermas (1971) proposed three domains of knowledge that suggest yet another means of classifying theories of learning: a) technical knowledge, b) practical knowledge, and c) emancipatory knowledge. Emancipatory knowledge is gained through critical self-reflection and can also be seen as a component of the constructivist paradigm (Cranton, 1994). Mezirow's theory of transformative learning is primarily concerned with emancipatory knowledge. Mezirow (1991) described emancipatory knowledge as that "gained through critical self-reflection, as distinct from the knowledge gained from our 'technical' interest in the objective world or our 'practical' interest in social relationships" (Cranton, 1994, p.87). Transformative learning is defined "as the development of revised assumptions, premises, ways of interpreting experience or perspectives on the world by means of critical self-reflection" (Cranton, 1994, xii-preface).

Mezirow's Theory of Transformative Learning

Mezirow (1990) is credited with providing the most comprehensive structure of perspective transformation in adult education. Adults establish "meaning perspectives" or their overall worldview by filtering life experiences and sense impressions through their frame of reference. This "frame of reference" consists of two aspects: 'habits of mind' and 'point of view' (Mezirow, 1991). Habits of mind are the broad generalized, taken-for-granted assumptions and beliefs individuals possess. Point of view includes the specific attitudes, beliefs, judgments, and criteria for evaluating which create meaning schema. As people hear information and encounter new experiences, they "process these ideas and impressions through [their] frame of reference and construct meaning perspectives" (Payette, 2004, par. 9). Transformation occurs when people establish new frames of reference, elaborate on existing frames of reference, transform habits of mind, or transform their point of view. This transformation results in perspective changes.

Central to transformative learning is the claim that "because we are all trapped by our own meaning perspectives [i.e. frames of reference generated by life experiences], we can never make interpretations of our experience free of bias" (Mezirow, 1990, p.10). Transformative learning seeks to free the individual from "the chains of bias" (Pohland & Bova, 2000, p.139) through the process of "perspective transformation," or " the process of becoming critically aware of how and why our assumptions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about the world" (Mezirow, 1991, p.167)

Kegan (1994) described transformational learning as a 'leading out' from an established "habit of mind" (p.232). Kegan maintained that genuinely transformational learning is, always to some extent, an epistemological change rather than "merely a

change in behavioral repertoire or an increase in the quantity or fund of knowledge"

(p.48). This was supported by Daloz (2000) who maintained that "what shifts in the

transformative process is our very epistemology—the way in which we know and make

meaning" (p.104).

Mezirow (Mezirow & Associates, 2000) emphasized the importance of rational

thought and reflection in the transformative learning process. He outlined several

components that make up this recursive process: (a) The occurrence of a triggering event;

(b) critical reflection; (c) engagement in reflective discourse; and (d) action on the new

perspective.

Transformative learning is said to most often follow some kind of a "disorienting

dilemma" (Mezirow, 1991, p.168), which can often be a personal crisis. Feedback can

also act as a trigger event for the questioning of assumptions (Cranton, 1994). Good

critical questioning creates a sense of disequilibrium which can act as a trigger event for

transformative learning. Next, people engage in critical reflection and reevaluate the

assumptions that they have made about themselves and their world. This happens when

people "realize something is not consistent with what (they) hold to be true" (Taylor,

1998, p.9). Reflections on their meaning perspectives or their overarching structure of

assumptions can result in a perspective transformation or change in worldview (Mezirow,

2000; Baumgarten, 2001).

The use of Feedback and Reflection in Adult Learning

Mezirow distinguished among three kinds of reflection—content reflection,

process reflection and premise reflection. In content reflection, individuals may reflect on

the content or description of a problem. In process reflection, individuals are involved in thinking about the strategies used to solve the problem rather than the content of the problem itself. Cranton (1996) described this as a rational and orderly kind of reflection that does not incorporate intuition. In premise reflection, the individual questions the relevance of the problem itself—the assumptions, beliefs, or values underlying the problem are questioned. This process is distinct from problem solving and can lead to transformative learning. Cranton (1996) noted that if the process of reflection leads to an awareness of an invalid, undeveloped, or distorted meaning scheme or perspective; if that scheme or perspective is then revised; and if the individual acts on the revised belief, the development has been transformative.

Combined reflection and action, called praxis by Freire (cited in Glickman et al., 1998, p.55) enables the adult learner to become aware of assumptions guiding his or her own life and to act on this knowledge. Such a theory suggests, that "reflective and critical thinking must be encouraged as an important part of teacher learning as well as instructional improvement efforts" (Glickman et al., 1998, p.55).

The third type of reflection involves people engaging in "reflective discourse" (Mezirow & Associates, 2000, p. 11). In short, they talk about their new perspective to obtain consensual validation. This is followed by action on the new perspective. In other words, not only seeing, but living the new perspective is necessary (Mezirow & Associates, p. 17, emphasis in original).

A mindful transformative learning experience requires that the learner make "an informed and reflective decision to act on his or her reflective insight" (Mezirow, 2000, p. 24). Taking action on reflective insights often involves overcoming situational,

emotional, and informational constructs. Challenging one's cherished beliefs often invokes a threatening emotional experience (Mezirow, 1990). Belenky and Stanton (2000) maintained that most adults simply have not developed their capacities for articulating and criticizing the underlying assumptions of their own thinking, nor do they analyze the thinking of others in these ways. Furthermore, many have never had experience with the kinds of reflective discourse that Mezirow prescribes. In other words, adults can be particularly tenacious in holding on to their beliefs (Brookfield, 1990).

Mezirow has been criticized for ignoring the affective, emotional and social content aspects of the learning process (Clark and Wilson, 1991, Lucas, 1994; Taylor, 1994 cited in Baumgartner, 2001, p.17). However, in his most recent work, Mezirow (Mezirow & Associates, 2000) acknowledged that learning occurs in the "real world of institutional, interpersonal, and historical settings (and) must be understood in the content of cultural orientations embodied in our frames of reference" (p. 24). In addition, Mezirow acknowledged that social interaction is important in the learning relationship.

The importance of relationships in the transformational learning process was supported by Taylor (2000). Taylor reviewed twenty-three studies that used Mezirow's model and focused on fostering transformational learning in the classroom. She found support for many of Mezirow's ideal condition for transformational learning, including the need for "a safe, open, and trusting environment that allows for participation, collaboration, exploration, critical reflection, and feedback" (Taylor, 2000, p.154). The learner must, in some way, be ready to question assumptions. However in addition, she found that certain aspects of the process, such as working through feelings, seem to be more significant to change than other aspects and she reported that "without the

expression and recognition of feelings participants will not... begin critical reflection" (p. 291). Emotions are vital to thought and to learning. The body, emotions, brains, and mind form an integrated system (Damasio, 1994), and emotions are enmeshed in neural networks involving reason.

Critical thinking often becomes a cognitive process whereas critical reflection is both a cognitive and affective exercise. In other words, transformational learning is a complex process involving thoughts and feelings. Mezirow (2000) emphasized that effective transformative learning requires emotional maturity (awareness, empathy, and control), or what Goleman (1998) called "emotional intelligence," in addition to "knowing and managing one's emotions, motivating oneself, recognizing emotions in others and handling relationships—as well as clear thinking" (p.11).

Argyris (1991) posited that many professionals have extremely 'brittle' personalities. When suddenly faced with a situation they cannot immediately handle, they tend to fall apart. Argyris attributes this brittleness to a very common fear of failure. In studies he conducted with more than 6,000 people, he determined that the defensive reasoning individuals use to place the blame for failure outside of themselves is universal (Argyris, cited in Airasian & Gullickson, 1997, p.285). It follows that transformative learning has been seen as a painful process (Mezirow, 1991). As noted by Brookfield (cited in Cranton, 1994) resistance to learning can be a consequence of "anxiety or fear of change" (p.7). This was also supported by Senge (2001) who stated,

> We simply see the world to be a certain way and are not willing to consider the
> possibility that we are wrong. Change occurs when we really open ourselves to

the views of others to see things differently, to engage in real conversations, and to listen deeply to those who do not see the world in the way that we do.

Argyris (1982) and Schön (1987) wrote extensively about the difficulties, and importance of overcoming the natural tendency to resist new learning that challenges existing mental schema from prior experience. Argyris (1982, 1991) labeled learning as either "single-loop" or "double-loop" learning. Single-loop learning is learning that fits prior experiences and existing values and which enables the learner to respond in an automatic way. Double-loop learning is learning that does not fit the learner's prior experiences or schema. Generally, it requires learners to change their mental schema in a fundamental way.

Similarly, Schön (1987) spoke about "knowing-in action" and "reflection-in-action". Knowing-in-action is the somewhat automatic response based on our existing mental schemas that enable us to perform efficiently in daily actions. Reflection-in-action is the process of reflecting while performing to discover when existing schemas are no longer appropriate and changing those schemas when appropriate. Knowles, Holton & Swanson (1998) stated, "The most effective practitioners, and learners, are those who are good at reflection in action and double loop learning" (140). The result of this double-loop learning or reflection-in-action or learning how to change mental models can be "powerful improvement in individual and organizational learning, and perhaps performance" (p.141) and can lead to a transformational learning experience and growth.

Critically Reflective Teaching

Brookfield (1995) wrote extensively about critically reflective teaching. He noted that the critically reflective process happens when teachers "discover and examine their

assumptions by viewing their practice through four distinct, though interconnecting lenses" (p. xiii). These lenses are: (a) Autobiographical reflection; (b) our students' eyes; (c) our colleagues' perceptions and experiences; (d) literature. He observed that some of the teachers who are most resistant to the critically reflective process are "those who have built careers on a set of unquestioned assumptions about good practice" (Brookfield, 1995, p. xiv). He stated that teachers must embrace feedback in order to understand how their actions are perceived.

Acquiring new perspectives on our teaching practice and questioning assumptions that we "did not even realize we had" (Brookfield, 1995, p. 39) are always emotional experiences. Brookfield stressed that we have to make the environment as non-threatening as possible so that critical reflection will be encouraged. For many in education, critical reflection is tied to teacher evaluation and the words "accountability," "supervision" and "evaluation" are frightening. They imply "having one's feet held to the fire for failure" (McGrath, 2000, p.34). Many teachers have a tough time taking and giving criticism as we all have that very common fear of failure. McGrath stated that, "We have not accounted for what makes people tick and have left our supervision and evaluation systems totally lacking in human dynamics" (p.36).

All educators have assumptions, beliefs and values concerning their practice (Cranton, 1994) and in order for evaluation to be meaningful for teachers it needs to be "participatory and reflective" (Weiss & Weiss, 1998, p.4). We know that "adults respond primarily to positive reinforcement, that they want to be involved, that they prefer to operate in a collegial and collaborative environment and traditional teacher evaluation violates many of these new understandings" (McGreal, cited in Brandt, 1996, p.30).

Organizational Learning

Research pertaining to professional practice and learning in the organization provides further insights into adult learning and the theories that govern professional behavior. Argyris and Schön (1996) discussed professional practice in terms of theories of action. They stated that:

> When someone is asked how he would behave under certain circumstances, the answer he gives is usually his espoused theory of action for that situation. However, the theory that actually governs his actions is his theory-in-use which may or may not be compatible with his espoused theory (p.11).

Argyris and Schön suggested that the espoused theory/ theory-in use distinction also pertained to organization and that organizations have theories which they announce to the world and theories-in-use which may be inferred from directly observable behavior. These theories may provide some insight into understanding teachers' perceptions of the 360° feedback process as espoused in theory and experienced in practice in this school context.

Summary

This section discussed the literature on adult learning as it pertains to teacher growth and development. As previously noted, teaching is largely a decision-making process and the process of improving teacher decision-making may be accomplished by understanding the process of adult learning. Therefore, the research on adult learning offers an insight into teacher improvement.

The literature suggests that learning involves reflection and action followed by critical reflection and is a cognitive and affective exercise which is best fostered in a safe, trusting environment (Brookfield, 1995; Damasio, 1994; Taylor, 2000). Critical reflection can lead to changes in our worldview of transformational learning (Mezirow & Associates, 2000). In addition, there are times, as adults, when we are challenged to change our previous mental schema and to critically evaluate our underlying beliefs or assumptions. Such learning is called double-loop learning as distinct from single-loop learning which involves using our current assumptions or beliefs to resolve situations or solve problems (Argyris, 1982).

For teachers, reflecting on their teaching practice and questioning assumptions that they have are emotional experiences but necessary for adult learning to occur. The research indicates that the environment in which this reflection occurs needs to be as non-threatening as possible so that critical reflection and adult learning will be encouraged.

Chapter Summary

This literature review presented some of the seminal ideas in the literature in the areas of teacher evaluation, the 360° feedback process and teachers as adult learners that are relevant to this dissertation. The theories and studies outlined represent some of the classic theories and illustrative studies about each of the relevant topics to my study. In addition, the literature presented above informed my study about teachers' growth and development as educators throughout the research process. In general, the literature provides evidence that there is a growing body of knowledge pertaining to teacher evaluation and the relevancy of my study.

Furthermore, the literature suggests that very little research has been conducted in this specific area of 360° feedback and no studies appear to have been conducted in the area of teachers' perceptions of the 360° feedback process. Thus, an overview of the relevant literature appears to support the rationale for my study about teachers' perceptions of feedback from a 360° feedback process. While this chapter examined previous research that is of particular relevance to this study, the following chapter presents the methodology followed in this study to investigate teachers' experiences with, and perceptions of, feedback from a 360° feedback process.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this qualitative study was to discover teachers' perceptions of a 360° feedback process. The study focused on answering the following questions: (a) What sources and kinds of feedback do teachers find helpful? (b) How do teachers use feedback to improve instruction and student performance? (c) How do teachers deal with the emotional aspect of receiving critical feedback on their performance? (d) What are teachers' perceptions of 360° feedback? This chapter provides a detailed overview of the research design and methodology for the study conducted at an American school in Asia. Information is presented about (a) a preliminary study conducted on this topic and how that preliminary study influenced the dissertation study that is the focal point here, (b) the site and respondents of this study, (c) the procedures used to get access to the teachers who were studied, (d) the researcher's role in the study, (e) the data collection and analysis procedures that were used, and (f) the procedures that were used to insure trustworthiness.

Preliminary Study

The researcher conducted a preliminary study of the 360° feedback process during the 2002-2003 school year entitled: "Teachers Using Feedback From Students, Parents and Peers." This study focused on closely examining how teachers used feedback received through the 360° feedback process to improve their performance. The study, primarily, focused on a) the sorts of feedback teachers received from students, parents and peers; (b) the kind of feedback teachers found useful; and (c) how teachers used the feedback. The two guiding questions for this preliminary study were: (1) What kinds of

feedback did teachers find helpful? (2) How did teachers use feedback to help improve instruction and student performance?

For the preliminary study, ten teachers at the Far Eastern American School were interviewed. The purposeful sample represented teachers from all school divisions: lower school, middle school and upper school. Three teachers from lower school, three teachers from middle school and four teachers from upper school participated. These teachers were selected because they represented different grade levels, were not on probation or under the researcher's supervision. All teachers in the research study had participated in the 360° feedback process for two consecutive years. An interview of approximately one-hour duration was conducted with each teacher and artifacts supporting interviewees' responses were examined; in addition, classroom observations were conducted to verify data. The interviews were transcribed and responses organized according to categories representing major themes.

Findings of Preliminary Study

The findings of this preliminary study indicated that the quality of feedback from different constituents (parents, students and peers) varied considerably in terms of teachers' perceptions of its relevance and value. Feedback from students, for example, reflected student experiences with the teacher and provided concrete suggestions for improvements. Participant teachers that were studied indicated that the feedback from students was very valuable. This finding was consistent across the different levels (lower, middle, upper levels) within the school and across all teachers surveyed within each level

with the exception of an early childhood teacher who asserted that students at that age are unable to give worthwhile feedback on a teacher's performance.

The reaction to feedback from parents, on the other hand, varied greatly amongst the participant teachers. At the elementary/lower school level, all three teachers perceived that they got relevant feedback, that they appreciated the feedback received, and that they made changes in their teaching behaviors as a result of the feedback. At the middle school level, two teachers indicated that the parental feedback was useful and one teacher reported receiving no useful feedback from parents. At the high school/upper school level, all four teachers felt that parents did not provide feedback that indicated knowledge or understanding of what went on in their children's classes.

The usefulness of the peer feedback proved to be an area where there was considerable agreement among teachers. All ten teachers indicated that they didn't believe that their peers had sufficient knowledge of what went on in the classroom to provide valuable, substantiated feedback. Some comments pertaining to an individual teacher's ability to work as a productive team member were accepted and resulted in teachers examining their behaviors as a team member but, in general, teachers found peer feedback to be a less than useful exercise.

Although nine out of ten teachers identified aspects of the 360° feedback process that were useful, not all teachers agreed that getting feedback from students, parents and peers was a useful method of evaluating their performance and helping them grow professionally. In fact, one teacher stated that, after reading her responses, she "put them back in the envelopes, put the envelopes in a drawer and they are still there." She discounted all feedback as irrelevant and of no value whatsoever. Among the teachers

interviewed, this reaction was an exception. All other teachers found feedback from one or more constituencies useful and all were able to indicate changes they had made in their teaching behaviors as a result of the feedback. Review of artifacts, such as the summary feedback forms and goals setting documents, by researcher confirmed these assertions.

Limitations of Preliminary Study

After reviewing the findings from the preliminary study, I realized that there were many questions left unanswered. Teachers' motivation for making changes in their teaching behaviors was unclear. Did teachers, for instance, change behaviors because of reflection on the data in light of best practices? Or did they make changes so that they wouldn't receive the same feedback the following year? In other words, were the changes attempts to simply fix the problem and did the process simply produce what Argyris (1991) called single-loop learning [1] or did the feedback encourage deeper reflection about teaching practices and teacher beliefs and values? Again, to use Argyris's term, did double-loop leaning occurring?

To state this matter another way, were the changes made merely as a positive public relations effort or did they result from thinking that probed more deeply and resulted in significant critical reflection on the part of the teacher? My opinion is that most changes were of the superficial sort and that the process produced merely single loop, not double loop learning. But this is only an opinion because I did not probe

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[1] When change is made, it can be an attempt to fix an identified problem or as Argyris (1991) terms it single loop learning. On the other hand, a person can learn to reflect critically on their own behavior and determine changes that need to be made to improve performance. Argyris calls this critical reflective learning process double-loop learning and considers it a highly desirable state for individuals and organizations that want to continue learning.

adequately in these areas. The theory, in other words, only arose during my analysis of the data from the preliminary study and, hence, I did not ask the sort of questions that would have produced adequate data about this issue to make a reasonably definitive, databased judgment about the emergent question.

Another area not fully explored in the preliminary study was describing the process that teachers went through when processing the data. What feelings were experienced and how did teachers respond to those feeling? How did teachers respond to the measurement process? Did teachers' supervisors provide the support necessary for teachers to work through the feedback, take meaning from it, facilitate understanding of reactions and help teachers learn from the process? In other words, did the feedback process fit into the goal setting/improvement process? Again, this issue seemed much more salient after the data from the preliminary study had been collected and analyzed than it did when designing the preliminary study and the interview questions for that study.

Teacher's Perceptions of a 360° Feedback Process

This dissertation, consequently, looked at the 360°feedback process both in depth and from a broader perspective. I conducted extended interviews with a representative sample of teachers who were not involved in the preliminary study in order to get an in-depth view of their experiences with the 360° process. The following questions guided the inquiry throughout the study:

1. What sources and kinds of feedback do teachers find helpful?

2. How do teachers use feedback to improve instruction and student performance?

3. How do teachers deal with the emotional aspect of receiving critical feedback on their performance?

4. What are teachers' perceptions of the 360° feedback process?

In addition, this study provided an opportunity to compare the perceptions of the ten teachers in the preliminary study in areas where the data collected were adequate with the perceptions of another selection of teachers as well as an opportunity to explore the perceptions of the focus group members. The remainder of this section will focus on describing the study of "Teacher's Perceptions of a 360° Feedback Process."

Site and Respondents Selection

This qualitative study was conducted at an international school in East Asia that will be referred to in this study by the pseudonym the Far Eastern American School (FEAS). FEAS is a K-12 college preparatory school using an American curriculum. FEAS was established in 1949 to serve the expatriate community, in this city in which the school is located seeking an English-language education similar to the education provided in United States schools. Since the school opened, students with North American passports are prioritized for admission purposes. In addition to these students, registration is open to children holding any other foreign passport and a valid and current visa to reside in the country where the school is located. Children holding a host country passport are not eligible for admission.

Over 90% of the school's teachers and administrators were educated and certified in the United States, Australia, New Zealand or the British Isles. Seventy four percent of

the faculty hold advanced degrees and the school notes a steady increase in the number of faculty with either Ph. D. degrees or Master's degrees with over 40 credits.

Parents of FEAS students work in multinational corporations, diplomatic and trade missions, academia or family businesses. The group included engineers, doctors, and other professionals. Parents are well educated and hold high expectations for their children. FEAS can be readily compared to independent/private schools or suburban schools in the United States as parents' socio-economic status and educational expectations most closely match those of parents of students in those schools. In addition, for the purposes of standardized tests, students at FEAS are normed against independent and suburban schools in the United States, and the majority of students ultimately proceed to universities in the United States.

As this is a school in Asia, and parents, although primarily North American passports holders, are primarily of Asian descent, it follows that the Confucian attitude to education prevails in this institution. A traditional saying attributed to Confucius states that "those who work with their heads will rule, while those who work with their hands will serve" (Merson, 1990, p.10). Therefore, education is considered a crucial strategy for social and economic advancement in life. At FEAS, this attitude is observed in a high expectation for exemplary curriculum and instruction and high academic achievement among members of the parent community. This academic achievement is most often associated with high test scores. In this environment, accountability for supervision and evaluation of teachers is demanded.

To this end, FEAS continuously strives to provide a quality supervision and evaluation process based on contemporary research-based evaluation practices. For the

past seven years, FEAS has worked closely with an acknowledged expert in supervision

and evaluation, Dr. Richard Manatt, Director of the School Improvement Model project

at Iowa State University, in developing the 360° feedback process at FEAS. The FEAS

Professional Growth & Evaluation Handbook outlines the multiple feedback sources that

are being used at FEAS. These include:

a) Facilitator/evaluators interaction and discussion (based on

formal/informal classroom observations with written feedback)

b) Self-evaluation (teachers' self-evaluation based on 15 teaching standards)

c) Student achievement data from internal and external assessments (based

on standardized tests, end- of-unit assessments, written assessments)

d) Feedback from colleagues (survey responses)

e) Feedback from students (survey responses)

f) Feedback from parents (survey responses)

(FEAS Professional Growth & Evaluation Handbook, 2001, p.1)

The FEAS Professional Growth and Evaluation System, based on the concept of

multiple sources of input, is designed to give the time, resources and structures necessary

to ensure that all teachers learn and grow. The foundation of the evaluation system is

fifteen teaching standards that reflect research on teaching and learning and describe

observable teacher behaviors that influence student achievement. This is a supplement to

the 360° feedback process as defined by Manatt and other experts in the field. These

standards are the result of a synthesis of several sets of professional teaching standards

developed by Charlotte Danielson (1996) and summarized in appendix A. In summary,

FEAS has provided a rich environment in which to study an evaluation process such as the 360° feedback process.

The sample studied was a purposeful sample of teachers at the school who had participated in the 360° feedback process. Purposeful sampling focuses on "selecting information-rich cases whose study will illuminate the questions under study" (Patton, 1990, p.230). The pool of potential respondents was large as all 220 FEAS teachers participated in the 360° feedback process during the school year 2001-2002, 2002-2003, 2003-2004 and again in the 2004-2005 school year. I conducted interviews with ten teachers representing two divisions of the school: Middle School and Upper School. Since teachers' training and experience in middle school and upper school faculties are similar in that they are subject centered and deal with students at a higher developmental level than elementary school students, the researcher limited the sample to these two divisions. In addition, limiting the sample to these two divisions ensured that respondents were not under the researcher's supervision. The supervision issue had not been a problem in the preliminary study because I had not been the elementary school principal when the preliminary study was conducted.

This purposeful sample was selected based on the technique that Patton (1990) calls "criterion sampling" (p.176). He states that the logic and purpose of criterion sampling is to "review and study all cases that meet some predetermined criterion of importance" (p. 176). This purposeful sample group was selected based on the following criteria:

> (a) Teachers in the middle school or upper school as they were not under my supervision,

(b) Teachers who experienced a western (United States, Australia, New

Zealand or British Isles) teacher training program as distinct from an

Asian approach to teacher education,

(c) Teachers who participated in the 360° feedback process for two years

thereby ensuring familiarity with the process,

(d) Teachers who were not in the Professional Growth and Development

Committee as these individuals generally were active proponents of this

evaluation system, and

(e) Teachers who were not on probation or receiving intensive assistance due

to unsatisfactory performance.

Within this purposeful sample of 120 teachers, ten teachers were randomly selected.

Focusing on ten participants allowed the researcher sufficient time to listen, understand,

and gain insight into their individual experiences.

For the purposes of triangulation, I conducted a focus group discussion with

another group of representative teachers from these two school divisions who were not

part of the original sample. Participation in this focus group was open to teachers from all

subject areas in middle school and upper school who met the above criteria, thus

encouraging diverse experiences and opinions to be represented. All 67 teachers who met

the stated criteria were invited to attend the focus group, and 11 attended. These teachers

came from different grade levels, taught different subject matter, and offered possibilities

for a more diverse range of experiences with the evaluation process.

Data triangulation is a technique utilized by a researcher to enhance the credibility

of a study. Different strategies or procedures of data collection are used to establish or

confirm whether the data collected with one strategy confirms data collected with another strategy. If the results of multiple sources of data agree, triangulation of data has occurred. Credibility of research findings is established. In this study, the focus group respondents were invited to make sense of the data collected from interviewees and to share their ideas. As there is the possibility that the data ensuing from this research may occasionally converge but may also prove "inconsistent and even contradictory" (Mathison, 1988, p.6), I attempted to make sense of what I found by looking for "plausible explanations about the phenomena being studied" (Mathison, 1988, p.6).

Access

In order to gain access to the ten interviewees and also the focus group teachers, I needed permission from the school's "gatekeepers." Gatekeepers are described as "the person or persons who must give their consent before you may enter a research setting, and with whom you must negotiate the conditions of success" (Glesne 1999, p. 39). The gatekeeper at FEAS is the Superintendent. I received permission in writing from the Superintendent to conduct research at FEAS. The divisional principals could also be considered gatekeepers of their own divisions and, therefore, permission was elicited from principals (a) to interview teachers and focus group participants, and (b) to analyze artifacts (summary feedback and goal-setting documents) in relation to teachers' responses.

After my proposal was approved by my dissertation committee and I was granted permission to conduct the study by the Institutional Review Board), I met individually with all potential respondents who had been randomly selected from the pool of possible respondents who met the established criteria. During these one-on-one meetings, I

explained my work and asked each person to be part of the study. Once these individuals

agreed to be part of the study, they each signed an informed consent form (see Appendix

B). This informed consent form outlined the conditions for the participants in the study. It

is noteworthy that two teachers refused to participate in this study. When this happened, I

randomly selected two other participants who received the same instructions and

accepted the same informed consent form as the other participants in the study.

Researcher's Role

I played a number of different roles in this study: interviewer, participant observer

and learner. No matter what role was being played, I endeavored to follow Wolcott's

(1990) advice to "satisfy the implicit challenge of validity" (p. 127), such as: talk little,

listen a lot; record accurately; begin writing early; let readers "see" for themselves; report

fully; be candid; seek feedback; try to achieve balance and write accurately. In addition,

during the course of interviews and the focus group discussions, I was "ever conscious of

[my] verbal and nonverbal behavior" (Glesne, p. 41) in order to ensure that I

authentically communicated to others "how a researcher acts" (p.41).

As an interviewer, I tried to access the perceptions and perspectives of the

interviewees using an interview guide approach. This interview guide was consistently

used with all participants. An interview guide is a list of the questions or issues that are

going to be explored in the course of an interview (Patton, 1990). As an interviewer, I

focused on building credibility. In all cases, I had built up a rapport and comfort level

with the teachers involved during three years working at FEAS and I continued to do this

as the research unfolded.

In the role of participant observer, my observer activities were subordinate to activities associated with being an active participant within the organization. Adler and Adler, as cited in Merriam (1998), would characterize the role I played as an "active membership role." In this type of role, researchers are "involved in the setting' central activities, assuming responsibilities that advance the group, but without fully committing themselves to members' values and goals" (p.101). This role involved examining written feedback surveys from parents, students and peers in addition to the goal setting documents of teachers in the study. In addition, I participated in the Professional Growth and Development Committee which allowed collaborative sense-making about the 360° feedback process.

In all roles, I was aware of the danger of subjectivity. Peshkin (1988) argued that "subjectivity is inevitable" (p. 10) in research, it is "like a garment that cannot be removed" (p.17) and that researchers should acknowledge this and actively "seek out" their subjectivity from the very beginning of the research. In any research, there is a person doing the research, not what Glesne (1999) termed a "disembodied passive voice" (p. 111). She maintained that a full consciousness of biases and subjectivity assists the researcher in producing trustworthy data in her statement as "continual alertness to your own biases, your own subjectivity ... assists in producing more trustworthy interpretations" (Glesne, 1999, p. 151). I aimed for what Wolcott (1990) called a "disciplined subjectivity" (p.133).

Subjectivity may actually have been an asset in this research. Lee (cited in Patton, 2001) stated:

If I want to be part of the solution rather than part of the problem, I better be sure

that I know what the experience of different stakeholders really is, not constrained

by the limited questions I may think to ask, or guided too narrowly by work done

in the past"

(p. 337).

My insider knowledge acted as a tool to sensitize me to key issues and things to look for.

Finally, I played the role of "researcher as learner." I did not approach my

interviewees as an expert in the area but rather as a "curious student who comes to learn

from and with the research participants" (Glesne, 1999, p.41). In other words, I did not

approach the participants as an authority on the topic at hand, but as a learner interested

in teachers' use of feedback and views on the 360° feedback process.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

Interview Procedures

As noted above, interviewing was the primary data collection method. I used an

interview guide (See Appendix C) which allowed me "to pursue the same basic lines of

inquiry" (Patton, 2001, p.343) with each person interviewed. With the interview guide

approach, the interviewer outlines, in advance, topics to be covered but he/she is open to

asking the questions in different ways and in a different order. It also allows the

interviewer to develop "new questions to follow unexpected leads that arise" (Glesne,

1999, p.93), in the course of interviewing and to probe more deeply if new lines of

inquiry arise.

Using the interview guide provided a number of advantages (Patton, 1990) for this study: (a) I was able to ensure that I used the time available effectively; (b) interviewing a number of people was rendered more systematic by delimiting the issues to be explored; and (c) the interview guide kept the interaction focused and at the same time allowed the interviewee's perspectives and experiences to emerge. The interview guide approach was more appropriate, in this study, than the informal conversational interview, which would not have guaranteed that the same information was collected from each interviewee. Similarly, the interview guide was more appropriate than the structured open-interview interview or closed fixed response interview approaches, which would have allowed little flexibility in relating the interview to the particular interviewee's experiences.

I constructed the guide by writing an outline of questions before the first interview. As Patton (1990) suggested, I planned for one round of interviews using the interview guide, but I left the option open for a second round if new ideas emerged from the data. In two cases, I conducted short follow up interviews to clarify responses left unclear during the first round.

All interviews were audio taped and transcribed. I interviewed teachers in their classrooms, my office or off campus depending on their preferences. When organizing the interview schedule, I followed Glesne's advice about making interviews "convenient, available and appropriate"(Glesne, 1999, p.78) to schedule the interviews with the teachers.

In this study, I drew upon insights gleaned from my own 360° feedback, both as a teacher, a coordinator and a principal at this school. I had received feedback on my

performance as a teacher, the Language Arts/ESL Coordinator and as the lower school principal. In these positions, I facilitated teachers' reflections on their feedback and their subsequent goal setting. In addition, I received feedback from my supervisor, faculty, the parent body and students on my performance. In summary, my experience with other teachers as well as my role as the recipient of feedback from students, parents and peers and direct supervisor had provided me with experience in the 360° feedback process from many different perspectives. Although these experiences had provided some insight into the process, I approached this study from neither a critical nor an advocacy stance but more from the perspective of a researcher who wants to learn.

During the preliminary study, I tried to develop a relationship of trust, respect, and reciprocity with the interviewees. Interviewees reported a sense of enjoyment at discussing their experiences with the 360° feedback process and thanked me for interviewing them. Two interviewees remarked that they never expected to tell me so much. I endeavored to continue the cultivation of this level of openness and reciprocity with the interviewees in the new study. The first respondent in this study noted that she hadn't expected to share so much, that this was not a perfunctionary interview but rather a deep analysis of the subject. She also said that she "didn't think you [the researcher] would elicit from me as much truth as you have elicited from me" indicating a level of comfort where she could tell the truth and share the details of her experience.

Data Analysis Methods

Content analysis procedures were used to analyze the data from both the interviews with the ten research participants and the focus group discussion. *Content analysis* is a term used to refer to "any qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort

that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings" (Patton, 2001, p.453). To accomplish this, I identified, coded and categorized the primary patterns of data (Patton, 1990, p.381) and attempted to uncover possible themes. Both Glesne (1999) and Patton recommended establishing early coding scheme as "without classification there is chaos and confusion" (Patton, 2000, p. 463). Thus, although many categories emerged from the data, some a-priori categories were employed initially to sort the data. These a-priori categories were based on the initial questions. However, Glesne and Patton cautioned that these schemes will most likely be altered and refined as data is collected and, indeed, changes were made to these earlier coding systems as data was collected. Coding of data was an on-going process.

Each major code represented a concept or a central idea as codes "are efficient data-labeling and data-retrieval devices" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.65). Some of the major codes that I used, at least initially to analyze the interview data that I had collected were: [2]positive feedback from parents (fd-pp), [3]negative feedback from parents (fd-pn), positive feedback from colleagues (fd-cp), negative feedback from colleagues (fd-cn), positive feedback from students (fd-sp), negative feedback from students (fd-sn) teachers' perceptions of positive feedback (t-p), teachers' perceptions of negative feedback (t-n), actions taken due to feedback (act), reflection (rft), learning –single loop[4] (sl), double (dl), (cp) change in perspective, teacher reactions to feedback (subcategories: reactions to feedback from parents, reactions to feedback from peers and reactions to feedback from students), overall view of 360° feedback system (View). These codes came, primarily, from the interview questions.

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[2] Complimentary commentary on performance
[3] Criticisms of performance

As noted in the above discussion of triangulation procedures, document analysis data were used to confirm evidence arising from individual interviews and the focus group discussion. Findings from the interviews were used to guide the documents and artifacts reviewed.

In addition to the content analysis of individual interviews, I conducted a cross-case analysis. A cross-case analysis involves grouping together answers from different people to common questions. The common questions, in this case, were the research questions. To facilitate cross-case analysis, I used the same categories and sub-categories across cases to the extent possible.

The analyzed data were organized into a matrix. Miles and Huberman (1994) have provided a rich source of ideas and illustrations of how to use matrices in qualitative analysis. I used a matrix, for example, to represent how teachers used feedback from the different constituents as well as a quote matrix where teachers' perceptions or reactions are portrayed using the most appropriate and applicable quote from that person. The matrix used depended on the research question and contained a mixture of direct quotes and summary phrases. Matrices are recommended by Patton (1990) as an effective method for organizing and visually displaying data. These matrices were used both in data analysis and as a data display tool. Frequent checks for accuracy in representation increased the validity and trustworthiness of the research.

In looking for methods of displaying data as a precursor to generating a discussion about that data in a focus group, I looked for a method of data display that would not involve extensive reading for busy teachers. Willis (2001), noted that as educational researchers get in touch with "the methodologies of the humanities as well as other social sciences,

we are all likely to find ourselves considering a wide range of methods for collecting new forms of data as well as new ways of representing our interpretations of that data" (para. 7). This point was reiterated by Eisner (1997) when he commented that:

> The assumption that the languages of social science—propositional language and number—are the exclusive agents of meaning is becoming increasingly problematic, and as a result, we are exploring the potential of other forms of representation for illuminating the educational worlds we wish to understand" (p. 4).

One such method proposed by Donmoyer and Yennie-Donmoyer (1996) is Reader's Theater as a mode of qualitative research data display. I use the term Reader's Theater as it was defined by Donmoyer and Yennie-Donmoyer (1996) as "...a staged presentation of a piece of text or selected pieces of different texts that are thematically linked" (p.407). In this context, Reader's Theater is used as a presentational rather than a representational art form. Donmoyer and Yennie-Donmoyer (1996) referred to Kleinau and McHughes (1980) when explaining these two terms. They explained that representational art forms attempt to conjure up the illusion of reality on stage whereas in presentational art forms, the audience is invited "to make meaning from what is suggested rather than from what is literally shown" (Donmoyer and Yennie-Donmoyer, 1996, p.406).

I presented a Reader's Theater performance of the data from the ten teachers followed by a focus group discussion on the data in order to assess generalizability within my own organization. The Reader's Theater performance provided a mechanism to quickly display the data. The script (see Appendix D) reflected the themes from the

content analysis of the 10 interviews including some direct quotes, some composite quotes and some exposition by the narrator (the researcher). The use of direct quotes involved getting permission from those particular individuals so as to ensure that breaches of confidentiality did not occur. The script was shared with all interviewees prior to finalization and all interviewees gave permission for its use.

Teachers performing in the theatrical production were teachers other than the ten teachers who were interviewed. These teachers were lower school teachers who were approached directly by the researcher for the purposes of presentation.

Most teachers, with busy schedules, couldn't be expected to take the time to read extensive data carefully. However, they quickly got engaged in a brief theatrical production. The Reader's Theater production also provided a stimulus for discussion on the 360° feedback process at FEAS. Specific questions for discussion purposes were outlined at the beginning: What did you find true? What fits with your experience? What doesn't fit with your experience? What are you now thinking about that you didn't think about before? The discussion was captured on video and transcribed for the purposes of analysis.

Procedures Used to Insure Trustworthiness

Multiple sources of data were used for triangulation purposes. Documents and artifacts included teacher 360° feedback surveys from students, parents and peers and goal-setting documents. These helped to "contribute to credibility" (Glesne, 1999, p. 152). I was fortunate that the teachers interviewed allowed access to the summary feedback forms they received during the last two years. These summary feedback forms provided insight into those areas that were perceived as strengths and areas in need of

improvement. Comparisons of these areas for improvement to documented yearly goals, professional development proposals, and curriculum plans were used by the researcher to confirm that goal setting and teacher generated improvement plans had been based on 360° feedback.

As a member of the 360° Professional Growth and Development Committee, I also participated in the review of yearly faculty surveys about evaluations procedures and implementation. These discussions provided me with an even broader understanding of the 360° feedback process form teacher and administrator perspectives over time.

In order to gauge the generalizability (or, in traditional research language, the internal validity) of findings gathered from the sample to the FEAS teaching body, I engaged in a focus group interview with teachers from middle school and upper school. A focus group is described as "an interview with a small group of people on a specific topic" (Patton, 1990, p.335). In the focus group interview setting, the participants are asked to reflect on the questions asked by the interviewer; they get to hear each others' responses and to make additional comments. The focus group participants included middle and upper school teachers who were not participants in the initial interviews. This focus group allowed the researcher to "get high-quality data in a social context where people can consider their own views in the context of the views of others" (Patton, 1990, p. 335). Focus groups interviews, when conducted carefully and used appropriately promise to provide rich qualitative evaluation information (Krueger, 1988; Morgan, 1988). Using the technique of triangulation and the comparison of data [findings] from various strategies outlined above, contributed to the credibility research findings.

Summary

This chapter provided a detailed overview of the research design and methodology that guided my study. I presented information about the international school site that I chose to conduct the mini-study and this study and the ten teachers who participated in the study. In addition, I discussed the procedures that I used to obtain access from the school's Superintendent and my subsequent role in the study as interviewer, participant observer and researcher as learner. I also reviewed the interviewing process as the principle data collection method employed in the study. Moreover, I discussed the procedures that were used to ensure trustworthiness: the focus group discussion and the review of the documents. While this chapter detailed the methodology that guided my study, the following chapter presents the results of the procedures that were outlined in this chapter.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY OF DATA AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Chapter four presents a summary and analysis of the study's findings. The chapter begins with a description of the 360° feedback process as implemented at Far Eastern American School (FEAS). This is followed by a description of the participants' background, professional information, and their experience with supervision and evaluation prior to experiencing the 360° feedback process. Finally, interviewees' responses to each of the research questions will be summarized followed by a presentation of the data from the focus group established to assess the generalizability of the initial interview findings across the school setting.

The 360° Feedback Process as Implemented at FEAS

In 1999, the Far Eastern American School held an Educational Summit. The purpose of this gathering of school stakeholders was to shape a vision for the school and to articulate a strategic plan which would take the school forward into the next six years. Seventy five people attended, including parents, teachers, students and administrators.

One of the issues discussed was teachers' professional growth and development. In response to a desire expressed by faculty for more meaningful professional growth and a desire from parents to offer feedback to teachers, the concept of a multiple feedback process was developed. Following the summit, the FEAS administrators worked closely with an expert in supervision and evaluation, Dr. Richard Manatt, Director of the School Improvement Model project at Iowa State University, to develop and implement the 360° feedback process at FEAS.

At the time of this study, the 360° feedback process has been implemented at FEAS for five years. All teachers follow the 360° feedback process on a yearly basis. That process is outlined on page 24 of the FEAS Professional Growth and Evaluation Handbook. These procedures are reproduced in Appendix E. The process involves:

(a) feedback from colleagues;

(b) feedback from students;

(c) feedback from parents; and

(d) feedback from supervisor.

Each set of feedback has two components: Likert scale (1-5) responses to survey items and open-ended responses to open-ended questions. The feedback form includes the teacher's score for each question (or item on the survey) alongside a divisional mean score for each question. Therefore, each individual teacher is able to compare his/her scores on each question to the mean score for that question for all classroom teachers in that school division. In addition, anecdotal comments and answers to open-ended questions are summarized at the end of each form.

In addition to receiving feedback from the sources listed above, every three years, teachers conduct an extensive self-assessment based on the FEAS 15 Teaching Standards adapted by FEAS from Danielson's (1996) teaching framework (see Appendix A). Although student achievement data is also listed as a component of the 360° feedback process in the FEAS Professional Growth and Evaluation Handbook, this component of the process had not been implemented up to the point that the study was conducted. A conscious decision was made by administration to withhold the implementation of this

aspect of evaluation until the articulation of the curriculum was fully completed and further study of implementation details was undertaken.

Since feedback from a teacher's supervisor had been an established component of the FEAS evaluation system throughout the years prior to the time the 360°feedback process was implemented, teachers tend to focus on the feedback from students, parents and peers when they speak about the 360° feedback process. As noted, the feedback from students, parents and peers is solicited in the form of written surveys. Altogether, parents of 30 of each teacher's students are randomly selected and receive the parent survey for each middle school and upper school teacher; three classes of the teacher's students receive the student survey; and seven of the teacher's colleagues receive the peer-to-peer surveys (see Appendix F for sample surveys). The completed surveys are confidentially mailed to Iowa State University where the data are tabulated and the written comments typed and compiled on a feedback form. In May of each year, during the professional development day set aside for reflection on data, each teacher receives his/her packet of feedback forms. Copies of the feedback forms are also given to each teacher's supervisor (principal or assistant principal). During the course of the professional development day, teachers are expected to reflect on the data and to determine one area for goal setting for the following year. A goal-setting meeting is later established with a teacher's supervisor to review the data and to confirm a teacher's professional goal for the following year.

All ten teachers who were part of this study had experienced the FEAS 360° feedback process annually over, at least, a three year period. The following section provides a description of each of the ten respondents in the study.

Description of the Participants' Background

The ten teachers interviewed at the research site, FEAS, were teachers at the middle and upper school divisions. The teachers interviewed ranged in years of experience as classroom teachers from 14 years to 41 years. The average time spent as a classroom teacher was 23.5 years. All of these teachers had worked at other schools prior to coming to FEAS. In fact, two of these teachers had worked in their home countries and at another overseas school prior to coming to FEAS. Table 1 provides further background and professional information about the participants.

Table 1. Background and Professional Information

Teacher	Nationality	Division	Years of experience	Years at FEAS	Highest Degree	Years of 360° feedback process
Pete	Australian	Middle	15	7	Masters	4
Shay	Australian	Middle	18	6	Masters	4
Kara	American	Middle	25	15	Masters	4
Jay	American	Upper	28	17	Masters	4
Erin	American	Upper	16	3	Masters	3
Gabriel	American	Upper	41	5	Masters	4
Grey	American	Upper	22	4	Masters	3
Dana	Australian	Middle	14	7	Masters	4
Roxy	American	Middle	31	10	BA	4
Ria	American	Upper	25	15	BA	4

During the course of their teaching careers, these teachers had experienced various forms of supervision and evaluation processes. During the interviews, the ten

teachers were asked about their prior experience with supervision and evaluation. These responses will be discussed in the next section.

Interviewees' Prior Experience with Supervision and Evaluation

All teachers interviewed were veteran teachers with extensive teaching experience. However, their experience with supervision and evaluation varied considerably. Gabriel, the teacher with 41 years of experience, remarked that his experience with supervision and teacher evaluation was that "mostly... there is none." He noted that he "went through more years without having an administrator or someone come into my room to observe and assess" than years when an administrator visited his classroom during the school year. This experience was echoed by Roxy, who noted that, in her previous school system in the USA, there was very little supervision or evaluation. She remarked that "once you have been deemed a decent teacher, you go off on your own," and that her own growth as a teacher came from seeking professional development independently.

As Table 2 indicates, other teachers told a somewhat different story about their prior supervision and evaluation experience. Even among the five teachers who recalled experiencing supervision and evaluation, in fact, the description of its benefits differed greatly.

Table 2. Interviewees' Experience with Supervision and Evaluation

Pete	The only real program for supervision that I worked with was a system called Watching Others Work (WOW) and it was a system whereby younger teachers, and I was early in my career, paired off with an older teacher of their choice. And, you got together and talked about teaching and things in your own classroom that you wanted to improve. We worked on the idea of just one thing that you thought you could work on. And, you got some choice in it; you could pick who you wanted to work with—which was good. He visited my classroom and I did the same thing for him. And what he liked was that I was fresh out of college, just two years out, so you've got all those ideas that you bring from college. And, I would say that we did this in college, and we did that in college, and he listened to a couple of them and said that was just what he needed. So in that way, it was not so much of an evaluation process, I guess, as professional development on the job working with another teacher.
Shay	We had a system called peer appraisal. I have to say that is was not very successful.
Jay	The main focus of the supervision was ... the principal who would come in and observe two or three times throughout the year and they would have a certain assessment form that they would use. And, they would share that with me before the observation and then sit down and discuss it after the observation.
Grey	In my previous school district, it [supervision and evaluation] was all done by principals coming in to the classroom once or twice a semester. They would sit with an evaluation form, I think I still have some of these, and they would look at your lesson plan and your lesson and how you were implementing it in the classroom, what kind of strategies you were using, what techniques, your interactions with the students, your interpersonal skills and they would look at the classroom environment and you would get a write-up from that visitation and that was it—that was the extent of the supervision I had and that would happen, I think, two or three times a year.
Kara	I've had the usual pre-conference, observation, post-conference model. And then, I've had the principal drop-in for 15 minutes model and that makes me nervous because they may drop in at a bad moment.
Dana	I've had lots of different models. I've had peer coaching and the more traditional models where the administrator comes in and does the required assessment. I've also experienced drop-in visits as well and goal setting.
Erin	My history with evaluation is that at [school in the USA], we gave our own students teacher evaluations (written by us) to fill out and these were not shared with administration. There also were classroom visitations by our department chairs and they gave us feedback.

Jay, for example, remarked that, as a new teacher, clinical supervision helped him

to learn "new classroom techniques and classroom management skills." By contrast,

Grey, who also reported having experienced clinical supervision, noted that observations by his principal did not help him grow as a teacher. He commented that "you were just basically relieved when they came through, when everything went well and you weren't having a bad day." Grey also stated that "it [being observed] was more like putting on a show and hoping it goes well." However, he associated some significance to those principal visits. The "evaluations mattered, they were certainly something you would take to your next job, they carried weight so it wasn't as though they were useless." In addition, Grey spoke about the accountability aspect of the evaluations he had experienced. He remarked that as the principal's visits were unannounced "it kept you on your toes" and "you made sure that you were planned and that you had good relations with your students because you couldn't fake that; your classroom environment had to be good."

Kara, by contrast, appeared to be more comfortable with the predictability of the clinical supervision model she had experienced and extolled the virtue of predictability. As she proceeded to describe her experience with unannounced drop-in supervisor visits, she expressed the concern that the principal might "drop in at a bad moment." Although she noted that she had never received "worrying" feedback from her principal, being observed or evaluated by her principal was something she was uncomfortable with.

Working with peers was described by Pete and Erin as being beneficial in their growth as teachers. Pete, for example, clearly found the "Watching Others Work" peer feedback system very helpful in developing as a new teacher. He perceived this peer collaboration and coaching experience more as professional development than as supervision or evaluation. Erin also mentioned that, as a new teacher, he found working

with a fellow math teacher to be beneficial. This positive perception of peer coaching was not shared by Ria who described her participation in peer coaching as a "little shallow." Although training in peer coaching was provided to her and her fellow teachers, scheduling classroom visits was difficult and time consuming and she wasn't unhappy when it was discontinued. Similar sentiments were also expressed by Shay.

Soliciting input from students on teaching performance was discussed by two teachers. In Erin's case, providing teacher evaluations to students was part of the regular evaluation procedure in the school district in which Erin had worked prior to joining the FEAS staff. In Jay's case, however, the student feedback process had to be self-initiated:

> Throughout the years, I have always wanted to get input from the students, so over the years, no matter what system was used, there was always a questionnaire that I would give to the students at the end of the year asking about my teaching and, part of it was … checking boxes or assigning numbers but part of it was short response. I always found the numbers marginally interesting but the responses that they would make were most informative

Summary

From the responses discussed above, it is obvious that the ten teachers' prior experience with supervision and evaluation differed considerably, and that, even when the actual experiences appeared to be similar, the perceptions of the experience often varied. During the interviews, teachers were asked to comment on the sources and kinds of feedback they found helpful. They were also asked about the processing of this feedback, changes made as a result of feedback, how they dealt with the emotional aspect of receiving critical feedback on their performance, and their overall perceptions of the 360° feedback

process. In the next section which summarizes the interviewees' responses to the series of questions outlined in the interview guide, I will organize the questions into a number of overarching categories and summarize the responses to the questions falling within each category.

How the Feedback was Perceived

Although the 360° feedback process incorporates feedback from students, parents, peers, the teacher's supervisor and the teacher's self-assessment, the feedback sources discussed by teachers were students, parents and peers. There were variations in the teachers' interpretation and processing of the feedback, however, some consistent themes emerged from the interview data. Questions in this category explored which sources of feedback teachers found helpful or unhelpful, and how accurately they felt that the feedback reflected their performance.

Helpful Feedback

As the excerpts on in Table 3 indicate, the ten respondents were unanimous in stating that the feedback they found valuable was the feedback from the students. The student feedback is described as "an informed kind of feedback," "personal" and "empowering." Nine of the ten teachers also stated that the student feedback encouraged them to critically reflect on their teaching performance.

Table 3. Helpful Feedback

Ria	I always find student feedback helpful.
Dana	I found comments from students helpful especially positive comments about what I was doing well. I found that very empowering because it makes you think "great, that's what I was hoping to do and it's happened" or it might be some small detail that you didn't think was that important but students remembered and you think I must be careful to weave it into my class again. So, I did find that helpful.

Table 3 con't	
Erin	I would consider student feedback first and determine what I did based on student feedback. Even if some students had shared an observation with me after class, I might have thought that their observation was an aberration, but when the students got asked to sit down and make comments specifically and many of them said the same thing, then it got to me. That's really a reflection of asking students what they think, which is such a reasonable thing to do and something all teachers should do.
Shay	The only feedback I have even taken notice of is the student feedback.
Kara	I see some value in the student feedback.
Jay	About the only thing I find helpful is the student input. I've always found the students to be honest and forthright, and that's always been the case even before we started the 360 here, you know, I've always said, 'Look, don't write your name. Just tell me what you think. That is the only way it's going to help me.' And, you know, they're the ones who are there every single day. They're the ones who know my personality, my idiosyncrasies, my strengths, my weaknesses, and so forth and I really appreciate the comments that they make. And I think it is an informed kind of feedback because they are there all of the time.
Roxy	I value feedback from students, but...
Pete	I think the student surveying is very important.
Grey	Student feedback was the most valuable. What sticks with me are the comments that students make because those tend to be more personal. They come from a student so you feel they are addressing their needs, and so, if you see a pattern in that, then there is something that you could use to improve your teaching.
Gabriel	Feedback from students has caused me to change things that I have been doing for twenty years and I have seen positive outcomes. That is pretty powerful!

However, even among some of those who were positive about receiving feedback from students, the utility of eliciting general feedback from students in written form only once a year was questioned. Roxy, for example, noted that she had supplemented the FEAS 360 student feedback with additional surveys because the questions on the FEAS student surveys were too "generic." She was concerned that the survey questions did not allow her to identify and target all of important areas for improvement. She stated, for example, "If I am experimenting with some new teaching methods in my class, they [the

students] get asked such a generic question that I don't get the feedback on whether this new system is helpful or not?" Another example she cited involved the games they played to review for tests, she indicated that she wanted to ask, "Yes, you probably found them fun but are they actually helping with test review?" This level of information is not available to her through the once a year student survey in which questions are—to use Roxy's term—generic.

Erin made a similar point. He stated that although he greatly valued receiving feedback from his students, comments that were "a little vague and not specific" gave him little direction regarding student concerns and needs.

Others who valued student feedback made somewhat different points. Jay, for example, was a very positive advocate of student feedback, but he remarked that a teacher always has to put the feedback from students in "the proper perspective." He noted that, oftentimes, there are contradictions in the feedback. He stated, "Some students will say, 'This homework is really easy; it's not very much.' and others will say, 'You give way too much homework.' You get both ends of the spectrum; you get both extremes." He recommended that teachers look at the overall patterns or themes in order to determine areas of concern or areas in need of improvement.

Kara stood out from the other respondents as being less enthusiastic about receiving feedback on her performance from her students. She stated that although she saw "some value" in student feedback, she wondered if the benefits were worth the cost in terms of time and money. In contrast, others, such as Roxy and Ria expressed a desire for more regular surveying of students. They felt that, for student feedback to be most

effective in influencing and improving teacher performance, the students should be surveyed frequently.

Ria, for instance, mentioned that she likes to conduct her own student surveys at the end of every major unit to "validate what she is doing." From these surveys, she was able to learn, not just about the students' reactions to the content of the units but also to her teaching methodologies and the students' comfort level in her classroom. It is possible that Ria's more informal approach—which does not involve developing formal survey instruments which are sent to Iowa for summarization purposes–might respond to Kara's cost-benefit concerns.

Unhelpful Feedback

Two themes emerged from the responses to the question about feedback that respondents found unhelpful. The respondents found that neither the parent feedback nor the peer feedback were useful in providing direction for improvement or for causing them to reflect critically on their performance. In discussing these responses, I will divide the unhelpful feedback responses into two subsections—parent feedback and peer feedback.

Parent Feedback

Teachers were unanimous in responding that the parent feedback was unhelpful. The comments in Table 4 reflect that teachers found the number of parent responses limited and the quality of the feedback questionable.

Table 4. Responses to Parent Feedback

Pete	I've had enough evidence from the parent feedback to say that it is just about valueless. Not many parents respond, for starters, and the evidence that you do get is sometimes very confusing.
Shay	Parent feedback is an absolute waste of time.
Ria	The parent feedback is not helpful. I only got 8 back; I don't know how many went out. And, I only got 3 comments.

Table 4 con't	
Dana	Parents are not qualified to comment on my teaching.
Erin	In my particular situation in the upper school, there is not a lot of feedback from the parent as there is not a lot of interaction with the parents.
Gabriel	I'm not really interested in the comments by parents at all because their comments are the same as the comments by students. I mean how else do they know who I am or what I do because they are never in the classroom.
Kara	There were so few parents who responded that I learned nothing.
Jay	I didn't particularly find the parent feedback helpful. I mean parents aren't in the classroom; they hear word of mouth from their children. Plus, it still is a very, very limited number in relation to the number of students that I teach.
Roxy	There were comments from one or two parents that were so far out of left field, compared to everyone else, that I just discounted them.
Grey	The parent's comments, I don't think were that useful, because I don't think they are that informed about what goes on either way. I mean it's either merry sunshine stuff or it's sort of irrelevant kind of off-the-wall things.

Table 4 clearly indicates that a number of concerns related to parent feedback were raised. The first concern raised was the limited number of parent responses. Pete, Kara and John noted that, although surveys were sent out to 30 parents, the number of parents who responded in terms of the number of students they teach was so small that it could not possibly be considered a representative sample of their students' parents.

The second concern related to the parents' ability to respond to the survey statements dealing with the teacher's performance in the classroom. The parent survey, for instance, included the following item: "As a parent of a child in this class, I am satisfied with the learning experiences this teacher is providing." Teachers felt that, since the parents had no first hand experience of the teacher's performance in the classroom, they were not in a position to respond to this sort of question. Grey, Gabriel and Jay, for instance, each noted that parents had to rely on their children's impressions in order to

complete such a response, Ria went even further: She stated her belief that "there are an incredible number of high school students who are filling it [the survey] out for the parent."

Shay raised an additional concern about parent feedback that may be more appropriate in this site than in some other locations. He noted that, although he considered parent feedback on a teacher's performance problematic at any time, in an Asian culture, where many of the parents "espouse a Western system of education" but have experienced a different system themselves, "we don't know how they are interpreting the survey." He also was concerned that some of the parent comments that may have been intended to be constructive "transfer in a very hurtful way because of limited English."

Dana summarized in a relatively unsubtle way a perception that was almost certainly at least a subtext of the other comments on parent feedback: "Some parents believe that because they went to school; they have knowledge of teaching and are qualified to comment on particular aspects of teaching. Of course, they can offer opinions but it's all perception."

In summary, the responses indicated that the ten teachers who were interviewed questioned the parents' qualifications to reliably complete a survey about their performance as teachers and, consequently, placed little value on parent feedback.

Peer Feedback

In analyzing the responses to the value of peer feedback, a contradiction quickly emerged: the teachers appeared to value peer feedback but not in the form employed in the 360°feedback system. Specifically, they objected to the use of surveys as a vehicle

for providing feedback and also to the fact that feedback came only once a year (and at the end of the year, at that). Table 5 provides excerpts from each of the respondents' comments about parent feedback.

The comments included in Table 2.2 clearly demonstrate that teachers did not consider the 360° feedback process of eliciting feedback from their colleagues as the best method for either fostering collegial peer interaction or providing them with feedback on their teaching performance.

Table 5. Responses to Peer Feedback

Erin	Peers are some of the best judges of how I teach, even in some cases, better than the students. But, they don't want to say anything bad so they aren't prepared to give you constructive criticisms.
Pete	The peer one [survey], I don't put as much weight into that as I do into the student one, that's the most important one as far as I'm concerned.
Shay	I found faculty feedback useless for the most part because most of it was a checklist. Nobody would be bold enough to rate you below a 4. Most people stick in 4 or 5 and there is a message in there somewhere.
Gabriel	And then the comments by my peers, I don't pay too much attention to them, because most peers are going to have positive comments for one another.
Jay	I didn't particularly find the peer feedback helpful.
Roxy	I pretty much discounted my peer feedback. In all the colleague feedback I got, one teacher was honest; one teacher gave me constructive feedback as in, "I really think you should improve in this area."
Pete	The teacher-to-teacher surveying, I find has evolved so that it is very difficult to put something negative down about someone, because you see all around you, at the time, the effect it [negative feedback] has on others. So, unless there's a real problem there, you're pretty much going to be generous in your responses.
Grey	I found the peer feedback was kind of like getting a birthday card.

Eric, for instance, expressed appreciation for the value his peers could add to his professional growth. He also indicated, however, that, although "peers have a whole

wealth of experience to offer [him]" he was concerned that they didn't have time to sit in on classes and offer "insights." There was a sense that the feedback received wasn't pertinent to the classroom.

As Jay pointed out:

> Peers don't see you enough, you're not in their classrooms and they are not in yours. You may be all together in meetings but that is not the essence of what you do, which is what you do in the classroom.

Some interviewees also noted that their peers seemed reluctant to give or receive negative or critically constructive comments. Jay emphasized, for example, that "it's nice to get complimentary comments"; he added that, if he didn't get complimentary comments, it might be difficult "to stomach." Similarly, Roxy noted that most teachers merely "paid lip service" to the peer feedback process and gave only complimentary feedback "because no one wants to go out on a limb and offend someone."

Pete explained his reluctance to write critical comments because he had "seen all around [him] ... the effect it has on others" who were upset by critical comments from peers. In addition, he questioned the appropriateness of sharing concerns on a feedback form, stating, "And, if there really is a problem there, why are you waiting until the 360 comes along. If there is an issue with a teacher, you need to resolve it." Jay seemed to concur with this sentiment and, in fact, shared the following personal observation:

> I got a comment and thought, "Why didn't someone tell me this?" If someone has a problem, you talk about it and resolve it, you don't give someone a low score on a piece of paper or write a negative comment on them anonymously.

Feedback Summary

In summary, the responses from interviewees indicated that feedback from students was generally perceived as useful and helpful in motivating teachers to reflect on their performance (even while raising questions about the frequency and specificity of the feedback). The responses also indicate, however, that, the current feedback system at FEAS for parent and peer feedback was not perceived to be providing credible, quality feedback.

Feedback as an Accurate Reflection of the Teacher's Performance

When responding to the question—"Did you feel that feedback you received accurately reflect your performance?"—it was interesting that the question was reinterpreted by all ten interviewees as, "Did the student feedback you received accurately reflect your performance?" Although the question was interpreted similarly, the responses indicate a divergence in opinion about the accuracy of the student feedback received. As seen on Table 6, some considered the feedback accurate, others somewhat accurate and still others considered the feedback more inaccurate than accurate.

Table 6. Feedback as a Reflection of the Teacher's Performance

Ria	My lowest score last year was in response to "Homework cannot be done in 30 minutes." So, that's what I set my goal on for this year, On the question that states, "The teacher cares about me." I never get very high on that either and I know I don't come across that way; I'm not a warm, fuzzy type of teacher.
Dana	One thing that did come through in my feedback is that there is one area that I can improve, one which I already knew—the timely return of feedback. Last year, that was my goal. But, I also think that there is an expectation that they will get them [their papers] back the next day. If I can get it back within two weeks, wow, that's fast. One week would be amazing.

	Table 6 con't
Erin	I think it [the feedback] accurately reflects the students', and the parents' and the peers' perception of my performance. When I analyze the data and I look at the comments, my perception of my performance is totally different. For example, on tests, sometimes, the students rate me low. From my perspective, I should give challenging tests and from their perspective, they would like less challenging tests so that they could do better on them. So, I am aware of these discrepancies; there is going to be a difference of opinion.
Gabriel	Yeah, I think the kids answer the questions pretty much based on what goes on in the classroom. You know, like when they say that I use very little technology in teaching [my subject area], that's true. And, I pretty much have a constant that goes through year after year, that I talk too much, you know that kind of thing. And, yes, I talk quite a bit in class so what they say about the way I teach or what I do, I think it is pretty accurate.
Jay	I think the student feedback was fairly accurate. They say that I'm challenging them as a teacher. That I give tests and quizzes and so forth that stretch them. Some of them liked that. Some of them thought they were stretched too far.
Roxy	I think I am harder on myself than they are on me. They didn't target enough areas for me to grow in—I have to find those on my own.
Pete	Look, it does [feedback reflects performance] and it doesn't because the scores can be manipulated. I really believe they can be. My goal last year was based on the lowest score I've had for the last two years which is getting work back to kids in a more timely manner. I'm sure looking at the mean scores for the whole school; I am not alone in that area. You know I think the more you tell the kids what your goal is, the harder they grade you on it. This year, I deliberately have not told them my goal for the year and I want to see the difference. In the past I have told the kids about it—this is my professional goal for the year—and I really think that they marked me harder on it.
Grey	You know, I don't think it necessarily did. I think it often reflects how fun the class is.

Interestingly, only two of the respondents spoke immediately about the areas of strength that students remarked on: The other eight launched into a discussion of the negative aspects of the feedback they received, even though the question specifically asked the respondents to comment on "feedback both *in areas of strength* and, if relevant, areas in need of improvement" (emphasis added).

Other responses to this question are consistent with responses to earlier questions. Jay, for example, once again returned to the theme of the contradictory nature of student responses. Here, for example, he noted that some students commented on the fact that Jay's tests "stretch them" in a positive way even as others noted that they were "stretched too far."

Erin mentioned a similar sort contradiction in the perception of tests. In Erin's case, the contradiction was between him and his students. Erin, in fact, emphasized that the students' perception of the difficulty level of his tests caused him to reflect that there was a discrepancy in terms of students' expectations for tests and his expectations for tests. From his perspective, tests should challenge students, while based on the feedback from his students, he concluded that they wished for tests to be less challenging so that they could get better grades. So, although, he didn't agree with the accuracy of the students perception, he acknowledged that "it reflects a disconnect which is very useful to be aware of."

Pete expressed a concern that the scores could be manipulated. In his response, he described how he shared his goal for the year with his previous year's students. The goal was based on a low area in the student feedback—the timely return of student work. Having shared this goal with his students at the beginning of the year, he felt that they really focused on this aspect of his performance in his feedback and "marked [him] even harder on that" because of it.

Teachers were forthright in acknowledging that some feedback, while accurately reflecting their performance, might refer to areas that would continue to appear low on their feedback. An example is Gabriel's recognition that the use of technology would

never be his strength, although he was making efforts to improve in other areas identified by students. Similarly, Ria stated that she would never become a "warm, fuzzy type teacher" unless she "completely revamped herself" which she "wasn't prepared to do."

In Grey's response to the question about the accuracy of feedback (which, for Grey, as well as the others, meant the accuracy of student feedback) he described his experience of matching his expectations to student expectations as "a constant balancing act" to teach skills and concepts while maintaining student motivation through "entertaining and interesting activities." He noted the following, for instance:

> I think that last year I made an effort to make the class fun—more so than previous years—more fun and more exciting, and I think it came out as a positive on my feedback. But, although motivation is really important, I think that it is just one aspect of what we are trying to accomplish... I feel like you get a lot more positive feedback if you're keeping it interesting and fun. You'll get good ratings. If you really roll up your sleeves and work hard, you know, blood, sweat and tears, if that's all you do, you may produce really good writers but I don't think you're going to get positive feedback about that.

Grey wondered if, this year, he would receive more feedback on how "he scaffolds for the teaching of writing" or how his "instruction was step-by-step so that they could follow it" which were his areas of focus. He acknowledged that students, of that age, probably "do not have the language to talk about that" and will continue to comment on the fun, engaging activities he employs in his teaching.

Feedback Reflecting Performance Summary

Interviewees' views differed in how they perceived the extent to which feedback reflected their performance. Some noted that the feedback was accurate; others indicated that there were contradictions within the student feedback and still others noted areas where the students' perceptions did not match theirs. It was interesting that all participants spoke about the student feedback when considering this question.

Changes Made as a Result of Feedback

Questions in the category pertaining to changes generated by feedback pertained to how teachers processed the feedback and what changes were made as a result of specific feedback. In this section, I will report on teachers' processing of the feedback data followed by a description of changes made in response to feedback.

Processing the Feedback

Processing the feedback involved reviewing both numerical and anecdotal data from the three sources. The response to each question involved a score on a Likert Scale (1-5). The feedback form included the teacher's score reported for each of the three sources by question (or item on the survey) alongside a divisional mean score for each question. Therefore, each teacher was able to compare his/her scores on each question to the mean score for that question for all classroom teachers in that school division.

The feedback forms were returned to the teachers with the numerical data at the front and a typed list of anecdotal comments from different survey respondents (i.e. students, parents and peers) attached. Teachers were encouraged to look for trends or

themes in their data. Upon review of the data, teachers were expected to reflect on the feedback in relation to the FEAS 15 Teaching Standards and to identify any areas that were in need of improvement. One of these areas of improvement should, then, be the focus of the professional goal for the following school year (See goal setting document, Appendix H).

Teachers differed in the order in which they read their feedback. Some read the student feedback first because, in their minds, it was the "most valuable." Others kept the students' feedback until last for a similar reason: They believed it was the "most important." Interestingly, teachers used words and phrases like "scanned" and "have a look at" when discussing the parent and peer comments in contrast to words like "focus" and "reflect" when referring to the process they used in reviewing the student feedback.

Although interviewees differed in terms of which data sets (i.e. student, parent, and peer) they looked at first, all observed that they scanned the numerical data prior to looking at the list of comments. Many also noted that, during this scanning, they focused on how they compared with other teachers.

Comparison was facilitated by a program that a mathematics teacher in the upper school had previously developed. The program reported divisional mean scores for each question alongside the mean scores received by the teacher. The mean score allowed feedback recipients to statistically compare their scores to the mean, in other words. Two of the interviewees (Roxy and Erin) utilized this program to discover where they might be falling above or below the mean. These teachers espoused the benefits of this program which gave them a sense of how their performance compared to the performance of other

teachers within their division. As Erin stated, "I think it only makes sense that you would want to know how you rank, even if it's just for your own use."

Three other interviewees, however, expressed a concern about being compared to the mean score of all teachers. They saw "no need for a mean when we have standards." Pete commented that "it [the 360° feedback process] would be a better process if the mean [score] were removed." Other critics were more concerned about the nature of the mean. Dana, for example, stated a preference to be compared to other teachers of her subject area. She indicated that she would like to see the data disaggregated for each subject area. Ria concurred with this opinion and considered the divisional mean scores "worthless information" as it is currently structured. She explained that some classes, such as English, social studies and math, are required; consequently, to her, at least, it is "obvious that teachers of required classes are going to score lower" than teachers in classes that students choose to take, presumably, because they are interested in the material taught.

Three of the five high school teachers expressed satisfaction that they were able to disaggregate the data based on their own individual classes. Jay stated:

> It was very helpful to know which section of [his] classes, the feedback came from because…classes take on dynamics and personalities and in some classes, there may be a less cohesive group of students, who for one reason or another, aren't able to work together… and you might approach that a bit differently. So it is good to know which section they came come even if you don't know which individual.

Some teachers, Erin and Roxy in particular, found the numerical data informative. Erin, for example, noted that the perspective of all respondents is reflected in the numbers, as all those who respond complete the numerical data whereas the comments may only reflect the thinking of a few of the teacher's students.

All respondents also noted that if there was a score lower than expected, it gave them an opportunity to reflect on the probable cause for that response. Most respondents, however, found that the anecdotal comments provided more fodder for reflection. They spoke about the "power of student comments" to provoke reflection. Pete summarized his reaction to the comments versus the numerical data as follows: "the comments usually affect me more. He went on to note that the "comments caused him "to stop and think" and to try to understand "what the respondent was thinking." Grey also noted that comments can really "provoke reflection on your part" and cause you "to change your perspective." Even Roxy, a strong proponent of using the statistical comparison data, conceded that "additional written comments would be more helpful than knowing if I am above or below the mean."

Even though teachers were encouraged to look for the trends and themes in the feedback and to ignore "outlier" comments, all teachers were deeply affected by the limited number of negative comments or the "zingers" that took them by surprise. As Pete noted, "You may say to yourself, that is one out of 45, but when "it is written down, it hurts."" Processing the negative comments was described as "devastating" and "hurtful" by various individuals. Seven teachers preferred to process these comments alone and three teachers de-briefed with colleagues.

Teachers, in fact, displayed different comfort levels regarding the sharing of their feedback with colleagues. Three interviewees discussed their feedback, both positive and negative, openly with colleagues. Others waited to discuss the feedback with their supervisors. One interviewee said that he had discussed the feedback with "with no one, not even... [his] wife" until he had his goal-setting meeting in August. Two other interviewees, however, commented that since the school headmaster and the principals shared their feedback openly with the faculty every year, they felt "brave" enough to follow this example and to share openly with colleagues.

Roxy, in particular, displayed an unusual level of openness in sharing her feedback, especially when compared to the others who were interviewed. She shared themes from her feedback with her students and even with parents at the Parent Open House and asked parents to feel comfortable communicating openly with her during the school year. She also asked trusted colleagues if certain perceptions that were reflected in her feedback were obvious to them.

After a period of reflection, each teacher set a goal based on specific feedback. A goal-setting meeting was then held the following August with the teacher's supervisor or the department chair. Jay expressed the concern that requiring a goal to be set based on 360° feedback data could be restrictive. He expressed the desire for a more "holistic" approach to goal setting where the teacher could base his or her goal on whatever data source seemed most appropriate to use. All ten interviewees, however, had complied with the expectation and set goals for the following year that reflected feedback from the 360° process that had occurred during the prior school year; furthermore, all interviewees

considered the goals they set to be worthwhile goals. Copies of the goals set were made

available to the researcher.

Changes Made

When asked if specific changes had been made in their teaching or instruction as a

result of feedback from the 360° feedback process, all teachers in this study responded

positively. Table 7 presents selected comments about changes that were made as a result

of specific student feedback. During the interviews, respondents discussed a variety of

other changes they had made because of feedback. Not surprisingly, given the data

presented here, the majority of the changes were made in response to student feedback.

Table 7. Changes Made as a Result of Feedback

Pete	Yes, I made a change in how I give directions to students—better written and oral directions and more checking for understanding.
Shay	Yes. From student feedback, I looked at ways of delivering more accessible oral work.
Roxy	Yes, I started giving my students, and their parents, more regular feedback on their grades and their progress.
Ria	Yes, because of the feedback from students on homework, I have focused on the quantity of home work I assign and the relevance of the particular homework assignments.
Kara	Yes, students indicated that they didn't find me very approachable or available to them. So, that is the single most valuable thing I have learned from my feedback and I have improved in that area.
Jay	Yes, students told me that I was always calling on the same students for answers. So, I am conscious of that and work hard on calling on the full range of students.
Grey	Yes, my students have told me that I speak too quickly and wade too fast through the material, so I am making a conscious effort to slow down.
Gabriel	Yes, students told me that I lectured too much so I am focusing on including more of a variety of methods, different activities, groupings etc.
Erin	Yes, I like to give the students challenging tests but they would prefer less challenging tests. So, I am doing a better job of communicating the purpose of each test.

Table 7 con't	
Dana	Well, every year, I get a lower score on the "timely return of work" and even though I make an effort, it's always going to be a lower area because of the volume of work I am dealing with. But, I'm working on it.

Some of these changes would be considered single-loop learning, such as a teacher responding to the feedback "you speak too quickly" by making a conscious effort to speak more slowly. Or, Dana, who received feedback from a number of students that she did not return assignments in a timely manner, made a schedule where she went to Starbucks every second day for two hours, turned off her cell phone, and graded work for two hours. These are good responses but do not indicate a level of critical thinking or double-loop learning.

Other responses resulted from a deeper level of thinking. One teacher received feedback, from a number of students that stated that she always called on the same people especially at the end of the lesson. So, she decided to monitor her behavior. She found that, indeed, the students were right; she was inclined to call on the same students every day toward the end of the lesson. This occurred when she was checking the understanding of the concept she was teaching, presumably to ascertain students' level of understanding. She realized that she always seemed to have a lot of material to cover in her lessons and was usually in a rush at the end. She also realized that her inclination was to ask these students because she suspected that they knew the answers and she could leave feeling good about the class. She decided to change the habit immediately and instead of asking individual students, she would ask each student to discuss what they had been studying with a partner. Then, she allowed time for questions and answers. In

order to do this, she had to redesign her lessons and ensure better pacing but she felt that she was better meeting all the students' needs instead of the needs of a few.

Other times, teachers found that they needed to communicate their thinking more to the students. For example, a math teacher was told by a number of his students that he was "unprepared for class." He realized that his style was to come to class without working out all of the problems. This was a deliberate strategy which he had never explained to his students. By not preparing the problems in advance, he could work through the problems and model the strategies with the students on the spot. He acknowledged that maybe he did a bit too much "on the fly" and needed to be more structured but the most important response was to explain his thinking to the students.

Review the summary feedback forms confirmed this type of feedback. In addition, a review of these teachers' goal setting documented confirmed the goals teachers had established each school year.

Sharing Feedback with Supervisor

At FEAS, the goal setting process varies somewhat between the middle school and the upper school division. Middle school teachers set their yearly professional growth goal with their supervisor (principal or associate principal). The goal is based on their feedback, on an area that appears to be in need of improvement. However, upper school teachers set their goal with their department head if they belong to a particular department. This complicates the 360° feedback process since the feedback is for the teacher's and the supervisor's eyes and only those two people receive a copy of the feedback forms. In other words, an upper school teacher may be setting a goal with a department chair who has not been privy to the student, parent or peer feedback even

though the expectation is that the teacher sets a goal based on an area that the feedback

suggests needs improvement. Following the goal setting meeting with the department

chair, the principal reviews every teacher's goal to ensure that it is in line with the

individual's feedback.

In Table 8, we see that three of the respondents did not discuss their feedback

with their supervisors. These three teachers (Gabriel, Ria and Jay) had set their goal with

their department chair but had never been involved in a conversation with their principal

about their feedback. All other respondents had discussed their feedback with their

supervisors.

Table 8. Sharing Feedback with Supervisor

Pete	I'm happy to talk about things. But, you're sitting there with your boss and you' thinking, "I have to defend what this kid has said."
Shay	You know even though I do have a tough outer skin; it still is like going to the dentist. You want to go in there and feel, "I want to be the best for you [the supervisor].'
Gabriel	I think our supervisors are doing that [discussing feedback] with some teachers because I talked to other teachers in our department that have sat down with the administrator and then, together, are looked at the results but no one has ever done that with me.
Jay	I set my goal with the department head, so I never really discussed my feedback with my supervisor.
Roxy	I do not yet have a warm relationship with [current supervisor] so discussing my feedback is not as relaxed as it was previously.
Dana	I have a great relationship with my supervisor. [Supervisor] said "it's just a snapshot."
Grey	Yes, that's when I talked about the specific part of my feedback, about where m goals came out of...where on the 360, I focused my goal setting. But, we didn't talk about anything else.
Ria	I don't know if [the department chair] ever saw them or not.
Erin	If there was a problem over a number of years, it might be used as a summative tool.
Kara	Depending on your scores, it could be the cause of professional probation.

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The process of sharing the feedback with a supervisor and the supervisor's use of the 360° degree data evoked a variety of responses from the respondents. One respondent, Erin, described the use of the 360° feedback for supervisors as a kind of shortcut for supervisors:

> It's a tool for them, just like it's a tool for me. They can ask about those scores, praise the high scores, and look at the low scores and say, "How is that going to inform your choices for the next year?" That way, they don't have to come into your classroom and make their own determination; they can look at the data from your students and your parents.

Shay also described the administrator's use of the feedback in terms of helping teachers. He believed that "administrators look at it [360° feedback] from the point of view of helping teachers. Grey noted that the supervisor was able to get feedback on each individual's performance in addition to getting an overall sense of the faculty. He stated:

> I think it is probably for my supervisor to get a picture of what's going on. It must be great for administrators to get a sense of their staff. And probably, I would imagine that they use it more to get a composite picture of who we've got department wise in addition to knowing more about the individuals. If they saw issues in a teacher's performance and saw it reflected on the 360, I think that might be important too.

However, Shay felt that administrators would be surprised if they knew how upsetting the sharing of the feedback with the supervisor was to teachers in general. He stated, "I think they [the administrators] would be alarmed if they knew how upset and how uncomfortable people are, and I think that is because teachers see it as a high risk

thing." He described the process of meeting with your supervisor to discuss your feedback as "like going to the dentist" and even though he has a "thick outer skin," he found the experience very challenging.

Four respondents said that, when discussing the feedback with their supervisor, they felt a need to defend feedback that appeared to be below the divisional mean or comments that were negative. Pete, for example, noted:

> As soon as you sit down and the supervisor is there in front of you, I find the conversation very interesting. We look at the scores, they're all good, but there's one negative comment and [the supervisor] asks, "What do you think of this comment?" And, you think, that's one kid out of all the kids surveyed and we're talking about that one comment. And, I'm happy to talk about things, but you're sitting there with your boss and you're thinking "I have to defend what this kid has said."

References to defensiveness emerged in other responses, as well. Gabriel, who had never discussed his feedback with a supervisor, was "kinda glad that it [hadn't] happened" because:

> We have a tendency to look at the negatives all the time. If your numbers aren't high enough, you say "look here, this number is a little bit lower than the school average or whatever." That immediately implies that the person isn't doing a very good job. Unless your numbers are perfect, I get the impression that the supervisor that you are going to go over your results with is going to ask you "how can we improve this?

The comparison of individual's data to the divisional mean data emerged again in discussing the sharing of feedback with the supervisor. Grey said that sharing the feedback "could be risky" because "people compare so much" and you "don't want to stick out there." This risk was more clearly defined by Kara. She viewed the 360°feedback process as a summative process and believed that "depending on your scores, it could be the cause of professional probation." Five out of the ten teachers used words like "nervousness," and "anxiety" when discuss the sharing of feedback with their supervisor.

Ria wondered how the administrators "have time to look through all the feedback." She assumed that administrators "look at the new teachers' [feedback] and teachers that they hear might be a problem." Other respondents, such as Erin and Jay, believed that "if there was a problem over a number of years," the supervisor might use the feedback as "a summative tool."

The supervisor's handling of the feedback conference appeared to be a significant factor in determining the teacher's level of comfort when sharing the feedback and working on goals for improvement. When the supervisor confirmed the person's teaching performance and perceived the feedback as a "snapshot" of the person's performance, the teacher's level of comfort increased. Shay stated that "the way in which your administrator handles the [feedback] document tells you what they feel about you." He added:

> If someone walks in [to the supervisor] and he [the supervisor] says, "What I've read confirms everything I've known about you as a teacher and confirms why I employed you. And now, let's look at the other areas. Well, that's just an 11 year

old talking. That parent obviously has an axe to grind. But what do you think

about this comment because it re-occurs? Do you think it's justified? Do you

think it's helpful?

That type of dialogue was described by Shay as confirming his role as a teacher at FEAS. It also helped him to ignore the occasional "zinger" and to focus on trends or themes in his feedback.

Over the years, as principals and associate principals transitioned in and out of the school, building the sort of trusting relationship in which teachers are comfortable with sharing feedback became challenging. Roxy, for example, noted that with her previous supervisor, she would have "walked into [the previous supervisor's office] and said, "Do you think this is true or not? What do you hear about me? What kind of teacher am I? I think [previous supervisor] was spot on." She stated that she hadn't yet built up that level of trust with her current supervisor.

The respondents would have preferred to have the option to keep the feedback private and for their eyes only; they wanted to "own" the data. They expressed a strong desire to have the opportunity to reflect on the feedback without sharing it with their supervisor. Despite having a "great relationship" with her supervisor, Dana, for instance, felt that if she didn't "have to share the feedback with her administrator, she would take it more seriously." For Dana and for others, it was a formative tool that should be used for the teacher's self-reflection and should not be used as a component of the supervisor's summative assessment of the teacher's performance. This preference did not coincide, however, with perceptions of the current reality.

Emotions Associated with the Feedback Process

Processing feedback, particularly negative feedback, was an emotionally charged experience for the respondents. Dealing with these emotions at the end of the school year, in May, was difficult. Roxy reported that one year she didn't open her feedback until August because at the beginning of the next year "you have more emotional energy."

In fact, a variety of emotions were associated with the 360° feedback process. Table 9 presents the descriptors each individual used when discussing the emotions associated with the process.

Table 9. Emotions Associated With Feedback Process

Pete	Hurt, curiosity, defensiveness, motivation
Shay	Nervousness, vulnerability, fear, stress, devastating, motivation
Gabriel	Defensiveness
Jay	Confidence, pride, soul searching, motivation
Roxy	Motivation, soul-searching, confirmation
Dana	Fear, stress, worry, agonize
Grey	Lack of confidence, anxiety, motivation
Ria	Confidence, curiosity, sensitivity
Erin	Motivation, confidence
Kara	Fear, nervousness, stress

There were two stages of the process, in particular that elicited uncomfortable emotions: (a) the teachers' initial review of the feedback data and (b) the sharing of the data with the supervisor. An analysis of the respondents' comments in this section reveals two major themes: (a) teachers' reaction to negative comments and (b) teachers' confidence as professionals. These two themes are elaborated below.

Reaction to Negative Comments

The respondents expected, and received, a considerable number of positive comments on their teaching performance. In fact, the vast majority of every interviewee's comments were positive. However, there was a tendency to "gloss" over the positive comments and to "fixate" on the negative comments and these negative comments, in turn, elicited a strong emotional response from the respondents. Eight of the ten respondents, in fact, discussed how dealing with the reaction to negative comments proved challenging and emotionally draining. In their interviews, they described not only their own reactions but also the reactions of colleagues around them. One respondent described her colleagues' reactions as follows: "A lot of people were sick, a lot of people felt hurt, a lot of people sat down and de-briefed, and said, 'I got this comment and I don't know what to think about it. I really didn't think I did that in my class.'" Shay also discussed counseling a male colleague who, "has been [at the school] for years…He said, "I have been crushed by some of these comments."

Negative comments that were unexpected or surprising affected the respondents profoundly. Grey described his reaction to such comments:

I think, in some way, you're most surprised by negative comments. Things that seem to come out of nowhere, things that seem toxic, and you think, wow, I had no idea! We spend so much time with these kids, when something like that comes out and you are not aware if it, that's shocking, and it hurts. That's where you feel like, "Am I that clueless that I didn't realize this student felt that strongly?"

As stated above, negative comments pertaining to the teacher's performance in the classroom were difficult to process emotionally for the respondents. However, after

reflection and considering the validity of the comments, most teachers were able to understand and come to terms with them. Ria said that when she thought about them, most comments were "fair comments." Grey responded in a similar fashion to reasonable constructive comments about his performance, but found comments that referred to his personality difficult to accept. He stated:

> If you think it is specific and is about things that you have done in class that had to do with their learning, that doesn't bother you so much. You can take that; it's useful, painful but useful. The personality things can cut a little deeper.

Some student comments—e.g., "Mr. So & So should just give up teaching" or "This class was a waste of my time"—were characterized as "mean." However, comments of a personal nature were more hurtful. These personal comments often provoked strong emotions among the respondents. Pete was profoundly affected by a student who noted in his comment that the teacher didn't respect him. He said:

> You know when a student writes, "Mr. So and So doesn't respect me." You think "Where?" "How?" "What did I do that he thought that?" Some of those personal things that you pride yourself on, like making a connection with every kid, having an individual relationship with every kid; it hurts the most when they say something like that. I know it's one out of 45, and you think what's one? But, when it's written down it hurts more.

There were three aspects to this comment that Pete found disturbing. First, the fact that a student thought he was disrespectful was the most upsetting aspect. Second, since that student was anonymous, Pete didn't know which of his 45 students, it was. He couldn't follow up with the student and could never investigate the behavior or incident

that caused the student to believe that he was being disrespected. To further complicate matters, Peter received the feedback at the end of the school year; consequently, he would never be able to do anything to resolve the situation with that particular student. Third, he was upset that the comment was in written form. Other respondents mentioned that having a comment written somehow made it more "official." Or, as stated by Shay, "When a perception is written on paper, it is often taken as truth."

Of all the respondents, only Ria said that she did not take negative comments personally since she understood that "you couldn't make everyone happy all of the time." She felt that perhaps she wasn't as "sensitive" as some of her colleagues who got very upset at negative comments, that perhaps she was getting "jaded" and "old." However, it was obvious from changes she had made in her teaching that although she may not have gotten upset, she had responded to student feedback.

Confidence as a Professional

Respondents explained that, when they were feeling confident as professionals, receiving negative or constructive comments was somewhat easier. Grey described that, when he was a new teacher to FEAS, even though he had 18 years prior experience as a teacher in the USA, there were many new expectations at FEAS and, consequently, he was less confident approaching his 360° feedback. Now, after experiencing the process three times, he noted that he is more confident and experiences less anxiety. He explained this growth:

> I was less confident then. You worry because there is so much on your mind all the time, and then the feedback comes and you think "now, I've got to face the music." So there's a bit more anxiety if you're not confident. If you get a bad

comment, that will also knock down your confidence. When you go into it the next time, you are gun shy. When I was more confident, I didn't have much anxiety at all.

The sense that developing self-confidence allowed you, as a professional, to more easily process others' perceptions of you was described by Erin:

So, I think the problem is that, in any profession, the only way to ever be successful is to not feel so wrapped up in others' perceptions. You have to be strong in your own perception of yourself. If you feel that you are improving and you feel that you are a good teacher then, that's the most important thing. I think it is a learning process. 360 in a school is a process where professional teachers can develop that kind of ability to look at the feedback in a professional way, but it is never going to be easy.

Not all respondents were at Erin's and Grey's level of self-confidence and, after three, or in some cases four, experiences with the 360° feedback process, they were still finding the experience emotionally challenging. Dana stated, "Really, I should have enough confidence in myself as a professional not to be worried, but there is an emotional aspect to this model that doesn't necessary fit teachers."

Grey acknowledged that some teachers were more open than others to receiving feedback on their performance. He stated:

Some people love to know these things; some people don't want to know that at all. It depends on the type of person you are, how open you are to seeing yourself. I don't think it's ever easy for anyone to get criticism but some people really use feedback as a point of reflection.

Six of the ten respondents, in fact, mentioned that the feedback was motivating. They took the comments "to heart" and were motivated to do something about the situation. From Roxy's perspective, "negative feedback…causes behavioral change." Grey also spoke about motivation and the challenge to improve. He noted that for some people, feedback was motivating whereas for others, the opposite might be true:

> I would say the feedback is a bit motivating. But it depends on the person. Some people rise to the challenge. Ego plays into it, if you are a competitive person (like me) you go for it, you say "I'm going to get in there and do better." But some people are more sensitive to those kinds of things, it could make them more fragile and less confident and that is not necessarily a good thing either because, confidence matters when you go in there and you are doing your job. It all depends on the person and on how you deal with criticism and feedback.

Overall Perceptions of the 360° Feedback Process

Overall perceptions of the 360° feedback process varied greatly. A number of positive aspects to the process were identified. Similarly, a number of negative aspects were also identified. Table 10 presents the main themes, with some description and an illustrative quotation from an interviewee. These themes are further explained in the ensuing commentary.

Table 10. Overall Perceptions

Theme	Description	Illustration
Purpose of 360°Feedback	Espoused as formative purpose but experienced as summative purpose.	"If it is to be a truly formative process, the teacher has to have complete control over the data." (Pete) Teachers "are upset that it is summative." (Erin)

Table 10 cont.		
Threat	Concern that unfavorable feedback could be used to place teacher on probation	Feedback "could be the cause of professional probation." (Kara)
Security	Feedback from other sources balances supervisor's observations.	"It's very difficult to ask someone to move on if your feedback from kids is terrific." (Pete)
School Culture	Competitive nature of culture makes it difficult to use feedback for growth purposes.	"There is a sense that this is a bit competitive…having schoolwide comparisons." (Grey)
School Culture	Focus is on what is not good enough instead of celebrating what is good.	"This process focuses on what isn't good enough…not on the critical aspects of teaching." (Gabriel)
Student feedback	Positive aspect of process, valuable feedback	The student feedback is "an informed kind of feedback," "personal" and "empowering." (All)
Popularity Contest	Concern that teachers could be rated on "personality" and "fun" in class.	"You have to deliver the curriculum and students may not necessarily love it." (Dana)
Cost/benefit	Concern about benefits of feedback versus costs	"We're spending an awful lot of money, time and energy to verify that we have good teachers here." (Ria)
Survey questions/standards	Focusing on survey questions raised level of awareness of expectations	"…was looking at the survey questions and thinking I could do a better job." (Pete)
Professional dialogue	Level of professional dialogue has improved	360° feedback process "has raised awareness of and attention to best practices." (Roxy)

Interviewees indicated a desire for clarification of the purpose of the 360° feedback process at FEAS. They noted that, although on page 2 of the FEAS Professional Growth and Evaluation Handbook, the process is described as a "formative evaluation process," the day-to-day message about the process was decidedly different. They

recommended that the purpose be made more explicit and communicated to the whole community.

The problem here appears to be that there is a gap between the "espoused theory" and the "theory-in-use" to use Argyris' (1982) distinction. Espoused theory is theory that is stated to represent practice, whereas theory-is-use is what actually occurs in practice. At FEAS, although the espoused theory is that the 360°feedback process is a formative process, the majority of the respondents indicated that they perceived the process as a summative evaluation process. Pete stated:

> The three hundred and sixty degree feedback process is not about just giving
>
> feedback in most of our minds. It's about making judgments about you as a
>
> professional. You can call it what you want but it's evaluative. If it is to be a truly
>
> formative process, the teacher has to have complete control over the data. It has to
>
> belong to the teacher.

Even if the original intention was to create a formative process, there was a sense that, as the feedback process was currently structured, it was difficult to perceive in formative terms. Erin, for instance, stated:

> I come from a place where I know that the primary purpose of it [360° feedback]
>
> would be to make the teacher better, not to rate them, not to judge them, and not
>
> to fire them. But, there's a fear, they [teachers in general] are upset that it is
>
> summative. They are afraid to share the results especially if there are weak areas.
>
> It is a difficult task to make it formative.

There was also a perception, expressed by three respondents, that unfavorable feedback over time could be a reason to place a teacher on professional probation. However, some

felt that there was security for the teachers because of multiple sources of feedback on their performance. In other words, a teacher could not be fired because of one or two unfavorable supervisor observations. Pete stated:

It's very difficult to ask someone to move on if your feedback from kids is terrific. Or even if it's not, there's a process that says these are the areas you need to improve on. And you get time to improve on them and if you do improve, you stay. And if you don't, you don't. In that way, I think that 360 provides a security for teachers.

Four teachers spoke about the school culture and the competitive nature of the school environment. They believe that the competitiveness of the school culture made FEAS a difficult school environment in terms of using feedback data for growth. Comparing teachers' scores to the divisional mean score was recognized as contributing to the perception of the competitive nature of the process. Grey pointed out "there is a sense that this is a bit competitive, having things in numbers and having school wide comparison."

Gabriel discussed his impression that, at FEAS, the focus was on what wasn't good enough rather than on the critical aspects of teaching and learning. He felt that the feedback process was a reflection of the culture of the school. He stated:

I think this process focuses on what isn't good enough; what your averages are and that sort of thing and not on critical aspects of teaching. Maybe that is what this school is all about. Maybe the way we are being assessed is the way we are assessing students and students are always looking for that perfect "A". Then if

> your teaching is a "B" or a "B+", it's not good enough; it's got to be an "A" or
>
> you are a failure.

Shay also spoke about the need for a "secure environment" in which teachers could reflect on their data, set goals and continue to grow as professionals without fear.

Eliciting student feedback was recognized by all respondents as a positive aspect of this process. However, the fear that this process could become a "popularity contest" was expressed by four respondents. There was a concern, in other words, that teachers could be rated on "personality" or that teachers of classes that were more academic would score lower than teachers of the "fun" classes. Dana explained:

> One concern I have is that this could become a popularity contest. With the
>
> students, sometimes there are things you just have to do—you have to deliver the
>
> curriculum and the students may not necessarily love it and sometimes it's hard.
>
> You just can't please everybody.

Three respondents questioned the need for a multi-source feedback process at FEAS. Ria summarized the issue as follows: "We're spending an awful lot of money, time and energy to verify that we have good teachers here." Jay also elaborated on this point: "I think that we have a great professional group of teachers, that that's part of their make up any way, and that that would happen whether there was a 360 process or not."

Focusing on the student surveys, which are directly linked to the FEAS 15 Teaching Standards, appears to have raised the level of awareness of the teaching standards among all respondents although one respondent noted that the linkage between the standards and the survey questions needs to be better communicated. Pete also said

that, just by reflecting on the survey questions, he realized that there were areas of his performance he could improve. He noted:

> One of the questions on the survey was, "My teacher tells us what we are going to learn and why it is important." I thought, "Yeah, maybe I need to do that more." It wasn't necessarily from the kids' scores; it was looking at the survey questions and thinking I could do a better job with that.

Five out of the ten respondents acknowledged that the level of professional dialogue had increased significantly since the introduction of the 360° feedback process. Roxy stated:

> I think that without the 360 process, we discussed professional growth and evaluation very little and whether the discussions are supportive or not-supportive of 360, it has raised awareness of and attention to best practices and what we are doing in the classroom. For that reason alone, I support it.

Erin stated that "in time it [the 360° feedback process] will have a good effect on discussions about teaching and learning."

<div align="center">Summary</div>

Through the implementation of the 360° feedback process, teachers received a considerable amount of feedback on their performance. An analysis of the initial interviewees' responses indicates that some sources of feedback were perceived as more valuable than others. Respondents found that feedback from students was valuable; it caused them to reflect on their practices and, in many cases, teachers made changes in response to student observations and concerns. However, concerns were raised about the level of specificity of the survey questions. It was noted that the questions were rather

"generic" and were not generating the type of detailed responses which the teachers found most helpful. Also, the frequency and timing of the feedback was questioned. Eliciting feedback once a year and, at the end of the year, was considered insufficient in terms of being able to use student feedback to impact learning. There was also a concern raised that eliciting feedback from students could become a type of "popularity contest" where teachers of the more "fun" classes would score better.

In many instances, teachers found that the student feedback accurately reflected their perceptions of their performance. However, there were some instances when contradictions among the student respondents were apparent. In addition, some teachers found that the student perception did not match the teacher perception when there was a discrepancy between the teacher/student expectations for the class. In these cases, teachers noted that being aware of the discrepancy was helpful.

Respondents indicated that peers were a valuable source of feedback. However, they questioned whether receiving peer feedback on a survey form was the best method for effectively receiving such feedback. Many expressed a desire for more peer collaboration and more authentic feedback mechanisms.

Parent feedback was not considered valuable. Teachers noted that the number of responses was limited. In addition, respondents questioned the parents' ability to answer questions about the teacher's performance in the classroom and noted that parents must rely on the student's perception of the teacher in order to complete the survey.

Processing the data involved reviewing both numerical and anecdotal data from students, parents and peers. Some found the numerical data valuable in terms of indicating an area where performance was lower than expected. For most interviewees,

comparing a teacher's mean score to the mean score of all teachers in his or her school division was an issue. There was a sense that this comparative data fostered a competitive environment where teachers focused on comparisons instead of continuous improvement.

Overall, respondents found that the anecdotal comments generated more reflection; the comments from students being the most valuable. Although the vast majority of the comments that interviewees received were positive, they found that they fixated on the negative comments. These comments generated emotional responses. In fact, negative comments, unexpected negative comments in particular, evoked strong emotional reactions among respondents.

Changes were made in response to feedback and teachers set improvement goals based on feedback. Not surprisingly, given that respondents found the student feedback the most valuable, the vast majority of changes were made in response to student feedback. A review of the interviewee's goal setting documents confirmed that goals had been set in response to 360° degree feedback.

Respondents felt that, in general, administrators viewed the 360° feedback as a tool for teacher improvement but that it could be used in a summative evaluative manner if a problem with a teacher's performance was observed over time. However, ownership of the feedback data emerged as an issue. Since 360° feedback is espoused as a formative tool, they felt that it should be used for the teacher's self-reflection and should not be shared with the supervisor or used as a component of the supervisor's summative assessment of the teacher's performance.

The overall perception is that, at FEAS, there is a contradiction between the "espoused theory" and the "theory-in-use" of the 360° feedback process. Although, the

espoused theory is that the 360°feedback process is a formative process, the majority of

the respondents indicated that they perceived the process as a summative evaluation

process.

In addition, concerns were expressed about the cost/benefit of such a system at

FEAS. There was a perception that the expenditure in terms of money, time and energy

was considerable and that, although it had increased the level of dialogue about teaching

and learning, there was a sense that there should be an easier way to get this information.

Finally, the cultivation of a positive school culture, where the focus was on

continuous improvement, was emphasized. Such a culture would focus on teachers

attaining the FEAS teaching standards and a high level of professional excellence. Such a

culture would disregard competition and reward professional collaboration. The

interviewees perceived that the 360° feedback contributed to the development of a

competitive culture rather than a collaborative culture.

The Focus Group Discussion

For the purposes of triangulation, I conducted a focus group discussion with representative teachers from the school divisions represented by the ten interviewees. All 67 teachers who met the stated criteria were invited to attend the focus group. To reiterate, the criteria were stated as:

(f) Teachers in the middle school or upper school as they were not under my supervision;

(g) Teachers who experienced a western teacher training program as distinct from an Asian approach to teacher education;

(h) Teachers who participated in the 360° feedback process for two years;

(i) Teachers who were not in the Professional Growth and Development Committee as these individuals generally were active proponents of this evaluation system; and

(j) Teachers who were not on probation or receiving intensive assistance due to unsatisfactory performance.

Altogether, 11 teachers who met the criteria attended. One other teacher attended as an observer. Of the 11 participants, four were middle school teachers; five were high school teachers and two teachers worked in both divisions. One teacher attended as an observer. Although these teachers self-selected to attend, the resulting group proved to be a representative sample of the FEAS teacher population. The profile of those who attended the focus group discussion is presented below.

Table 11. Background and Professional Information of Focus Group Participants

Teacher	Nationality	Division	Years of experience	Years at FEAS	Highest Degree	Years of 360° feedback process
Lanie	American	Upper	25	7	Masters	4
Goldie	Australian	Middle	15	5	Masters	4
Cary	American	Upper/Middle	18	6	Masters	4
Dora	American	Upper/Middle	12	5	BA	4
Red	American	Upper	15	3	Masters	3
Dray	American	Upper	22	3	Masters	3
Antonia	American	Middle	10	3	Masters	3
Delia	Australian	Middle	14	2	Masters	2
Kevin	American	Middle	16	4	BA	4
Roma	American	Upper	25	15	BA	4
Len	American	Upper	10	4	BA	4

For the focus group meeting, I reconstructed the interviewees' responses into a Reader's Theater script (See Appendix D) and, during the meeting, I used the script to generate discussions of the various interview findings. In addition, I asked some specific questions to elicit the focus group participants' opinions, such as, "Was there anything our readers presented that surprised you?" and "Do you think these ten voices captured teachers' feelings?"

The teachers who performed the script during the meeting were from the elementary division which had not been used in this particular research study. They were requested to wear black clothing in order to reduce the focus on the individuality of the speakers and to maintain the focus on the ideas they were articulating. Still, having actual

teachers act as the voices for the ten respondents ensured that the participants associated the opinions expressed with real people while, at the same time, protected the privacy of the actual respondents. The presentation method was described as "effective" by those participating in the discussion. One participant stated:

> The Reader's Theater is a fun approach, but I think it is also pretty effective in being able to get the comments out. Obviously these folks are playing a role so the comments come out and it allows the comments to be out there on their own. Then, we can think about the comments and what they are saying and not who is saying them.

The focus group participants were in agreement with the perspectives presented in the Reader's Theater presentation of the respondents' perceptions. There were no "surprises" even though comments about surprises were explicitly solicited. During the course of the focus group discussion, a number of themes emerged. These themes supported and, in some instances elaborated on, the interviewees' perspective.

In addition, the focus group made a number of observations about the 360°feedback process which were not made during the interviews. The general themes and a short summary of the comments generated by the focus group experience will be presented here.

Sources of Feedback

Participants agreed that student feedback was valued and that the parent feedback and the peer feedback systems were "not working so well." One participant stated, "I think it pretty much reinforces what I have heard teachers say: that they value the student

feedback, they question the parent feedback and see a lot of the peer feedback as "birthday card" type comments."

Though they, too, found student feedback to be the most valuable, focus group participants raised similar concerns to the concerns raised by the original respondents about this feedback. One participant stated:

I would agree that student feedback is valuable but I question whether the 360 process itself is the most valuable way of getting student feedback. I think that student feedback provided on a more regular basis directly tied to units of study or what's going on directly in the classroom has more value.

Another participant stated, "If you have it [student feedback] intermittently, then, as a teacher, you can act on it and students can see you act on it, which I think can be very valuable."

In addition, the level of specificity in the survey questions and the timing of the feedback process were questioned. One participant commented that "the questions are fairly generalized and they come towards the end of the year." Consequently, she recommended that FEAS find a "more productive" way to elicit student feedback than the 360° feedback process.

Finally, a recommendation was made by another participant that each department should individualize the survey by formulating "more specific areas of questioning specific to their department." This would allow each teacher to receive feedback pertaining to teaching in general and to their subject area in particular.

Purpose of 360° Feedback Process

The initial interviewees' confusion about the purpose of the feedback process was shared by the focus group participants. One focus group participant, for instance, stated, "There seems to be a real murkiness ... my understanding is that this was meant to be a formative tool but somehow along the way it's evolved into a summative tool." The gap between the espoused theory and the theory-in-use of the 360° feedback process was also apparent among the focus group participants.

Focus on Negative Feedback

The focus group debated the respondents' fixation on the negative comments in their feedback. One focus group participant noted that although 98% of her comments might be "fabulous," she tended to "agonize" over the 2% that were negative. A similar view was expressed by another participant who noted that he actually sought out the negative comments:

> I tended to seek those left field comments first, maybe not left-field but the negative comments, and I would sort of gloss over positive comments until I found the "zinger." I don't know why I did that because it didn't make me feel good but that's what I did, I focused first on the negative comments.

His rationale for seeking out negative comments was that he viewed the process as a formative process and the negative comments were what identified the areas where he needed improvement:

> When I focused first on the negative comments, it was because I thought that this is what would help me improve, all the stuff that's positive that's just telling me, "Oh, you're doing a good job!" But I didn't really think about reinforcing those

behaviors so, I was focusing on the negative because I thought that it would have formative purposes.

This reaction was in line with Erin's and Roxy's perspective but not necessarily the perspective of the other interviewees or the other focus group participants. Other members of both the focus group and the group of initial interviewees were emphatic that since the feedback went to the administrator, it felt summative and "so you are more worried about the negative comments."

Another focus group member emphasized that teachers learn from both the positive and negative comments. She felt that it was important to note the behaviors that were applauded in feedback since those were the behaviors we should focus on and reinforce in our teaching. As she explained:

> Why do we assume that we don't learn from positive feedback? It seems that to me, as teachers, that that is exactly what we do with students consistently, we reinforce good behaviors and reinforce good practices with positive feedback. But, somehow, for so many people, when they get positive feedback from their peers, that is perceived as useless. It seems to me it's not, what they are doing is that they are telling you that certain activities, certain behaviors that you have are ones they appreciate and it seems to me that we should learn from that, to continue to do that, or even do more of that.

The Culture of the Organization in Which the Feedback is Received

The focus group considered the cultivation of a positive, supportive school culture a key factor was the successful implementation of a 360° feedback process. One member explained:

If the culture is perceived as more collegial and supportive, it seems like it promotes reflection and more conversation among colleagues but if it is perceived as being very competitive and if it is seen as a summative tool, it seems that just makes people very anxious and less likely to have those conversations.

The focus group members agreed with the interviewees' view of the competitive nature of the feedback process at FEAS, using descriptive language such as *very fast paced, high achieving, competitive* to describe the environment. They stated that this competitiveness was reinforced by the comparison to other teachers in the feedback process. One member described teachers' view of receiving the data and recognizing that each teacher's data is being compared to the data from other teachers in the division:

I think innately we know that when we get this data, we are being compared so it is not just your data to improve you as an individual. Because if it were data just to improve you as an individual, it would be designed in exactly that way, it would be designed for what you personally need.

Another concern raised by certain initial interviewees—the unfairness of comparing teachers of one subject area with teachers of other subject areas in the division—was also recognized as a problem by some focus group members. One focus group participant, for example, stated:

When a student is responding in the upper school, and they are responding to a required class that they hate and don't want to take and responding to a class that they have signed up for and they love it … their response is not going to be the same. But, the questions are the same. So I think that to make a judgment on

those and to compare those numbers, it's apples and oranges, it's not the same thing.

However, there was not unanimous agreement in the focus group that the comparison to the divisional data was unhelpful. In fact, one participant in the focus group wished for, in addition to the numerical data comparison, a "repository of all of these comments with names and identifying comments removed so you could get an idea of where you fall with the students."

The issue of comparing teachers to other teachers instead of the teaching standards was also raised by the focus group. It was pointed out that perhaps "the linkage between the data, the questions and the standards" had not been made been explicit enough to the teachers.

A theme that surfaced in the interviews and which was more fully explored in the focus group was the idea that, in the FEAS feedback process, the positive aspects of teachers' performance are not sufficiently celebrated. One focus group member summarized this point in the following way:

> In this school, the way that 360 is set up, there is so much positive feedback
>
> which is ignored and is not celebrated and I think that [would make] a huge
>
> difference to the way we approach it; if there was a real celebration of all the
>
> things we do correctly and well.

The lack of celebration of the positive aspects of teachers' performance in the 360°feedback process was considered reflective of the school culture in general.

Ownership of the Data

The focus group also discussed teacher ownership of the feedback data. One participant described his perception of the issue:

> Maybe the issue is giving teachers more control over the data they want to collect, these are my goals, these are the issues or challenges or issues or challenges I want to work on and this is the data, and having some opportunity to make decisions about what data is going to be collected, this is the data that would be most meaningful to me. So, maybe that would be very empowering for teachers.

In line with the interviewees' views, the focus group recognized that teachers would be more empowered, more professionally rewarded and more motivated to continuously improve if they owned the data.

Additional Observations made by the Focus Group

Choice

The concern that the 360° feedback process, as currently implemented at FEAS, does not offer an element of choice to teachers in terms of which sources of data they wish to use or how they wish to be evaluated was expressed by the focus group. As expressed by one focus group member:

> I think everyone also knows as well that there are lots of other ways to evaluate teachers and I think it would be great if teachers had their own choice of the process as opposed to everyone having the same methodology.

> There was a sense that if the system were differentiated so that teachers at different stages of their career could avail of different options, it would be a more meaningful process.

The 360° feedback process over time at FEAS

The focus group recognized that some of the concerns expressed by the initial ten interviewees and the focus group participants had been heard before by the Professional Growth and Development Committee. This committee had, apparently, discussed these issues and efforts had been made to improve the process. One improvement involved rewording the parent survey so that the questions reflected the areas that parents could speak about knowledgeably. However, the focus group recognized that there were still a number of concerns that needed to be addressed in order for the process to be effective. One focus group participant explained the situation, as:

> I think it is important to note that there was a committee each year working on the 360 process, that it [the 360° process] did evolve and hopefully improved but, obviously, there are still a lot of drawbacks that everyone is aware of. There were a lot of comments made, a lot of feedback given, to the committee ... but it still has a long way to go.

Perception of process at FEAS versus at another school setting

The focus group members recognized that in order for the 360° feedback process to be successful in a school setting, it could never be "parachuted in"; it would need to be adjusted to the particular school in questions. The point was raised that perhaps in a different school setting, with a different school cultural environment, it might be perceived in a different way. As one focus group member explained, "I can imagine that if it were a slightly different school climate and if it were presented in a different way, it might be perceived in a different way." Another focus group member who agreed with this opinion, stated,

> I think it [implementation of 360° process in another international school or
>
> similar school setting] would be fairly similar although I believe that we have a
>
> very competitive environment here that characterizes our culture so maybe there's
>
> a little bit more of an edge here.

He also added that in relation to the initial teacher interviewees' responses about their perception of the 360° process at FEAS, he expected comments that had more of an "edge" when teachers were talking about the 360° feedback process. In his words, "I didn't hear quite the edge that I expected. I have seen many of the comments and they are not as kind and gentle as those we heard."

Final Comments About the Focus Group

It was surprising that, during the course of the focus group discussion, there was limited reference to the emotional aspect of receiving feedback as this aspect of the 360° feedback process, an aspect that was discussed at length by the interviewees. However, one participant expressed the observation that perhaps it was not surprising that teachers

found the 360° feedback process to be an emotional experience as all evaluation tends to have an emotional component.

> Maybe, it's that all evaluation has an emotional aspect to it that we are not comfortable with because I recall a while back I saw some feedback on a survey from 1994 about the teacher evaluation model, which was a completely different model. And, at that time, only 22% of the respondents said that it was helping them to become a better teacher. This led me to wonder if, well, maybe people just don't like to be evaluated regardless of the system. It's emotional when you feel like assessment is judgment. You are being judged somehow and that puts you off.

In summary

In summary, many of the focus group participants agreed with many of the perceptions of the initial interviewees thereby indicating some generalizability of those findings throughout the school setting. In addition, the focus group generated a number of additional interesting observations about their perceptions of the 360° feedback process.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, I will briefly review the purpose of the study, research methods, and the major findings. Then, I will focus on the interpretation of the findings and connections to the literature, methodological reflections, the study's implications for policy and practice, and its implications for further research.

Brief Review of the Purpose and Research Methods

As was discussed in Chapter I, the 360° feedback process has been gaining popularity in teacher evaluation despite the lack of research into its effectiveness as a tool for teacher growth and development. The 360° feedback process is an assessment strategy that originated in the business world in the 1980s. The process is based on the idea that an individual's skills may be seen differently by people who play different roles and who, consequently, view the individual from different perspectives. When used in Education, the traditional approach to evaluation (i.e., the clinical supervision model in which a supervisor observes a teacher teaching and provides feedback, at times based on jointly agreed upon issues), is supplemented—or even, at times, supplanted—by feedback from peers, parents and students. Feedback takes the form of aggregated responses to survey items and lists of open-ended comments that individuals made. The model also encourages an examination of student achievement data and teacher self-reflection based on all the feedback data provided.

There have been very few studies about the effectiveness of the 360° feedback system in the business world and, as was suggested above, even fewer in the field of education. Much of the literature on the effectiveness of this system is anecdotal in nature and very few systematic empirical studies have been conducted in either the business or the education sector.

Thus, the overarching purpose of this qualitative study was to discover teachers' perceptions of a 360° feedback process. Specifically the study focused on answering the following questions: (a) What sources and kinds of feedback do teachers find helpful? (b) How do teachers use feedback to improve instruction and student performance? (c) How do teachers deal with the emotional aspect of receiving critical feedback on their performance? (d) What are teachers' perceptions of 360° feedback?

As was discussed in Chapter III, the research for this dissertation involved a qualitative study at a K-12 American school in East Asia, FEAS. The school site studied was appropriate as the school had adopted the 360° feedback process in 2001 and implemented this process with all teachers annually since then. Feedback is provided to teachers through surveys completed by students, parents and peers. In addition, the teacher's supervisor provides feedback through regular classroom observations and the teacher conducts an extensive self-assessment every three years. Although articulated as a component of the professional growth and evaluation system in the FEAS 360° feedback process, student achievement data are not considered as a source of feedback in the process at this time in the 360° feedback process implementation.

Individual interviews were conducted with ten teachers, randomly and purposefully selected from a population of middle and upper school teachers who had

topics and/or issues. Matrices, according to Miles and Huberman (1994) and Patton (1990), are effective tools for organizing and displaying data, and, indeed, I found that using matrices was effective in organizing data from the initial interviews, and in displaying the relevant data in chapter IV.

Finally, after the initial data were organized, a comparison was made between the categories and themes that emerged and the comments made during the focus group meeting. Once again, the interview questions were used to organize the analysis, and the initial findings served as the major reference points (i.e., the basic question was whether the focus group participants agreed, disagreed, or, somehow, amplified the findings culled from the initial interview data). New points not found in the initial interview data also were noted, however.

The next section of this chapter provides a succinct summary of the findings. The summary is organized around the research questions articulated in Chapter 1 and above.

Review of the Major Findings

This section provides a succinct summary of the findings. The summary is organized around the research questions articulated in Chapter 1 and above.

Research Question #1: *What sources and kinds of feedback do teachers find helpful?*

From the multiple sources of feedback involved in the 360° feedback process, teachers received feedback on their performance from their students, their students' parents and their peers in addition to feedback from their supervisor. Student achievement data is also listed as a component of the 360° feedback process in the FEAS Professional Growth and Evaluation Handbook. However, this component of the process

had not been implemented up to the time of the study. A conscious decision was made, by administration, to withhold the implementation of this aspect of evaluation until the articulation of the curriculum was fully completed and further study of implementation details was undertaken. Teachers, to a person, interpreted the 360° feedback process as feedback from students, parents and peers. As feedback from the supervisor had traditionally been part of the evaluation process, teachers did not include that source of feedback when they spoke about the 360° feedback process.

The findings indicate that some sources of feedback were perceived to be of more value than others. The student feedback was considered valuable and helpful in focusing on continuous improvement; the parent feedback was unanimously not considered valuable; and although, peers were considered a valuable source of feedback, the 360° feedback process was not perceived as the most effective method for eliciting feedback from colleagues on a teacher's performance. Respondents found that the student feedback was valuable feedback. It was described as "an informed kind of feedback" and "empowering." Receiving the students' perspective on their experience in the classroom provided teachers with explicit information about their teaching and stimulated reflection. One respondent noted that comments in the student feedback really "provoke[d] reflection on [their] part" and caused them "to change [their] perspective."

However, the timing of the student survey and the level of specificity in the student survey questions were questioned. Eliciting feedback once a year—and, at the end of the year, at that—was considered insufficient in terms of being able to use student feedback to impact learning. One respondent summarized his ideal frequency of eliciting student feedback as follows: "If you have it [student feedback] intermittently, then, as a

teacher, you can act on it and students can see you act on it, which I think can be very valuable." Respondents indicated that more frequent surveying of students would provide ongoing feedback on the material being studied and the teaching approaches being used in addition to alerting the teacher to other issues or concerns arising in the classroom situation.

Concerns were also raised about the questions on the student surveys. They were rather "generic" and were not generating the type of detailed responses which the teachers found most helpful, according to the teachers. Along with more regular surveys, creating surveys questions that were more specific to the department or subject area was considered a necessary improvement in the process for eliciting student feedback.

In addition, there was also a concern raised that eliciting feedback from students could become a type of "popularity contest." Teachers were worried that students could determine a score based on the teacher's personality or the extent to which the class was perceived as "fun." As described by one respondent, "With the students, sometimes there are things you just have to do—you have to deliver the curriculum and the students may not necessarily love it." In other words, teachers were concerned that being popular and fun would be confused with being an effective teacher.

Respondents indicated that peers were a valuable source of feedback. However, they did not find the peer feedback generated through the 360° feedback process helpful. Receiving feedback on a written survey form was not considered the best method for effectively receiving feedback from colleagues. Many expressed a desire for more peer dialogue and peer collaboration and other more authentic feedback mechanisms.

Parent feedback was not considered valuable or helpful. Teachers noted that the number of respondents was so limited that it could not be considered a representative sample of the students' parents. In addition, respondents questioned the parents' ability to answer questions about the teacher's performance in the classroom and noted that, in most cases, parents must rely on the student's perception of the teacher in order to complete the survey. In fact, the major problem with both the parent and the peer feedback, from the teachers' perspective, was that neither group had observed teachers working in the classroom. Apparently, in the teachers' minds, classroom work was what constituted teachers' work, or at least the work that should be evaluated.

Research Question #2: *How do teachers use feedback to improve instruction and student performance?*

Processing the data involved reviewing both numerical and anecdotal data from students, parents and peers. A minority of interviewees found the numerical data valuable in terms of indicating an area where performance was lower than expected; these teachers used this information to stimulate reflection on what they had been doing (or not doing). However, in general, respondents found that the anecdotal comments generated more reflection than the quantitative summaries of the survey data. The comments encouraged them "to stop and think" and to try to understand "what the respondent was thinking."

For most interviewees, comparing a teacher's mean scores to the mean score of all teachers in his or her school division was highly problematic. There was a sense that this comparative data fostered a competitive environment where teachers focused on comparisons instead of continuous improvement. One respondent stated: "I think innately

we know that when we get this data, we are being compared so it is not just your data to improve you as an individual."

In addition, teachers expressed concerns about the nature of the mean scores, and, noted that, if the comparative data had to be included in the feedback form that summarized their data, the comparison should be with teachers of the same subject area. One respondent, for example, stated:

> When a student is responding in the upper school, and they are responding to a required class that they hate and don't want to take and responding to a class that they have signed up for and they love it ... their response is not going to be the same. But, the questions are the same. So I think that to make a judgment on those and to compare those numbers, it's apples and oranges, it's not the same thing.

Thus it was considered unfair to compare teachers of the required academic classes with teachers of student self-selected classes.

In some cases, discrepancies were observed between the teacher's perception and the student's perception. In these cases, teachers appeared to have considered the student's perspective carefully. Some observed that, although they did not necessarily agree with the student's perception, it was important to be aware of a discrepancy in perception. One respondent, for example, spoke about a difference in perspective he had with his students regarding the content of tests. From his perspective, he felt that he should give challenging tests so that students could demonstrate their understanding of the concepts. However, the student feedback indicated that they would like "less challenging tests so that they could do better on them." The teacher concluded after

receiving the feedback that he would continue to challenge his students but that, in future, he would explain why each test was pitched at that particular difficulty level.

All teachers reflected on their feedback; five of the ten teachers demonstrated extensive critical reflection and questioning of long held assumptions. In all cases, after considering the input from the students, teachers made changes in their teaching practices. Some of these changes were superficial but many involved questioning assumptions and changing habits they had practiced for many years.

As required by the FEAS professional growth and evaluation procedures, teachers set improvement goals based on feedback from the 360° feedback process. Although each teacher is expected to set one goal each year, many teachers set more that one goal and consequently had made a number of changes in their teaching. Not surprisingly, given that respondents found the student feedback the most valuable, the vast majority of changes were made in response to student feedback.

Research Question #3: *How do teachers deal with the emotional aspect of receiving critical feedback on their performance?*

Comments from students were valued and considered carefully. Interestingly, although the vast majority of the comments that the interviewees received were positive, most interviewees found that they fixated on the negative comments. These comments generated emotional responses. In fact, negative comments—especially unexpected negative comments of a personal nature in particular—evoked strong reactions (such as disappointment, stress, anger and self-doubt) among interviewees and focus group participants. One interviewee, for example, stated: "The personality things ...can cut a

little deeper." Most of the interviewees, in fact, used words like: *"hurt," "agonize,"* and

"devastating" when speaking about their reactions to negative comments. In addition,

respondents found that when they were feeling confident about their performance as

professionals, they were better able to accept and deal with critical comments. At times of

self-doubt, such as early in their careers at FEAS, these critical comments were more

difficult to deal with.

The supervisor's handling of the feedback conference appeared to be a significant

factor in determining the teacher's level of comfort when sharing the feedback and

working on goals for improvement. When the supervisor affirmed the teacher's

performance and viewed the feedback merely as "a snapshot" of the teacher's

performance rather than as the complete picture, the teacher's comfort level increased.

Research Question #4: *What are teachers' perceptions of 360° feedback?*

The answer to the fourth research question took a number of different forms. One

form focused on teachers' overall perception of the 360° feedback process at the school.

Other forms included the administrator's use of the feedback, teacher choice in the

process and the cost/benefit ratio of the process and the overall culture of the school.

The overall perception is that there is a gap between the "espoused theory" and

the "theory-in-use" of the 360° feedback process at FEAS. Although, the espoused theory

is that the 360° feedback process is a formative process, the majority of the interviewees

and members of the focus group indicated that they perceived the process as a summative

evaluation process. One respondent described her feelings as:

The three hundred and sixty degree feedback process is not about just giving

feedback in most of our minds. It's about making judgments about you as a

professional. You can call it what you want but it's evaluative. If it is to be a truly

formative process, the teacher has to have complete control over the data. It has to

belong to the teacher.

Since the feedback is shared with the teacher's supervisor, it becomes part of the

overall evaluation of the teacher's performance rather than being merely a stimulus for

reflection for the teacher.

Teachers referred to the documentation on the 360° feedback process which

states: "While the information from this process will be used by the facilitator as

assistance in making a decision about placing a teacher on the Intensive Assistance Track

[the probationary track], it must be stressed that this is a formative process" (Professional

Growth and Evaluation Handbook, p. 65, See Appendix G). As stated in Chapter IV,

some teachers viewed the possible use of the feedback, on a teacher's performance, in a

summative manner as a threatening situation or a "high risk thing." Others felt that, in a

sense, there was additional security for teachers because of multiple sources of feedback

on their performance. In other words, a teacher could not be fired because of one or two

unfavorable supervisor observations. Whichever attitude teachers took, the general

perception was that the process was a summative process.

In addition, there was a sense that the administrators underestimated how

"upsetting" the sharing of feedback with the supervisor was to teachers in general. Two

reasons were given for the concerns teachers experienced when sharing feedback with

their supervisor. One reason was that teachers wanted to appear impressive to the

administrator and were reluctant to share negative feedback that might influence the administrator's positive impression of them. Accordingly, teachers felt the need to defend low scores or negative comments. The second reason was that, as mentioned previously, since the feedback went to the teacher's supervisor, it felt summative and teachers were "more worried about the negative comments."

Another view shared by respondents was the desire to have some choices in the evaluation process. As expressed by one respondent,

> I think everyone also knows as well that there are lots of other ways to evaluate teachers and I think it would be great if teachers had their own choice of the process as opposed to everyone having the same methodology.

There was a sense that if the system were differentiated so that teachers at different stages of their career could avail of different options, it would be a more meaningful process.

Concerns also were expressed about the cost/benefit ratio of such a system at FEAS. The fact that the expenditure to support the process—in terms of money, time and energy—is considerable was clearly expressed by respondents. The process involves an extensive outlay of money and effort. Teachers are asked to complete a survey for each of several colleagues; students' instructional time is used to complete surveys; clerical time is required for mailing and collating surveys. In addition to the cost of time and effort, the cost of hiring a company to process the survey forms amounts to USD 70.00 per faculty member each year. The respondents noted that, although the process at FEAS appeared to have increased the level of dialogue about teaching and learning, there should be a more efficient and effective way to get feedback from students and peers on teachers' performance.

Finally, the cultivation of a positive school culture, where the focus was on continuous improvement, was emphasized. This concern was expressed by the interviewees and the focus groups members. As explained by one focus group member:

If the culture is perceived as more collegial and supportive, it seems like it promotes reflection and more conversation among colleagues but if it is perceived as being very competitive and if it [the feedback process] is seen as a summative tool, it seems that just makes people very anxious and less likely to have those conversations.

The interviewees perceived that the 360° feedback contributed to the development of a competitive culture rather than a collaborative culture. Although the term "morale" was not used, there was a sense that the 360° feedback process, as currently implemented, had a negative effect on faculty morale. The teachers involved in the study stated that in order to foster a positive culture and positive faculty morale, the focus of the evaluation system should be on attaining the FEAS teaching standards and demonstrating a high level of professional excellence. This would entail disregarding competition and rewarding professional collaboration. Teachers would be compared to the FEAS teaching standards instead of to each other. In addition, teachers indicated that they would be more empowered, more professionally rewarded and more motivated to continuously improve if they owned the data.

The Interpretation of the Findings and Connections to the Literature

The purpose of this section is to discuss some of the major findings in the context of the extant literature. Key findings will be discussed as related to existing literature.

The Purpose of the Evaluation Process

Much of the literature reviewed in Chapter II distinguished between formative and summative purposes for evaluation. Chapter II also summarized two opposing views about the relationship between these two purposes: One view purports that "unless the procedures for direct assistance (supervision and professional growth) are made clearly distinct and separate from evaluation (formal contract and renewal and judgment of competence), one can talk until one is blue in the face about supervision as a helping and formative process but teachers will not believe in it" (Glickman, Gordon and Ross-Gordon, 1998, p. 312). An opposing view was articulated by McConney, Schalock and Del Schalock (as cited in Stronge, 1997) who stated that formative and summative evaluation "can and...must support each other" (p.174), and by Stronge (1997) who stated: "Evaluation systems that include both accountability and personal growth dimensions are both desirable and necessary if evaluation is to serve the needs of individual teachers and the school and community at large (p. 4).

The findings from this study tend to support the former rather than the latter position. To state this issue more clearly, the findings of this research support the idea that using a teacher evaluation process for both formative and summative purposes is problematic.

Thus, the findings from this study support not only the thinking of McConney, Schalock & Del Schalock (in Stronge, 1997), they also support positions taken by Dalton (1996, cited in Dyer, 2001) and by Dyer (2001). Dalton posited that using 360° feedback for summative purposes violates principles about learning, growth and change. In

addition, Dyer (2001) claimed that "both leaders and raters may be reluctant to participate in the 360° feedback process if they know or even suspect that the data will be used for evaluative purposes" (p.37).

Dyer, in fact, was emphatic that the feedback from the 360° feedback process should be used by the teacher in his or her own professional growth and development. She stated that the school must "pledge" that the data belong to the person being rated and that the decision to act on the data belongs to the recipient. She further explained that if the supervisor wants assurance that the recipient is held accountable for the feedback, he or she "should initiate an evaluative performance appraisal, not a 360° process" (p.37).

Young (2001), in her research, also found that 360° feedback was more effective when used to foster professional growth rather than when used as a summative evaluation. Although her research involved school administrators, the findings were similar to the current study findings in this regard. Findings from this study would tend to support the view that feedback from the 360° feedback process should be used in a formative manner. Teachers stated that the feedback should be used for the teacher's self-reflection and should not be used as a component of the supervisor's summative assessment of the teacher's performance.

Multiple Feedback

The use of multiple sources and multiple evaluators in evaluating a teacher's performance has been touted as being more advantageous than single-source evaluation by a number of educators (Manatt, 1997, 2000; Stronge, 1997). Stronge, for example, stated that using multiple data sources provided a more complete and richly textured portrait of the evaluatee's performance and that greater reliability in the documentation of

performance was assured. Santeusanio (1998) maintained that 360° feedback, one method of eliciting multiple feedback, solves "some problems associated with single sources evaluations, including lack of fairness, accuracy, credibility, and usefulness to the evaluatee" (p. 32).

Respondents, in this study, however, did not find the "multiple" sources of data, as facilitated by the 360° feedback process, valuable. They found that one source of feedback, the student feedback, provided valuable insights into the student's experience in the classroom and, in general, that student feedback was fair and credible. However, respondents felt that, although peers were a good source of feedback, using the 360° degree process as a method of eliciting feedback from peers was unsatisfactory. They also questioned the value of eliciting feedback from parents through any method. In effect, using the 360° feedback process to elicit multiple feedback did not appear to present a "complete and richly textured portrait" of the performance of the teachers in this study.

Student Feedback

As noted in chapter II, there is strong evidence in the literature to suggest that student feedback is valuable in teacher growth and development (Cook-Sather 2002; Omotani, 1992; Rodgers, 2002; Scriven, 1995; Weber, 1992). Cook-Sather maintained that when teachers listen and learn from students, they cultivate the ability to see the world through students' eyes, which can then enhance teacher effectiveness. Brookfield (1995) stated much the same thing: "Seeing our practice through students' eyes helps us teach more responsively" (p. 35). Furthermore, the literature suggests that student reports

are a relatively reliable indicator of teacher effectiveness (Darling-Hammond, Wise &

Pease, 1983; McGreal, 1983).

Teachers, in this study, indicated that the student feedback was valuable in

understanding the students' perception of their performance. However, some concerns

found in this study are also expressed in the literature. As an example, teachers, in this

study, were concerned that student feedback could become a popularity contest. This

view is not totally absent from the current literature, despite the reliability findings

mentioned above, Price (1992), in fact, echoes the concern expressed by teachers in this

study when he states that there is a danger that students could use the feedback

opportunity to "reward teachers they like and punish teachers that they do not like" (p.34)

especially if they are aware that the feedback is being used for summative purposes.

Parent Feedback

As explained in Chapter II, the literature on parent feedback reveals that many

teachers question the value of parent feedback. Teachers are concerned, for instance,

about inaccurate and unfair feedback on their performance from parents primarily

because parents are not privy to their classroom teaching and base their perceptions on

their children's opinions (Ostrander, 1996). Furthermore, the literature suggests that,

although parents may be expert at raising their own children, they are not experts about

classroom teaching (Peterson, 2000). Manatt (1997), on the other hand, has articulated a

decidedly different view. He claimed that, since teachers know that parents (and students)

are not going to treat them as kindly as the educators with whom they work, they resist

adding parent voices to the evaluation process.

The teachers in this study clearly sided with Ostrander (1996) and Peterson (2000) when it came to assessing the value of parent feedback. One would think that feedback from parents would be of some value in terms of understanding parents' views on say communication or the students expressed views outside the classroom, however, respondents in this study did not identify any valuable components in the feedback from parents at all.

Does this mean that the sort of defensiveness that Manatt (1997) talked about was at work in the school? Not necessarily, since Manatt's analysis suggests that teachers devalue both parent and student feedback because they believe that both will be more critical than the feedback of peers. Participants in this study, however, clearly valued feedback from students and wanted even more of it. It is possible that the devaluing of parent feedback by FEAS teachers had more to do with the particulars of the situation.

Self/Other Comparison Feedback

This research study found that the majority of the respondents would prefer to have their feedback scores compared to a set of teaching standards rather than to other teachers' scores. Teachers conveyed that their goal was to meet the FEAS teaching standards. This did not involve competition with other teachers or a desire to score above the mean (although, when mean scores were placed alongside the scores they received— the practice at FEAS—they indicated that they felt compelled to compare themselves to them). Rather than a competitive environment, most teachers expressed a desire for a collaborative environment where the focus was on continuous improvement.

This set of findings is consistent with DeNisi and Kluger's (2000) research on performance appraisal feedback which suggested that feedback that highlights self-other comparisons focuses the recipient's attention on himself or herself rather than on the performance task being evaluated. This type of comparative feedback causes employees to become "alienated and demoralized" (Atwater & Brett, 2002).

This current study, however, also suggests that the situation is a bit more complicated. In this study, some respondents—albeit a minority of them—indicated that they appreciate the opportunity to compare their scores with the mean scores of the other teachers in the school. Thus, the overall findings, here, ultimately, are consistent with the findings of Atwater and Brett (2002). They found that such comparisons help *some* employees to achieve increased self-awareness, whereas, with others, the comparison is detrimental to their ego, threatens their self-esteem, and is likely to decrease the individual's capacity to use the feedback for growth and development. This study provides some empirical support for the idea that comparisons with other teachers will produce a bimodal response. It also suggests, however, that feeling threatened may be the more common response. If other studies confirm this, decision makers may want to reconsider the inclusion of mean data in the feedback provided to teachers.

Adult Learning

As was emphasized in the review of the literature, responding to feedback and improving teacher decision making are "largely...process[es] of adult learning" (Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon, 1998, p.51). A number of findings, in the literature on adult learning, are helpful in understanding teachers' reactions to feedback from the

360° process and the process they underwent in processing that feedback. For example, receiving and critically reflecting on feedback was, for the majority of teachers in the study, an emotional experience. This is consistent with what Brookfield (1995) has said about acquiring new perspectives on our teaching practice and questioning assumptions that we "did not even realize we had" (p. 39) always being emotional experiences.

Brookfield (1995) emphasized that critical reflection can only happen when the environment is relatively non-threatening and teachers in the study, for the most part, reinforced this idea. Teachers in the study, in fact, expressed the desire for a collaborative culture, a culture which encouraged the exchange of ideas and teacher growth, a culture that was supportive and non-threatening. Teachers described a culture such as that described by Taylor (2000), "a safe, open, and trusting environment that allows for participation, collaboration, exploration, critical reflection, and feedback" (p.154). Part of the problem with the 360° feedback process in the school in question, according to the teachers interviewed—and also the focus group members—was the highly competitive nature of the school's culture.

Organizational Learning

Argyris and Schön's (1996) distinction between espoused theories and theories-in-use are also helpful in making sense of the data from this study. The findings, in turn, add a degree of concreteness to the distinction. An espoused theory, according to Argyris and Schön's, is theory that is what members of the organization *say* is happening. By contrast, a theory-in-use is what actually occurs in practice and involves the normally unconscious "theories" that govern actual behavior. Teachers in this study perceived a

gap between the "espoused theory" and the "theory-in-use" related to the 360° feedback process at FEAS. The espoused theory is that the 360° feedback process is a formative process (See Appendix G, Professional Growth and Evaluation Handbook, p.2), however, from the respondents' perspective, the theory-in-use is that the 360° feedback is a summative evaluation process.

Over the past five years at FEAS, efforts have been made to monitor the 360° feedback process implementation. The Professional Growth and Development Committee was convened. This committee received feedback from faculty about specific aspects of the process that appeared not to be working. The committee responded to those concerns by modifying aspects of the process identified as being problematic. For instance, the parent, student and peer surveys were revised by the committee.

Another concept presented by Argyris & Schön (1996) may help to shed some light on the process being employed by the committee and the process that might be needed at this time to close the gap between the espoused theory and the theory-in-use of the 360° feedback process at FEAS. The committee worked to improve the technique, to make the technique more efficient. This response would be described by Argyris & Schön (1996) as single-loop learning as distinct from than double-loop learning. Argyris and Schön stated:

> When the error detected and corrected permits the organization to carry on its present policies or achieve its present objectives, then that error-and-correction process is *single-loop* learning…*Double-loop* learning occurs when error is detected and corrected in ways that involve the modification of an organization's underlying norms, policies and objectives. (Argyris & Schön, 1978, p.2)

It would appear that, at this stage in the implementation process, double-loop learning will be required in order for FEAS to bridge the gap between the espoused theory of evaluation and the theory-in-use. The underlying norms, policies and objectives of the 360° feedback system may need to be investigated.

Methodological Reflections

In considering the methodology employed in this study, there are two methods which I wish to discuss in more detail: (a) the use of Reader's Theater as a data presentation tool in order to stimulate the focus group discussion, and (b) the use of matrices for data analysis and presentation.

The Utilization of Reader's Theater as a Data Presentation Tool

In order to gauge the general generalizability of findings, gathered from the sample of teachers interviewed, to the FEAS teaching body, I engaged in a focus group discussion with teachers from middle school and upper school. A focus group is described as "an interview with a small group of people on a specific topic" (Patton, 1990, p.335). In the focus group interview setting, the participants are asked to reflect on the questions asked by the interviewer; they get to hear each others' responses and to make additional comments. The focus group allowed teachers to "get high-quality data in a social context where people can consider their own views in the context of the views of others" (Patton, 10990, p.335). Focus groups interviews, when conducted carefully and used appropriately promise to provide rich qualitative evaluation information (Krueger, 1988; Morgan, 1988).

Initially, 20 teachers indicated that they were going to participate in the focus group. However, I was required to reschedule the meeting date due to a family emergency and, consequently, some of these who were initially interested in attending were unable to attend. Altogether, 11 teachers attended. Of the 11 participants, four were middle school teachers; five were high school teachers and two teachers worked in both divisions. One teacher attended as an observer. All but one teacher has experienced the 360° feedback process for three or more years. One teacher had only been employed at the school for two years and consequently had two years experience of the process. The teachers who attended the focus group session mirrored the composition of the faculty in terms of male and female representation. According to Krueger's (1988) classic text on focus group methodology, the ideal focus group is composed of seven to ten people. The composition of this focus group reasonable reflected those ideal parameters.

In looking for methods of displaying data as a precursor to generating a discussion about that data in the focus group, I looked for a method of data display that would not involve extensive reading but would yet provide a stimulus for discussion. Most teachers with busy schedules couldn't be expected to take the time to read extensive data carefully at the end of a school day. Willis (2001), noted that as educational researchers get in touch with "the methodologies of the humanities as well as other social sciences, we are all likely to find ourselves considering a wide range of methods for collecting new forms of data as well as new ways of representing our interpretations of the data" (para. 7). This point was reiterated by Eisner (1997) who commented:

The assumption that the languages of social science- propositional language and

number- are the exclusive agents of meaning is becoming increasingly

problematic, and as a result, we are exploring the potential of other forms of representation for illuminating the educational worlds we wish to understand (p.4).

Arts-based educational research "employs a variety of artistic media, although most efforts have relied on words as their medium of expression" (Barone, 2002). One method proposed by Donmoyer and Yennie-Donmoyer (1996) is Reader's Theater as a mode of qualitative research data display. I use the term Reader's Theater as it is defined by Donmoyer and Yennie-Donmoyer (1996) as "...a staged presentation of a piece of literature or selected pieces of different literature that are thematically linked" (p. 407). They go on to state that if the word "data" is substituted for the word "literature" in this definition of Reader's Theater, the definition is appropriate for describing Reader's Theater in a research context (Donmoyer and Yennie-Donmoyer, 1996). The use of drama in presenting research findings was also supported by Lawrence & Mealman (2000) who stated, "Presenting research findings on stage allows the audience to interact with the data in ways that are nor possible with text only" (p.2).

As mentioned previously, in the research context, Reader's Theater is used as a presentational rather than a representational art form. Donmoyer and Yennie-Donmoyer (1996) referred to Klein and McHugh's (1980) when explaining these two terms. Klein and McHugh's (1980) explained that representational art forms attempt to conjure up the illusion of reality on stage whereas in presentational art forms, the audience is invited "to make meaning from what is suggested rather than from what is literally shown" (Donmoyer and Yennie-Donmoyer, 1996, p.406).

I presented a Reader's Theater performance of the data from the ten teachers followed by a focus group discussion on the data in order to assess generalizability within my own organization. The Reader's Theater performance provided a mechanism to quickly display the data. The script (see Appendix D) reflected the themes from the content analysis of the ten interviews including some direct quotes, some composite quotes and some exposition by the narrator and the researcher. The use of direct quotes involved getting permission from those particular individuals so as to ensure that breaches of confidentiality did not occur. The script was shared with all interviewees prior to finalization and all interviewees gave permission for its use.

Teachers performing in the theatrical production were teachers other than the ten teachers who were interviewed. These teachers were elementary teachers who were approached directly by the researcher for the purposes of participating in the presentation. All 11 teachers agreed readily and noted that they were curious about the method of presentation.

As mentioned, the teachers who performed the script during the meeting were from the elementary division which had not been involved in this particular research study and therefore individuals could not be associated with the data being presented. They were requested to wear black clothing in order to reduce the focus on the individuality of the speakers and to maintain the focus on the ideas they were articulating. Still, having actual teachers act as the voices of the ten interviewees ensured that the participants in the focus group associated the opinions expressed with real people while, at the same time, protecting the privacy of the actual interviewees.

Each of the ten teachers was designated as a reader (one to ten) representing the voices of the ten interviewees. These ten teachers held scripts and read their respective lines. The stage directions, noted in the script, ensured that all readers knew the stylization effects aimed for in the presentation. An example of stage direction was, "Each reader turns (right turn) and faces audience before speaking and stays facing front until all readers in the section have spoken. Then, all readers turn their backs (left turn) to the audience and face their respective stools." Having clear stage directions in the script ensured flow and again allowed the audience to interact with the data in an uninterrupted manner.

The teachers' voices spoke for themselves. When presenting the responses to questions such as, "What is your overall view of the 360° feedback process?" it was not necessary to present the differing opinions in narrative form drawing attention to the similarities and contradictions in the data. The readers, in sharing the interviewees' comments, achieved that goal.

The narrator served a number of functions; he explained the procedures, signaled the transitions and provided the guiding questions for the audience to contemplate. These questions were: What did you find true? What fits with your experience? What doesn't fit with your experience? What are you thinking of now that you didn't think about before? Open-ended questions such as these provided a stimulus for discussion. These open-ended questions were described by Merton et al, 1956 (cited in Krueger, 1988, p.60) as "a blank page to be filled by the interviewee." At other stages in the discussion, probing questions included, "Was there anything our readers presented that surprised you?" and "Do you think these ten voices captured the teachers' feelings?"

I had two concerns about engaging in a focus group discussion. One of my concerns was whether the participants in the focus group would freely discuss their opinions without inhibition. One of the reasons for this concern was that the participants were familiar with one another. Klueger (1988) defined this concern, "People who regularly interact...present special difficulties for the focus group discussion because they may be responding based on known past experiences, events, or discussion. Moreover, familiarity tends to inhibit disclosure" (p.28). The other concern was whether participants would feel comfortable openly sharing divergent perspectives. The Reader's Theater format appeared to alleviate both of these concerns. Inhibitions were relaxed after the Reader's Theater presentation as differing perspectives belonging to the interviewees were presented. This allowed the audience to be reassured that all perspectives were acceptable. It validated the existence of divergent perspectives on this issue and encouraged the audience members to speak freely.

The entire discussion was video taped. A review of the videotape reveals more than a tape recording would reveal. Participants' body language reveals head nodding, an occasional smile and other reactions as participants conversed. At one stage, the teacher taking the video, a previous member of the Professional Growth and Evaluation Committee, was so stimulated by the discussion, that in addition to directing two cameras, he intercepted a comment about the attempts of the committee to listen to teachers' voices and to make incremental change in the process. Following the taping, the discussion was transcribed and analyzed.

The presentation method was described as "effective" by those participating in the discussion. One participant noted that it was "dramatic" and "interesting to actually

'hear' people's views." Another participant explained the power of hearing the individual comments. He stated:

> The Reader's Theater is a fun approach, but I think it is also pretty effective in being able to get the comments out. Obviously, these folks are playing a role so the comments come out and it allows the comments to be out there on their own. Then, we can think about the comments and what they are saying and not who is saying them.

The use of a Reader's Theater as a data presentation tool proved to be very effective, in this instance, in terms of presenting the findings from the interviews and in stimulating the discussion.

The Use of Matrices for Data Analysis and Presentation

For the purposes of this study, I conducted a cross-case analysis in addition to the content analysis of the ten individual interviews. A cross-case analysis involved grouping together answers from different people to common questions. The common questions, in this case, were the research questions. To facilitate cross-case analysis, I used the same categories and sub-categories across cases to the extent possible.

In looking for an appropriate tool for analyzing and displaying data, I reviewed the work of Miles and Huberman (1994). They have provided a rich source of ideas and illustrations on how to use matrices in qualitative analysis. Matrices are also recommended by Patton (1990) as an effective method for organizing and visually displaying data. In addition, Wolcott (2001) stated, Display formats provide alternatives for coping with two of our most critical tasks, data reduction and data analysis" (p.129). In this study, matrices were used both in data analysis and as a data display tool. I used a

matrix, for example, to represent changes teachers made in response to feedback. In addition, I used quote matrices where teachers' perceptions or reactions were portrayed using the most appropriate and applicable quote from that person. The matrix used depended on the research question and provided an alternative to analytic text alone.

Miles and Huberman (1994) stated that, from their experience "extended unreduced text alone is a weak and cumbersome form of display" (p. 91) and they also noted that as the text is often sequential, it is difficult to look at two or three variables at once. In addition, they stated that the text is often "poorly ordered" and can present "bulky, monotonous overloading." Miles and Huberman (1994) recommended that some data display "should be a normal part of reporting conclusions" of qualitative data (p.243) just as it is in quantitative data display.

As noted previously, matrices also facilitate data analysis. As the data is organized, it facilitated comparisons and identification of patterns which led to better chances of drawing valid conclusions. As stated by Miles and Huberman (1994), "You know what you display" (p.92). Good displays permit the researcher to absorb large amounts of information quickly (Copeland, 1985, cited by Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.93). Looking at the display assists in summarizing and noting themes or clusters.

In this study, the development of the matrices began with a general pre-coding of the data. The displays were "partially ordered" as data were places in rows and columns representing descriptive categories. However, as noted earlier, an examination of the data revealed themes and patterns. In addition, the outlier statements or the independent opinions were also immediately obvious, thereby assisting analysis.

Miles and Huberman (1994) also noted that the format used for the analysis should usually be the same one used for final reporting as readers can "see for themselves how conclusions were drawn rather than being handed study results to be taken on faith" (p.100). In addition to the matrices displaying the data, conclusions from the displayed data are usually presented in the analytic text. In essence, the accompanying analytic text draws attention to the details in the display as well as continuing the analytic process. In this study, the cross-case analysis was greatly assisted by the use of matrices. In addition, using matrices to present the data in the final report allowed the interviewees' voices and opinions to be "heard" through the use of their own words and comments. Expounding on the data in the accompanying text allowed for further insights and observations to be made.

Summary

In this section, I have described the effectiveness of two methodological approaches utilized in this study: (a) The use of Reader's Theater as a data presentation tool which provided an excellent stimulation for the focus group discussion, and (b) the use of matrices for data display and data presentation. Both of these methods allowed the audience and reader to interact with and to make meaning from the findings.

Implications for Policy and Practice

As I consider the implications of this study's results for policy and practice, it appears that there are two sets of implications that need to be considered here: implications for FEAS and, in addition, implications for another school that might

consider adopting the 360° feedback process. In this section, I will address these two sets of implications separately.

Implications for FEAS

From the findings, there are at least three sets of implications for FEAS. These implications will be organized around three broad themes: (a) The purpose of the 360° feedback process, (b) the effectiveness of the 360° feedback process and, (c) improving the current process.

The Purpose of the 360° Feedback Process

Summative evaluation involves summarizing and drawing conclusions from evaluation data at the end of the evaluation cycle (McCay, 2000) for the purposes of making personnel decisions. Summative evaluation is administrator driven and focuses on accountability. Stronge (1997) noted that, in the literature on evaluation, the term "evaluation" is sometimes used to describe the summative aspects of performance review and, at other times, is used in a more inclusive fashion to include formative and summative aspects of performance review (p.18). A formative evaluation process focuses on promoting the individual's (in this case the teacher's) ongoing growth and development (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1993).

Currently, the FEAS 360° feedback process is described by school officials as a "formative evaluation" process (Professional Growth and Evaluation Handbook, p. 2, as presented in Appendix G). To many teachers, the term "formative evaluation" is considered an oxymoron and typifies the contradictions teachers see in the process.

Teachers in the study equated "evaluation" with "summative evaluation." One teacher described her perceptions of the "formative evaluation" process as:

> The three hundred and sixty degree feedback process is not about just giving feedback in most of our minds. It's about making judgments about you as a professional. You can call it what you want, but it's evaluative. If it is to be a truly formative process, the teacher has to have complete control over the data. It has to belong to the teacher.

Teachers in the study indicated that there should be a process described and experienced as a "formative" process and another process described and experienced as an "evaluation" process.

The espoused theory of the 360° feedback process at FEAS is that it is a formative process. Therefore, an effort needs to be made to close the gap between the espoused theory and the perceived practice or theory-in-use. As I see it, there are two options: (a) Determine that the purpose of the 360° feedback process at FEAS is summative and continue with the process as currently implemented, or (b) change the procedures so that the feedback is owned by the teacher and used for formative purposes only. Since the current espoused theory is that feedback from the 360° feedback process is for formative purposes, it follows that option (b) is a better option for FEAS as it more closely aligns with the current practice.

This implies that teachers would own the feedback and it would not be shared with their supervisor; the feedback would be "for the teacher's eyes" only. This would allow the teacher to reflect on the feedback, to set goals for improvement if necessary and

to make changes in teaching practices without the concern that the supervisor would use the feedback as part of the teacher's summative evaluation.

Effectiveness of the 360° Feedback Process

FEAS should consider the effectiveness of the 360° feedback process in providing valuable feedback on teachers' performance given that (a) two-thirds of the feedback sources are either not considered valuable (i.e. parent feedback) or not considered effective (i.e. the current system for eliciting peer feedback) and (b) student feedback generated from a 360° feedback process is believed to be too generic and too infrequent. The implementation of the 360° feedback process involves a significant outlay in terms of money, time and effort: Teachers are asked to complete a survey for each of several colleagues; students' instructional time is used to complete surveys; clerical time is required for mailing and collating surveys. In addition to the cost of time, there is a considerable financial cost for the survey instruments and for the scoring and report of the findings.

Although the data from this study are limited and the issue of cost effectiveness was not specifically addressed in the study, the comments from teachers—in both the initial interview group and in the focus group—do raise the question of whether the benefits of using a 360° feedback process in a school setting are substantial enough to justify the costs associated with implementing such a system. This is a question that should be considered by FEAS as it considers whether incremental changes and add-ons to the process will provide the feedback system it desires or whether a more dramatic reconsideration of the feedback system is required.

Improving the Current Process

Whether leaders at FEAS opt for the incremental or the more radical change approach, a number of implications for improving the implementation of the 360° feedback process at FEAS are suggested by this study. These implications involve modifying certain aspects of the current system, enhancing other aspects and even removing some aspects. These implications will be presented under a number of sub headings: student feedback, parent feedback, involvement of an outside organization, peer-to-peer surveying, differentiating the system, and fostering a collaborative culture.

Student feedback. The intent of eliciting feedback from students on a teacher's performance is that students will provide rich data on their experience in the classroom that teachers will reflect on this data and use information or insights learned for growth and development. However, the study showed that, although the student feedback was considered valuable, it was infrequent and lacking in the detail or richness required to truly guide the improvement process.

In light of these findings, a process should be explored for more frequent student feedback for the middle and upper school teachers. A regular schedule of surveys should be developed rather than the once-a-year surveying system implemented at present. The timing of these surveys could be tied into curriculum unit completion or some other timeline as determined by departments or teaching teams. The surveying could involve on-line surveying or hard copy surveys. An advantage of an on-line survey would be that the necessity of another individual typing the comments is removed. In order for the information from the surveys to be more informative and more detailed, some questions should be specific to the subject area. In other words, a selection of common questions

regarding classroom environment, homework experience, teacher's interpersonal skills, etc., could be included in each survey in addition to questions specific to the subject area.

Parent feedback. The implications for the parent surveys are more complex. Since the teachers did not find the parent feedback helpful or informative in virtually any way, FEAS could consider discontinuing the parent surveys. However, as parents have been invited to participate in the teacher evaluation process and have completed teacher surveys for five years already, discontinuing the parent surveys might have undesirable consequences in terms of public relations. Perhaps, a redesign of the parent survey is a better option. The parent survey should contain only those questions which parents can comfortably answer without observing the teacher in the classroom. Appropriate areas of questioning could include, for example, communication from the teacher regarding class expectations, communication regarding the child's progress, and the teacher's accessibility.

Another concern expressed by the teachers was that the number of parent respondents was very limited in comparison to the number of students being taught by the teacher; in other words, the sample of respondents was not considered representative of the teacher's student load. Currently, the n=30 and the response rate is approximately half of that. By increasing the n, the number of responses should increase. However, that still does not solve the question of the quality of the responses, and it could mean that many parents would be expected to fill out multiple surveys.

One final observation on the parent feedback should be made. Each year, between 40% and 65% of the parent body that is sampled, has responded to the 360° feedback surveys on their child's teacher. If there is a change in the process and the feedback is

designated for the teachers' eyes only, and not for the administrator's, it will be interesting to observe what percentage, of those sampled, respond to the surveys. In other words, will there be a drop in response rate if the feedback is not used by the administrator in evaluating the teacher's performance.

Involvement of an outside organization. FEAS should review the necessity of sending the surveys to Iowa State University for transcription and collation. A more frequent, informal surveying system, such as an on-line survey, should be explored. Although, this would also reduce the financial cost of the 360° feedback process for the school, it would involve expenditure of time and effort in developing and administering the new surveys, though online survey engines might reduce this workload considerably.

Peer-to-peer surveying. The intent of the peer-to-peer survey was that teachers would benefit from the observations and knowledge of their colleagues. Based on the study's findings, the peer-to-peer surveys should be discontinued. FEAS should explore other options for structured and sustainable peer collaboration and peer feedback mechanisms.

Differentiating the system. FEAS should consider differentiating the evaluation system. Although elements of the evaluation system are differentiated for new teachers and established teachers, all faculty members are expected to participate in the 360° feedback process every year. Introducing an element of choice into a formative system could alleviate many of the teachers' concerns. Teachers could, for example, have the option of peer coaching or peer supervision. Teachers could opt to develop a teacher portfolio as part of the formative evaluation process. Teachers could select from various source of data, choosing those sources they found most valuable. Peterson (1995, cited in Beerens,

2000, p.47) believed that teachers should have a choice in selecting from available data sources and that teacher controlled systems are perceived as being fairer to teachers' diverse styles and different circumstances. Peterson stated:

> The task is for teachers to establish their own case for quality performance and credibility in documenting it…the systemic change in a teacher-controlled, variable data-evaluation system is a move from the evaluation *of* workers, according to manager expertise, to evaluation done *by* professional teachers (p.127).

Fostering a collaborative culture. Recognizing that FEAS is a competitive environment and that including the mean comparisons in each teacher's feedback form feeds into that competitiveness, a recommendation should be made to remove the peer comparison data from all feedback forms. The principals can continue to receive the aggregated divisional feedback data containing the mean score for the division. This information can be made available for teachers, like Erin and Roxy, who wish to make such comparisons.

Implications for Other Schools Considering the Adoption of the 360° Feedback Process

The current study is a case study in one American school in East Asia, and as such, there may or may not be generalizaility of its findings to other school settings, which are likely to be quite different, must be acknowledged. However, this case study can serve a heuristic function by sensitizing other schools in other places to issues that need to be considered when implementing a 360° feedback process. These implications

will be presented under seven subheadings: purpose, survey design, involving an outside organization, confidentiality, comparative data, choice and emotional support.

Purpose of the 360° Feedback Process

Any school considering the adoption of a process such as the 360° feedback process should determine the purpose of the process before implementation. The purpose should be clearly communicated to all stakeholders (i.e. school governance, administrators, parents, students and teachers). If the feedback is for summative purposes, that needs to be understood and accepted by all at the onset. If the feedback is for formative purposes, then some of the obstacles experienced by FEAS should be taken into consideration by (a) communicating the formative nature of the feedback process to all stakeholders; (b) ensure that the feedback is for the teacher's eyes only and copies are not submitted to the supervisor; (c) ensure that goal setting and improvement plans are the prerogative of the teacher and the teacher's professional responsibility.

Wilmer and Nowack (1998) cautioned that it is ill advised to change purposes after the 360°feedback process has been implemented. Unfortunately, some schools that have adopted the 360° feedback process with the intention of using the feedback for formative purposes find that, over time, pressure from various stakeholders causes the focus of the purpose to change. K. M. Dyer (personal communication, July 25, 2003) noted that many school districts which adopted 360° feedback instruments designed for teacher development (formative) purposes have started to use the instruments for teacher appraisal (summative) purposes. A change in purpose can lead to frustration, disillusionment and a negative attitude toward the process.

Survey Design

Design feedback instruments (surveys) for student, parent and peer feedback which are suitable for the school culture. If using previously developed instruments, review the questions to determine the suitability for the particular school and amend the surveys if necessary. Ensure that questions on the student survey are appropriate for the age level and refer to matters about which the student can be expected to have knowledge or experience. Ensure that questions on the parent survey refer to matters a parent can be expected to know about (such as communication of expectations, accessibility and response to concerns). Questions on the peer-to-peer survey should refer to observations outside the classroom (such as collegiality and attitude) unless opportunities are provided for observations of the teacher in the classroom.

Consider the Pros and Cons of Involving an Outside Organization

In addition, the school should determine if the surveys will be administered in-house or through an outside agency. There are advantages and disadvantages to both. An outside agency will involve a financial outlay and will entail a fixed timeline. However, confidentiality is completely assured and the additional workload on school personnel is limited. This could happen with an on line survey engine. Administering the surveys in-house is cost efficient but may demand that school personnel time as transcription and collation of survey data is required. There may also be some concerns about the confidentiality of the responses.

Confidentiality

The confidentiality of the raters must be protected. This means that the number of respondents should be large enough that the teacher being rated cannot identify individual

respondents. Therefore, there should be clarity, in advance, as to what percentage of students, parents and peers will be surveyed. The selection of parents to be surveyed should be a random process.

Comparative Data

Careful thought should be given to the use of the numerical data which teachers will receive on the feedback forms. Ideally, this data should allow teachers to compare their performance to a set of teaching standards. In many systems, a mean score for all teachers in the division is provided. If this score is included in the feedback form, it may introduce an element of competition to the process where teachers are comparing themselves to others instead of to the standards. Such competition does not appear to foster critical reflection, collaboration or a focus on excellence for many teachers and, therefore, should be considered carefully before implementation.

Choice

Adult learning theory would suggest that an element of choice should be provided to teachers in this process. For example, teachers wishing to pursue alternative peer collaborative efforts should be provided with the opportunity to seek peer feedback in other ways. Likewise, teachers wishing to survey their students on a more regular basis should also be encouraged to do so. In effect, teachers expressing a desire to elicit feedback from any other source should be supported in this endeavor.

Emotional Support

Teachers should be provided with emotional support as they work through feelings associated with receiving feedback. This can be in the form of coaching with another colleague, a school counselor or some other individual determined by the teacher.

Feedback, especially negative feedback, which is against our perceptions of ourselves, is

difficult to process and a school adopting this process needs to consider how it will

support its teachers as they work through these emotions.

Implications for Further Research

This study focused on the 360° feedback process in one school. Consequently, it

has the inevitable limitations that all "n of 1" studies have. It would be useful to study

this process as it is implemented in other schools, especially schools that are radically

different from the situation at FEAS. For example, a study of the 360° feedback process

in a school where the feedback was used purely for formative purposes would be

enlightening. Implications for other areas of research are outlined below.

The 360° Feedback Process at the Elementary Level

This study did not look at the 360° feedback process at the elementary level

because the researcher is an administrator at that level and was concerned about

subjectivity and bias on her part and objectivity on the part of the teachers. Further study

should be conducted at the elementary level to determine the value of student feedback in

fostering teacher growth and development. Weber's (1992) study of K-5 students

concluded that even primary students (K-2) are capable of being discriminating judges of

teacher performance and that elementary students did not demonstrate a leniency or

severity bias in their ratings of teachers. However, further research needs to be conducted

into the value of the feedback from students at the K-2 and 3-5 level to their teachers.

In addition, further study should be conducted at the elementary level to

determine the value of parent feedback in fostering teacher growth and development at

that level. In many schools, interactions between teachers and parents are more frequent

at the elementary level and studies might yield different results to the current study involving middle school and upper school students.

Student Feedback

This study suggests the need to focus, in a more direct way, on the best methods for eliciting specific and informative feedback from middle school and upper school students to their teachers. More specifically, since feedback from students was considered valuable, more information on eliciting detailed, and constructive feedback from students at these levels would be beneficial.

Another student-related area that warrants further study is students' perceptions of the 360° feedback process specifically, how do they perceive the process and what kinds of information do they consider most significant to share with teachers.

Parents' Perspective of the Feedback Process

This study focused on the teachers' perspective of the 360° feedback process. However, the teachers' perspective may not tell the whole story. In addition to a study of the students' perceptions, as mentioned above, a study of the parents' perspective would also provide valuable insight into the process. Areas of exploration include: What aspects of the process do parents find meaningful? What aspects do they find problematic? How do they think the feedback is used? What recommendations do they have for eliciting valuable parent input?

School Culture

The findings of this study suggest that further research needs to be conducted into the characteristics of a school culture that would allow feedback, from different sources, to be successfully utilized in a formative manner.

Cost/benefit of a 360° Feedback Process

This study also raises the question of whether the benefits of using a 360° feedback process in a school setting are substantial enough to justify the costs associated with implementing such a system. Further study on the cost/benefit of the 360° feedback system in schools is warranted in a wide array of settings. Possibly, a grounded theory approach could be used to answer the cost benefit question while simultaneously attending to issues of context.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to discover teachers' perceptions of a 360° feedback process as implemented in an American School in Asia. The 10 teachers interviewed, in this study, were veteran teachers. All of these teachers had experienced the 360° feedback process at least three times and were in a position to share their experiences over time. These teachers' perceptions were validated by the additional 11 teachers who participated in the focus group discussion.

The research indicates that the availability of external information can enhance teachers' reflection by providing them with explicit information about practice. Airasian and Gullickson (1997) suggested, "One way to improve reflection of practice is to supplement teachers' personal perceptions and recall with formal evidence about practice" (p. 224). Teachers in this study indicated that the formal evidence they considered the most valuable, in terms of goal setting and improvement, was the students' views of their teaching. Other evidence or feedback, as generated through the 360° feedback system, did not provide worthwhile feedback for teacher reflection.

More specifically, findings from this study suggest that: (a) students are considered to be the most valuable source of feedback on a teacher's performance and that parents are believed to be the least valuable source of feedback, primarily because they have not observed the teacher in the classroom. (b) Working with a peer in a collaborative environment appears to be the most desirable situation for sharing peer-to-peer feedback. (c) The cultivation of a non-threatening, non-competitive school culture encourages teachers to reflect critically on their teaching and maximizes the benefits that can be gleaned from feedback on their performance.

In addition, the study provided evidence that using a teacher evaluation process for both formative and summative purposes is undesirable. Findings from this study indicate the 360° feedback process should be used for formative purposes as this would allow teachers to reflect on the feedback in a non-threatening environment, set goals for improvement if necessary and to make changes in their teaching practice without the concern that the supervisor would use the feedback as part of the teacher's summative evaluation.

Finally, although the data from this study is limited and cost effectiveness was not specifically addressed in the study, it does raise the question of whether the benefits of using a 360° feedback process in a school setting are substantial enough to justify the costs associated with implementing such a system.

Despite the advantages of the 360° feedback process purported by various researchers (Lepsinger & Lucia, 1997, Manatt, 1998; Ghorpade, 2000; Manatt, 2000) and the growing popularity of the 360° feedback approach in business and in education (Dyer, 2001; Manatt, 1997; Prybylo, 1998), the question remains in the researcher's

mind, at least, Is it worth it? Do the benefits outweigh the costs? The findings of this study would tend to indicate that, although there are advantages to eliciting feedback on a teacher's performance from the students they teach, there could be an easier way to do this. In addition, the other sources of feedback included in the 360° feedback process (the parent and peer feedback) did not yield the rich source of feedback this process assumed.

One additional conclusion derived from this particular study refers to the methodology used. The use of Reader's Theater as a data presentation tool provided an excellent stimulation for the focus group discussion, and the use of matrices proved an effective tool for data display and data presentation. The researcher recommends that further research be conducted into these tools in order to elicit additional benefits of using these tools in qualitative research.

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Appendix A

Far Eastern American School Teaching Standards

Performance Area A: Effective Planning and Preparation

Behaviors that Indicate a Teacher Does Not Meet this Standard Include:	Behaviors that Indicate a Teacher Meets this Standard Include:	Behaviors that Indicate the Teacher Exceeds this Standard Include:
• Makes *consistent* content errors • Does not correct content errors students make • Displays little understanding of pedagogical issues involved in student learning of content.	• Displays relevant content knowledge. • Makes connections within and across curricula. • Demonstrates pedagogical practices that reflect current research on best practices.	• Gives evidence of continuing pursuit of current content knowledge • Displays continuing search for best teaching practices • Demonstrates and shares best practices and content knowledge with colleagues.

Behaviors that Indicate a Teacher Does Not Meet this Standard Include:	Behaviors that Indicate a Teacher Meets this Standard Include:	Behaviors that Indicate the Teacher Exceeds this Standard Include:
• Does not demonstrate instructional planning based upon the TAS curriculum, content, skills, processes and unit plans.	• Includes the essential components of unit plans; this includes integration of ESLR's, commonly held values, standards and benchmarks, and information literacy and technology. • Integrates multi-cultural perspectives into topics and activities. • Incorporates learning area philosophy and *essential teaching agreements*	• Implements learning plans that are highly relevant to students and learning goal(s), while reflecting essential components of unit plans. • Demonstrates good lesson planning, focusing on unit plans that consistently allow for flexible adjustment to student/class needs.

Behaviors that Indicate a Teacher Does Not Meet this Standard Include:	Behaviors that Indicate a Teacher Meets this Standard Include:	Behaviors that Indicate the Teacher Exceeds this Standard Include:
• Includes learning activities that are inappropriate for students or instructional goal(s). • Does not properly support student learning and developmental needs by the progression of instruction within and between lessons. • Does not use assessment results as a tool for planning.	• Makes appropriate and coherent connections between abilities and developmental needs of students and curriculum. • Provides an appropriate progression within and between lessons. • Plans instruction consistent with English language needs of students. • Uses assessment results to guide instructional planning. • Engages in collaborative and/or team planning.	• Includes multi-faceted approaches to learning and problem solving. • Allows for variety of instructional groupings, student choice and differing learning pathways according to ability and developmental needs. • Leads in promoting collaborative learning.

Performance Area B: Productive Teaching

Behaviors that Indicate a Teacher Does Not Meet this Standard Include:	Behaviors that Indicate a Teacher Meets this Standard Include:	Behaviors that Indicate the Teacher Exceeds this Standard Include:
• Does not give clear directions and procedures uses unclear spoken and written language • Makes grammar and syntax errors • Asks questions that are of poor quality and irrelevant to the lesson plan. • Relies solely on lecture style, mediating questions and answers. • Has low student participation in discussions.	• Gives clear directions and procedures to students and which contain an appropriate level of detail. • Uses correct spoken and written language. • Uses vocabulary appropriate to students' age and interests • Asks questions that are of high quality and relevant to lesson planning. • Uses a variety of teaching techniques to communicate with students. • Attempts to engage all students in discussion	• Gives directions and procedures that are clear to students and anticipate possible student misunderstanding. • Consistently uses correct spoken and written language that is expressed in well-chosen vocabulary that extends students' vocabulary, usage, and understanding beyond learning expectations. • Consistently asks questions that are of uniformly high quality. • Provides opportunities outside the class to communicate with individual students. • Uses information technology (web page, PowerPoint, email) to communicate with *and instruct* students.

Behaviors that Indicate a Teacher Does Not Meet this Standard Include:	Behaviors that Indicate a Teacher Meets this Standard Include:	Behaviors that Indicate the Teacher Exceeds this Standard Include:
• Does not consistently communicate learning expectations. • Provides insufficient information to parents and students regarding student performance and achievement.	• Communicates learning expectations and takes into account developmental needs. • Consistently provides timely feedback regarding student performance and achievement. • Communicates with parents and students about student's progress and is available to respond to parent questions.	• Consistently provides timely feedback, including written and oral comments regarding student achievement and makes provisions for students to use feedback in their learning. • Proactively informs a parent about student growth.

Behaviors that Indicate a Teacher Does Not Meet this Standard Include:	Behaviors that Indicate a Teacher Meets this Standard Include:	Behaviors that Indicate the Teacher Exceeds this Standard Include:
• Chooses content, materials, and resources that are inappropriate, examples are unclear. • Chooses activities, assignments, and assessment techniques that are inappropriate and do not account for student developmental levels and backgrounds. • Does not make learning relevant to the student	• Chooses content, materials, resources and assessment techniques that are appropriate and link with student knowledge and experience. • Ascertains that students are cognitively engaged. • Makes learning relevant to the student • Conveys enthusiasm for learning and teaching. • Monitors and provides evidence of	• Chooses content and develops assessment that is highly appropriate and links well with student knowledge and experience. • Provides opportunities for students to demonstrate enthusiasm and a high degree of productivity. • Provides motivation and opportunity for students to engage in projects or activities to enhance understanding.

• Does not convey enthusiasm for learning and teaching.	student learning	• Conveys a high degree of enthusiasm for learning and teaching.

Standard 7: Addresses students' language proficiency		
Behaviors that Indicate a Teacher Does Not Meet this Standard Include:	**Behaviors that Indicate a Teacher Meets this Standard Include:**	**Behaviors that Indicate the Teacher Exceeds this Standard Include:**
• Reflects inadequate knowledge of student English language acquisition needs in planning, teaching practices, and assessment. • Does not promote literacy learning across curricula. • Does not provide appropriate opportunities for student speaking, listening, reading and writing.	• Demonstrates knowledge of student English language acquisition needs in planning, teaching practices and assessment. • Promotes literacy learning across curricula. • Provides appropriate opportunities for student speaking, listening, reading, and writing.	• Displays knowledge of student English language acquisition needs, consistent with the language and cultural diversity of students as demonstrated through planning and delivery of instruction. • Provides appropriate opportunities for meeting the full range of student literacy needs.

Performance Area C: Learning Environment

Standard 8: Personalizes Learning		
Behaviors that Indicate a Teacher Does Not Meet this Standard Include:	**Behaviors that Indicate a Teacher Meets this Standard Include:**	**Behaviors that Indicate the Teacher Exceeds this Standard Include:**
• Does not accommodate for the various individual learning styles and needs of students. • Does not present curriculum appropriate to student abilities.	• Accommodates for a variety of learning styles. • Presents curriculum appropriate to student abilities • Teacher differentiates instruction, displaying understanding of students' disparate skills, knowledge, interests and background.	• Implements a variety of strategies to address student learning styles, modalities and various "intelligences."

Standard 9: Demonstrates warmth in teacher-student relations		
Behaviors that Indicate a Teacher Does Not Meet this Standard Include:	**Behaviors that Indicate a Teacher Meets this Standard Include:**	**Behaviors that Indicate the Teacher Exceeds this Standard Include:**
• Interacts with students in an unprofessional manner. • Relates inappropriately with students, considering their developmental level or cultural background. • Inadequately addresses conflict between students	• Demonstrates professionalism, caring and respect in relations with students • Interacts appropriately with students, considering their developmental and cultural needs. • Is accessible to meet with and get to know students.	• Strives to know each student as an individual • Demonstrates superior ability in working with fragile or at-risk students • Proactively helps students overcome difficult barriers to mutual understanding and respect.

Standard 10: Promotes safe learning environment		
Behaviors that Indicate a Teacher Does Not Meet this Standard Include:	**Behaviors that Indicate a Teacher Meets this Standard Include:**	**Behaviors that Indicate the Teacher Exceeds this Standard Include:**
• Does not maintain a safe learning environment for students • Demonstrates inadequate supervision which places students at risk • Does not hold students responsible	• Maintains a safe learning environment for students • Addresses student behavior that may prove harmful • Promotes safety awareness and	• Creates a classroom environment where students offer peer social and emotional support. • Anticipates threatening situations and intervenes before student safety is

for inappropriate behaviors • Models or promotes unsafe behavior	knowledge of relevant safety procedures.	compromised • Advocates for improvements in school safety.

Performance Area D: Learning Community Responsibilities

Standard D.1. Demonstrates effective interpersonal relationships		
Behaviors that Indicate a Teacher Does Not Meet this Standard Include:	**Behaviors that Indicate a Teacher Meets this Standard Include:**	**Behaviors that Indicate the Teacher Exceeds this Standard Include:**
• Is generally not supportive of peers in regard to decision-making, sharing space, ideas, methods, and materials. • Does not consistently engage in open, honest and respectful communication. • Exerts a negative influence on team or group dynamics. • Does not exhibit or attempt to build cross-cultural understanding.	• Maintains collaborative and cooperative relationships • Participates in and supports team or departmental decision-making and team- building activities • Demonstrates cross- cultural understanding	• Consistently shares new ideas, methods and resources with peers • Takes a leadership role in team-building • Makes a significant effort to understand and respond to cultural differences

Standard D.2. Upholds and models commonly held values of honesty, respect, responsibility and kindness.		
Behaviors that Indicate a Teacher Does Not Meet this Standard Include:	**Behaviors that Indicate a Teacher Meets this Standard Include:**	**Behaviors that Indicate the Teacher Exceeds this Standard Include:**
• Does not keep professional commitments. • Shows disregard for school commonly held values of honesty, respect, responsibility and kindness. • Shows lack of tolerance for diversity of beliefs and values in others, be they intellectual, religious, cultural, related to gender, race or nationality.	• Upholds and models commonly held values of honesty, respect, responsibility and kindness toward all segments of the school community. • Encourages students to embrace and act upon the school values. • Demonstrates sensitivity, tolerance and respect for diverse value systems. • Inspires professional trust and confidence.	• Promotes integration of commonly held values into school curriculum. • Inspires others through own model of living commonly held values. • Provides students the motivation and opportunity to contribute to TAS and the wider community.

Standard D.3. Complies with policies and regulations		
Behaviors that Indicate a Teacher Does Not Meet this Standard Include:	**Behaviors that Indicate a Teacher Meets this Standard Include:**	**Behaviors that Indicate the Teacher Exceeds this Standard Include:**
• Demonstrates minimal knowledge of relevant TAS policies and regulations, and makes little attempt to adhere to them. • Uses inappropriate means of resolving workplace concerns and problems.	• Demonstrates knowledge of all relevant TAS policies and regulations, and adheres to these. • Uses appropriate means of resolving workplace concerns and problems.	• Contributes to ongoing review and development of procedures and processes relevant to his/her work area. • Demonstrates active involvement in seeking positive and lasting solutions toward resolving workplace concerns and problems.

Behaviors that Indicate a Teacher Does Not Meet this Standard Include:	Behaviors that Indicate a Teacher Meets this Standard Include:	Behaviors that Indicate the Teacher Exceeds this Standard Include:
• Engages in minimal professional development activities to enhance content knowledge, teaching skills, or skills to support TAS school improvement initiatives. • Makes little attempt to keep curriculum and teaching practices current.	• Seeks out opportunities for professional development to enhance content knowledge and teaching practices to support TAS school improvement initiatives. • Seeks to keep the school's curriculum and teaching practices current. • Contributes to school-wide improvement initiatives.	• Leads in sharing professional development activities with colleagues. • Seeks out professional activities that support school initiatives.

Behaviors that Indicate a Teacher Does Not Meet this Standard Include:	Behaviors that Indicate a Teacher Meets this Standard Include:	Behaviors that Indicate the Teacher Exceeds this Standard Include:
• Is not involved in school events, student activities and/or school initiatives.	• Participates in school events, student activities and/or school improvement initiatives beyond the classroom.	• Actively volunteers and participates in a variety of school events, student activities and/or school improvement initiatives beyond the classroom. • Initiates school events, student activities and improvement activities. • Demonstrates involvement in student life beyond the classroom.

Appendix B

Informed Consent Form

**University of San Diego
Institutional Review Board**

Catriona Moran, a Doctoral student in the Leadership Studies Program in the School of Education at the University of San Diego is conducting a research study about teachers' perceptions of a 360-degree feedback process. This research is part of a dissertation in partial fulfillment for a doctoral degree at USD; the research is being guided by Robert Donmoyer, Ph.D. (Chairperson). Below are the conditions under which participants in the study will work:

1. No risks are anticipated other than those ordinarily encountered in daily professional life.

2. Participants will be asked to share their use of feedback from the 360-degree feedback evaluation system.

3. Participants in this study will be referred to by pseudonyms. However, as quotes or descriptions from individuals may be used in the written document, complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

4. Quotes or descriptions may be used in the written document. Therefore, participants will be able to review-and if need be alter- interview transcripts before material is used in written documents resulting from the study; if participants request that any quote not be used for whatever reasons, it will not be included in the final report.

5. The maximum duration of each interview will be no more than two hours. The interview will be audio taped and later transcribed (by researcher and/or professional transcriber). At this point, one interview is anticipated, with a possible second follow-up interview. The follow-up interview will last no longer than one hour. The participant will be afforded the opportunity to review and edit his or her individual transcription prior to the end of the research.

6. Interviews will be recorded and the recordings will be transcribed, tapes and transcription will be kept in a locked cabinet and/or in a password –protected computer when not being used and will be destroyed after five years.

7. Interviews will be arranged in a place and time convenient to participants. Classroom observations will be arranged at teachers' convenience.

8. Participation in the study is completely voluntary. Participants can withdraw from the study at any time. Data collected prior to withdrawal will not be used unless a participant agrees to let it be used.

9. If participants have any questions or concerns at any point, they are encouraged to contact Catriona Moran moranc@tas.edu.tw or 2873-9900 Extension 108 or her advisor, Dr. Robert Donmoyer (619-260-7445) or donmoyer@sandiego.edu . The information collected will be used in Catriona Moran's dissertation study and in any additional publications emerging from the study.

10. The benefit for participation in this research is personal satisfaction in adding to the body of knowledge regarding this topic.

11. There is no agreement, written or verbal, beyond that which is expressed on this consent form.

I, the undersigned, understand the above explanations and, on that basis, I give consent to my voluntary participation in this research.

_____   _____   _____
Name of Participant (printed)   Signature of Participant   Date

_____   _____
Location   Date

_____   _____
Signature of Principal Researcher   Date

Appendix C

Interview Guide Outline

1. Introductory questions will focus on understanding the teacher's background and history at the school. For example:
   - Tell me about your background in education?
   - How long have you been at this school?
   - Tell me about your experience with evaluation and supervision?
   - How many years have you experienced the 360-degree feedback system?
   - Please describe what you mean by the 360-degree feedback process?
   - How would you describe your experience with the 360-degree feedback process at TAS?

2. Here, I will focus on the actual feedback the interviewee received, how it reflected his/her own perceptions of his/her performance, what feedback he/she found useful, and if and how he/she used feedback. For example;
   - What kind of feedback did you find helpful?
   - What kinds of feedback did you find unhelpful?
   - Did some kinds of data get more attention than others?
   - Did you feel that the feedback you received accurately reflected your performance (both in areas of strength and, if relevant, areas in need of improvement)?
   - Did you complete a self-evaluation? If so, how did that match up against the 360-degree feedback?
   - Were you surprised by any of the feedback?
   - Were there any contradictions in the feedback you received?

3. This section will focus on how teachers used feedback to improve instruction and student performance? How did teachers process the feedback? What changes did they make? Was any of the feedback such that it would generate what Argyris (1991)[5] refers to as double-loop learning? Given the nature of the feedback, would it have been reasonable to assume that teachers might go beyond the behavioral level in their response?
   - Describe in detail what you did when you received your feedback.
   - Which group's feedback did you read first, second, etc?
   - What themes emerged in your data?
   - What strengths and areas for improvement did you focus on?
   - Could you give me an example of specific feedback and changes that you made resulting from this feedback?

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[5]When change is made, it can be an attempt to fix an identified problem or as Argyris (1991) terms it single loop learning. On the other hand, a person can learn to reflect critically on their own behavior and determine changes that need to be made to improve performance. Argyris calls this critical reflective learning process double-loop learning and considers it a highly desirable state for individuals and organizations that want to continue learning.

- Could you describe specific things I would see if I came into your room today that I would not have seen prior to your receiving feedback?
- Talk about your feedback in relation to goal setting.
- If you did set a goal based on the feedback, tell me about the goal and your perception of your attainment of this goal. If you did not set a goal based on the 360-degree feedback, on what did you base your goal?
- Describe the process you went through with your supervisor in reviewing the feedback.
- Describe the feedback conference.

4. This section focuses on how teachers dealt with the emotional aspect of receiving feedback on their performance? For example:
- Could you describe how you reacted to the feedback you received?
- How did you react to positive feedback?
- How did you react to negative feedback?
- How did you feel about sharing your feedback with your supervisor?
- Before you experienced 360-degree feedback, how did you get feedback on your performance?

5. This section will elicit teachers' overall perceptions of the 360-degree feedback process. For example:
- What do you see as the purpose of 360-degree feedback process?
- What is your overall view of the 360-degree feedback process?
- Do you see the 360-degree process as falling in line with formative assessments or summative assessments?
- How do you think administrators use the 360-degree feedback?
- What recommendations do you have for eliciting feedback from parents, students and peers?

Appendix D

SCRIPT FOR

TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF A 360° FEEDBACK PROCESS

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

(At the start of the production, Catriona and Facilitator are standing at each end of the stage in front of two stools. The 10 readers are off stage.)

FACILITATOR: Catriona has asked you here today to participate in this study. I will act as facilitator. Think of me as Oprah, not Jerry Springer. An important distinction, as we prefer if you do not throw chairs, use excessive profanity or get naked.

So, what is this study about?

CATRIONA: It's called "Teachers' Perceptions of a 360° Feedback Process." There has been little systematic study of 360° feedback systems in schools and even less on its use with teachers. Therefore, I noted a need to examine the impact 360° feedback has on teachers. The particular focus for this study is on teachers' perceptions of the 360° feedback process; for example, what kinds of feedback were helpful to teachers, how they used feedback to improve performance and if and how the feedback contributed to their development as teachers.

FACILITATOR: So, who did you interview?

CATRIONA: I interviewed ten teachers, five from Middle School and five from Upper School (and ten teachers previously in a mini-study). These teachers came from different grade levels and different subject areas.

FACILITATOR: Audience, you will have the opportunity to hear what these colleagues shared during the interviews. In addition, you will have an opportunity to share your own reflections during the discussion.

So this is how it will work: Some of our lower school colleagues will join us and share, in a Reader's Theater format, the observations and insights of those teachers interviewed during the interview process. Following this presentation, we will offer you a chance to share your reflections. But before we start, is there anything else, you'd like to share?

CATRIONA: Yes, you are going to hear some quotes and some narration. In some cases, what you will hear will represent a composite of what was said by more than one person because often the same themes emerged in different interviews. It is not important who said what. You may agree with some of the ideas you hear in the presentation and you may completely disagree with some others. Whatever your reaction, I hope this will cause you to reflect on your own experiences and feelings and that you will share your insights during the discussions. It is important to note that the readers do not necessarily agree with the people whose views they are articulating during the performance.

FACILITATOR: Let's welcome the 10 readers.

(10 readers come on stage with one stool each and all readers stand in front of the stools with their backs to the audience)

FACILITATOR: How would you describe the 360° feedback process?

(Each reader turns (right turn) and faces audience before speaking and stays facing front until all readers in the section have spoken. Then, all readers turn their backs (left turn) to the audience and face their respective stools.)

READER 1: I would describe it as a method for gathering information from all the different stakeholders in the school: from students, parents, administrators and fellow teachers. And having them evaluate your teaching and your collegiality.

READER 2: The feedback is given back to you as a means of reflection and also given to your supervisor as a means of summative evaluation. Your supervisor is supposed to come in and do something …but often there's not enough time…

READER 3: It's an attempt to get feedback from your students, peers and parents through a list of targeted questions and a rating system with some commentary.

READER 4: It means feedback from all the way around – feedback is not just from one source, it is from students, parents, peers and the administrator.

READER 5: But we focus, as do most teachers, on the surveys from students, parents and peers when we are talking about 360.

READER 6: I think it is a comprehensive way for me and the school to obtain feedback on what I do. And it's all related to the teaching standards.

READER 7:   And you are compared to the other teachers…you are compared against a mean for your division.

READER 8: The 360 process is described as a formative process but if the feedback is given to your principal and used in your evaluation, how can it be just formative?

READER 9: We have 360 because, in the last strategic plan, we, teachers, wanted more feedback on our performance and we sure got it.

READER 10: How would I describe it? I just don't like it.

(After the final reader in this section is heard, all readers turn their backs (left turn) to the audience and sit on their respective stools.)

CATRIONA: As most of you will recall, the 360° feedback process was introduced in our school's strategic planning process of 1999. The intention was to promote a formative evaluation process using multiple sources of feedback to foster ongoing, individualized professional growth for all administrators and teachers.

NARRATOR: Next, we will examine perceptions of different sources of feedback. Did you find student feedback helpful?

(Each read stands to deliver speech and remains standing until all readers have spoken.)

READER # 1: I have always found student feedback to be honest and forthright. They are the ones who are there everyday so it's an informed kind of feedback.

READER # 2: Feedback from students has caused me to change things that I have been doing for 20 years and I have seen positive outcomes. That is pretty powerful!

READER # 3: Students know my personality, my idiosyncrasies, my strengths and my weaknesses. They are able to talk about their experiences in my classroom.

READER # 4: I value student feedback.

(After the final reader in this section is heard, all readers turn their backs (left turn) to the audience and sit on their respective stools.)

NARRATOR: Did you find parent feedback helpful?

(Each reader stands to deliver speech and remains standing until all readers have spoken.)

READER #5: The parent feedback is an absolute waste of time.

READER #6: There were comments from one or two parents that were so far out of left field, compared to everyone else, that I just discounted them.

READER #7: The number of parents who respond is very, very limited in relation to the number of students I teach.

READER #8: Some parents believe that because they went to school; they have knowledge of teaching and are qualified to comment on particular aspects of teaching. Of course, they can offer opinions but it's all perception.

(After the final reader in this section is heard, all readers pivot back (left turn) to their original positions.)

NARRATOR: Did you find peer feedback helpful?

(Each reader turns (right turn) and faces audience before speaking and stays facing front until all readers in the section have spoken. Then, all readers turn their backs (left turn) to the audience and sit on stools.)

READER #1: The feedback from my peers was "like a birthday card."

READER #2: Peers don't see you enough, you're not in their classrooms and they are not in yours. You may be all together in meetings but that is not the essence of what you do, which is what you do in the classroom.

READER #3: I got a comment and thought, "Why didn't someone tell me this? If someone has a problem, you talk about it and resolve it, you don't give someone a low score on a piece of paper or write a negative comment on them anonymously.

READER #4: I am fortunate to work in a department where we do a lot of sharing and that helps me grow professionally.

READER #5: Peers are some of the best judges of how I teach but their response cannot be in the form of a survey; I'd like to see them come into my class.

(After the final reader in this section is heard, all readers pivot back (left turn) with their backs to audience and face their respective stools.)

CATRIONA: Research notes that employees are more motivated to use feedback, even unfavorable feedback, if the feedback source is perceived as credible and if the feedback is of high quality. From these responses from your colleagues, we learn that feedback from students is perceived as useful and helpful in motivating teachers to reflect on their performance. However, current feedback systems from parents and peers are not providing credible, quality feedback.

Thank you, readers.

(At this stage, the narrator elicits a response from the audience. For the duration of the discussion, all readers face the audience sitting on stools.)

NARRATOR: This is your opportunity to participate in the discussion. What did you find true? What fits with your experience? What doesn't fit with your experience? What are you now thinking about that you didn't think about before? Would someone like to share?

(Time is provided to audience members to share their opinions.)

NARRATOR: Thank you for sharing your opinions. Now, we will carry on. Readers are again ready to share the perspectives of the interviewees.

How do you feel about sharing your feedback with your supervisor?

(Each reader stands before speaking and stays facing front until all readers in the section have spoken.)

READER#10: If I didn't have to share my feedback with my administrator, even though I have a good relationship with them, I would take it more seriously. I would "own" the data and set goals based on it.

READER#9: If I could do goal setting with my administrator and just talk about the feedback, instead of having them read it, it might lessen the emotional impact.

READER #8: These are people's perceptions and while they can be somewhat valid, they are not necessarily a true reflection of what is happening in the classroom, but they are submitted to your supervisor.

READER # 7: My supervisor explained that this is just a "snapshot."

READER # 6: It's pretty scary because low scores could mean that you are put on professional probation.

READER # 5: I have a very good relationship with my supervisor but if I didn't, it would be quite uncomfortable and quite intimidating.

READER # 4: Like I said before, if it is just a formative process, why does the supervisor have to see it - it belongs to the feedback recipient.

(After the final reader in this section is heard, all readers sit on stools facing audience.)

FACILITATOR: Have you made changes in your teaching as a result of feedback?

(Each reader stands to deliver speech and remains standing facing front until all readers in the section have spoken. Ten, readers sit on stools with backs facing audience.)

READER #1: Yes. I made a change in how I give directions to students – better written and oral directions and more checking for understanding.

READER #2: Yes. From student feedback, I looked at ways of delivering more accessible oral work.

READER # 3: Yes, students told me that I lectured too much so I am focusing on including more of a variety of methods, different activities, groupings etc.

READER # 4: Yes, students told me that I was always calling on the same students for answers. So, I am conscious of that and work hard on calling on the full range of students.

READER# 5: Yes, I started giving my students, and their parents, more regular feedback on their grades and their progress.

READER # 6: Well, every year, I get a lower score on the "timely return of work" and even though I make an effort, it's always going to be a lower area because of the volume of work I am dealing with.

READER # 7: Yes, my students have told me that I speak too quickly and wade too fast through the material, so I am making a conscious effort to slow down.

READER # 8: Yes, because of the feedback from students on homework, I have focused on the quantity of home work I assign and the relevance of the particular homework assignments.

READER # 9: Yes, I like to give the students challenging tests but they would prefer less challenging tests. So, I am doing a better job of communicating the purpose of each test.

READER # 10: Yes, students indicated that they didn't find me very approachable or available to them. So, that is the single most valuable thing I have learned from my feedback and I have improved in that area.

(After the final reader in this section is heard, all readers sit on stools facing audience.)

NARRATOR: Does the 360 process help teachers focus on the critical aspects of teaching and learning?

(Each reader turns (right turn) and faces audience before speaking and stays facing front until all readers in the section have spoken.)

READER # 1: It's hard on the ego, but when I got over receiving some negative comments, I certainly paused and reflected on what the students said.

READER #2: One person came into my room, a staff member, who has been here for years and said, "I have been crushed by some of these comments." And I had to console him and advise him to put it in the context of all of the other feedback he received.

READER #3: I think this process focuses on what isn't good enough; what your averages are and that sort of thing and not on critical aspects of teaching. Maybe that is what this school is all about. Maybe the way we are being assessed is the way we are assessing students and students are always looking for that perfect "A". Then if your teaching is a "B" or a "B+", it's not good enough; it's got to be an "A" or you are a failure.

READER #4: The comments usually affect me more that the numbers. It's funny how you can look at a score and note that it is a low score from your students in a certain area.

But, when students write down a negative comment, that hurts much more. I just think that if the kid has taken the time to write down the comment, they must mean it. So, yes, it causes me to focus on teaching and learning.

READER #5: You know when a student writes "Mr. So and So doesn't respect me." You think "Where?" "How?" "What did I do that he thought that?" Some of those personal things you pride yourself on, like making a connection with every kid, having an individual relationship with every kid; it hurts a lot when they say something like that.

READER #6: No, I don't think that the 360 focuses enough on the critical aspects of learning. The questions we are asking on the surveys have been watered down so much that are wishy washy and don't get to the heart of best teaching practices.

(After the final reader in this section is heard, all readers sit on stools facing audience.)

NARRATOR: What is your overall view of the 360° feedback process?

(Each reader stands before speaking and stays facing front until all readers in the section have spoken.)

READER # 10: I think it is an improvement over simply having the supervisor evaluate you.

READER # 9: We don't need the mean score. We don't need to compare ourselves against each other. It might ease the strain for some folks if we didn't do that because you never want to be below the mean on any of the questions. The important point is, "am I meeting the standard or not?"

READER # 8: This is a business model and we are not business managers.

READER # 7: I believe in observations. I believe in feedback. I believe in trying to learn and grow and having a realistic understanding of my strengths and weaknesses. But that feedback comes from my supervisor, the students and from the peers I work with.

READER #6: 360° feedback is not about just giving feedback in most of our minds. It's about making judgments about you as a professional. You can call it what you want but it's evaluative. If it is to be a truly formative process, the teacher has to have complete control over the data. It has to belong to the teacher.

READER #5: I have seen some really good teachers display some really unusual behaviors with their 360. We should have enough confidence in ourselves as professionals not to be worried, but there is an emotional aspect to this model that is not considered.

READER # 4: We all need appraisals but the climate in which the appraisals are done is very important. This is already a very competitive environment and the 360 process makes it worse - it is seen as a popularity contest.

READER #3: I think it is really good to look at ourselves from different angles, rather than just looking from one perspective.

READER #2: I do not think it is worth the cost in terms of time and money.

READER #1: Using multiple sources of data on a teacher's performance is good, but there has got to be a better way of doing this.

(After the final reader in this section is heard, all readers sit on stools facing audience.)

CATRIONA:

Research shows that the purpose of feedback has to be very clear to feedback recipients. Interviewees indicated a desire for clear definition of the purpose of the 360° feedback process; a formative or summative purpose. The comments received affected recipients more than the numerical data; comments caused the recipients to pause and reflect on their teaching. However, respondents found that they had to process an emotional reaction to these comments before they were able to consider the feedback for improvement purposes. Although, it is seen as an improvement on supervisor only feedback, the 360° feedback process is seen as summative rather than formative, and, it is perceived as fostering a climate of competitiveness rather than one of excellence where meeting the teaching standards is the goal of teacher professional growth and evaluation. Thank you, readers.

Now readers move into the at-ease position, i.e. they sit on stools in a relaxed and informal way facing audience.

At this stage, the narrator elicits a response from the audience.

NARRATOR: You have been presented with a short summary of the themes that emerged in the ten interviews. Feel free to contradict or reinforce the opinions you heard. What did you find true? What fits with your experience? What doesn't fit with your experience? What are you now thinking about that you didn't think about before?

(Time is provided to audience members to share their opinions.)

Final comments from Catriona followed by Wine & Cheese reception.

Appendix E

Protocol for Collecting Multiple Input Data

Multiple-Input feedback is not an evaluation of an employee's performance; it is a source of data to enrich perspective about your professional performance. While the information from this process can be used by the facilitator as assistance in making a decision about placing a teacher on the Intensive Assistance Track, it must be stressed that *this is a formative process*.

The following chart provides explanation of procedures, roles and responsibilities for collecting Teacher to Teacher, Parent to Teacher, and Student to Teacher *survey* data within the three-tiered system of evaluation.

The protocols are specific to the data that is acquired through the dissemination, collection and collation of survey scan forms. Confidentiality is crucial in this process. The procedure must ensure objectivity; therefore sealed envelopes will be supplied by the Human Resources Office into which the completed survey scan forms are inserted.

> *An individual teacher's multiple input feedback data will only be shared with the teacher and their evaluator. Only aggregated divisional and all-school (K-12) feedback data may be shared with full faculty and community groups.*

Explanatory letters and/or instructions are provided to teachers who are administering the surveys to students. Other letters (and a DVD explanation of the process to parents) with needed information about the process will be provided to parents. These letters should be used in two ways. First, to provide advanced notice to participants regarding the intent of the survey, and second, to explain the procedures to be followed in completing the survey form and returning it for processing.

Collecting Teacher-to-Teacher Survey Data*

Action	*Responsibility*
• The H.R. Department will send you the teacher-to-teacher survey instrument. • Hand five (5) of the surveys to colleagues of your choice. • Your supervisor/principal will choose an additional two (2) surveys to send to other colleagues who are associated with your work. • **_The principal/supervisor provides the chosen names to the teacher._** • The teacher being surveyed hands out the seven (7) surveys personally to listed colleagues. • Teachers who complete the survey turn in the form to the Human Resources Office, in a sealed envelope	• Human Resources will send the survey forms, grouped by teacher name, to Iowa State University for collation of data. • Iowa State University personnel will send back feedback data in a sealed envelope for teacher and facilitator/principal. • Teachers selected to fill out a survey for a colleague should respond to as many survey questions for which they have knowledge.

Collecting Parent-to-Teacher Survey Data

Action	*Responsibility*
• The school database will be used to produce a random sample of students (30 for each teacher) whose *parents* will be sent a survey. The survey is sent from the H.R. Office. Lower school teachers will have a survey sent to each student's parents. • The H.R. office staff will match mailing labels (using Chinese characters for the address) with labeled surveys for each teacher. • Parent names will not be printed on the survey form. • Surveys will be placed in envelopes, matched with selected parent name to teacher name. (The teacher will not know the names of parents who are receiving a survey) • The random sample of parents who are to fill out a survey for a given teacher is drawn from the teacher's complete list of students taught. Using 30 parents and considering that some forms will likely not be returned, should provide a survey sample size of at least 10-15 responses. • Parents return their survey for a given teacher using return mail or by dropping off a sealed envelope to the H.R. office. • See the triangulation chart below for K-12 specialist teachers or counselors.	• Once the parent surveys forms have been returned, Human Resources will send the survey forms, grouped by teacher name, to Iowa State University for collation of data and analysis. • Iowa State University personnel will send back feedback data in a sealed envelope for the surveyed teacher and their evaluator's eyes-only. ** Only those respondents who are randomly selected through the protocol process will complete the survey. Others wishing to give feedback should schedule a meeting with the teacher.*

Collecting Student –to-Teacher Survey

Action	*Responsibility*
• MS and US teachers will receive survey feedback from three (3) classes of students. • Elementary teachers will receive feedback from all of his/her students. • Each teacher to be surveyed chooses a partner teacher who comes into the class to administer the survey. A set of instructions will be given to each partner teacher to read before the surveys are completed. (Survey should take no longer than 20 minutes to administer) • The partner teacher then returns the surveys in a sealed envelope to the H.R. office. • Surveys must be kept confidential; each student inserts his/her survey into the large envelope provided by the Human Resources Office. • K-12 specialist teachers may choose four (4)	• The partner teacher delivers the sealed envelope of the student feedback surveys to the H.R. Office. • Human Resources will send the survey forms, grouped by teacher name, to Iowa State University for collation of data and analysis. • Iowa State University personnel will send back collected feedback data with analysis in a sealed envelope for the surveyed teacher and their evaluator's eyes-only.

classes across school divisions. If the K-12 specialist teaches within one school division they will survey three (3) classes.	

Collecting Self Assessment Survey Data

Action	*Responsibility*
• Each classroom teacher fills out one of the student survey forms and places it in their professional growth folder to be used as a form of self-assessment and comparison to the perceptions of students.	• Classroom teacher places the completed student survey form in the professional growth folder. • Other forms of self-assessment and goal setting are completed individually (once multiple input data has been returned to the teacher) and with the goal setting facilitator and evaluator.

Triangulation Chart for Collecting Multiple Feedback Data

Faculty Classification	Data Collection Triangulation (3 sources of Data)	
Classroom Teachers	Student Survey: ■ Middle and upper school teachers will survey three classrooms of students. ■ Lower school teachers will survey their entire class of students ■ Specialist teachers will survey four classes across the school divisions (if teach more than one division). If the specialist only teaches within one division, they will survey three classes. Peer Survey: ■ Normal Protocol: 5 peers chosen by the teacher + 2 chosen by the supervisor (principal) Parent Survey: ■ Thirty parents (random sampling) will be asked to complete the parent survey for each middle and upper school teacher. Each family will receive no more than six surveys. Lower school teachers will have a survey sent to all parents of children in their classroom.	
Activities / Athletic Director and Associate Activities / Athletic Director	Student Survey: Peer Survey: Parent Survey:	20 Participating Students 8-10 Coaches 10-15 Team Parents
Aquatics	Student Survey: Peer Survey: Parent Survey:	Age group swimmers (30 across grade levels) Athletic department faculty Parents of age group swimmers (30 across grade levels)
Information Technology Coordinators and Computer Teachers	Student Survey: Peer Survey: Parent Survey:	Four (4) classes of students Normal protocol five plus two (5+2) None
Library Media	Student Survey: Peer Survey: Parent Survey:	4 classroom groups 8-10 chosen and 2 from principal None
Counselors	Student Survey:	20% of caseload across grade levels for middle and upper school counselors. Four

		classrooms for lower school counselors
	Peer Survey:	Normal protocol five plus two (5+2)
	Parent Survey:	20% of caseload across grade levels
Psychologists	Student Survey:	All students tested
	Peer Survey:	Normal protocol five plus two (5+2)
	Parent Survey:	All parents of student tested
Resource, Reading, Speech and Language Teachers	Student Survey:	All students on IEP
	Peer Survey:	Normal protocol five plus two (5+2)
	Parent Survey:	All with students on IEP
Nurse	To be developed	

Appendix F
FAR EASTERN AMERICAN SCHOOL
Student Feedback to Teachers
Grades 9-12
(2003-2004)

Teacher Name _____

Note to Students: Please remember that completing this form is voluntary. You may keep this form if you decide not to participate.

Directions: The statements below are designed to find out more about your class and teacher. This is not a test. Do not put your name on this paper. Please respond to all the statements. Please work independently to complete the survey.

(5)Very Often (4) Often (3) Sometimes (2) Not Often (1) Never (0) Do Not Know; Does Not Apply

What is your experience in this class during this school year?

1.	I am learning new ideas and skills in this class.	5	4	3	2	1	0
2.	I am encouraged to ask questions and actively participate in this class.	5	4	3	2	1	0
3.	I work on assignments that require me to integrate ideas or information from a number of sources (ex. print media, online databases, personal interviews, internet).	5	4	3	2	1	0
4.	I am encouraged to continually improve, revise or refine my work.	5	4	3	2	1	0
5.	I am required to use some form of technology in the completion of an assignment in this class. (ex. calculator, digital media, computer, internet, word processing, spreadsheet) for my learning.	5	4	3	2	1	0
6.	I receive helpful feedback (written and verbal) from my teacher about my performance in this class.	5	4	3	2	1	0
7.	My homework assignments support what is taught in class.	5	4	3	2	1	0
8.	In this class there is a balance of learning and teaching approaches. (lecture, discussion, group projects, collaborative group work).	5	4	3	2	1	0
9.	Homework assignments for this class generally do not exceed 45-60 minutes to complete.	5	4	3	2	1	0
10.	I am encouraged to write clearly and effectively.	5	4	3	2	1	0
11.	I am encouraged to speak clearly and effectively.	5	4	3	2	1	0
12.	I am encouraged to do my best.	5	4	3	2	1	0
13.	In this class I have challenged myself and feel good about my efforts.	5	4	3	2	1	0
14.	I appreciate the value of what I am learning in this class.	5	4	3	2	1	0

15. I am taught to think critically: to go beyond memorizing facts, ideas or methods. 5 4 3 2 1 0

16. I am taught to analyze elements of an idea, concept, experience or theory. 5 4 3 2 1 0

17. I am taught to synthesize and organize ideas, information and experiences into new or more complex ideas. 5 4 3 2 1 0

What is your experience with this teacher during the school year?

18. My teacher is well-prepared and organized for class. 5 4 3 2 1 0

19. My teacher provides timely feedback on work I have handed in. 5 4 3 2 1 0

20. My teacher clearly explains the course material and expectations. 5 4 3 2 1 0

21. My teacher clearly demonstrates knowledge of what is being taught. 5 4 3 2 1 0

22. My teacher paces instruction to meet my needs as a learner. 5 4 3 2 1 0

23. My teacher helps me try to be successful in this class. 5 4 3 2 1 0

24. My teacher is kind and understanding toward me. 5 4 3 2 1 0

25. My teacher helps me to become involved with the ideas and concepts taught in this class. 5 4 3 2 1 0

26. My teacher models the FEAS values of respect, honesty, responsibility and kindness and encourages students to follow these. 5 4 3 2 1 0

27. My teacher encourages me to work cooperatively with others. 5 4 3 2 1 0

28. My teacher's assessments (projects, labs, tests, quizzes) relate to what is being taught in this class. 5 4 3 2 1 0

Think about what you have been learning in this class. What has been the most interesting unit of study and *briefly* explain how the teacher made it this way:

Describe one way that this teacher could help you more with your learning:

If you gave this teacher a low rating on any of the above statements, please explain why:

FAR EASTERN AMERICAN SCHOOL
Parent Feedback to Teachers

(2003-2004)

Teacher Name _____

Teacher ID				
0	0	0	0	0
1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9	9

Your thoughtful feedback concerning the professional performance of this FEAS faculty member is an integral part of the school community's mission to raise confident, creative and moral individuals. Far Eastern American School believes that the ongoing partnership between teachers and parents fosters a high quality education and a supportive learning environment. In this spirit your observations will aid each faculty member as he or she strives to maintain best practices. We hope for 100% return of these forms. The information you share is confidential and will be processed by Iowa State University. The collated results will then be returned to the teacher and his/her supervisor. Please feel free to complete this form in Mandarin or in English. If you have questions or need assistance, please call 2873-9900 extension 1348. Thank you for your time and attention.

Section A: General Observations

Please complete all questions in this section.

(5)Very Often   (4) Often   (3) Sometimes   (2) Not Often   (1) Never   (0) Do Not Know; Does Not Apply

1. My child and I discuss what is going on in this class.   5 4 3 2 1 0

2. My child appears interested in what he/she is learning.   5 4 3 2 1 0

3. My child appears motivated by this class.   5 4 3 2 1 0

4. My child appears appropriately challenged in this class.   5 4 3 2 1 0

5. My child appears to understand his/her homework assignments for this class.   5 4 3 2 1 0

6. My child appears comfortable with his/her teacher.   5 4 3 2 1 0

7. My child's teacher effectively communicates my child's strengths.   5 4 3 2 1 0

8. My child's teacher has helps me understand how my child is progressing in this class.   5 4 3 2 1 0

9. As a parent of a child in this class, I am satisfied with the learning experiences this teacher is providing.   5 4 3 2 1 0

Section B: Communication

Have you communicated directly with your child's teacher (phone, email, conference, Back to School Night)?
YES ☐ NO ☐

If you answered 'YES' to the above, please complete the following questions. If you answered 'NO', please proceed to Section C.

)

(5)Very Often	(4) Often	(3) Sometimes	(2) Not Often	(1) Never	(0) Do Not Know; Does Not Apply

10. My child's teacher is open to my questions about my child's learning.   5 4 3 2 1 0

11. My child's teacher responds openly, honestly, and frankly to my questions.   5 4 3 2 1 0

12. My child's teacher responds to my questions in an effective and timely manner.   5 4 3 2 1 0

13. My child's teacher helps me understand how well my child is learning.   5 4 3 2 1 0

14. My child's teacher effectively communicates the expectations of his/her course or classroom.   5 4 3 2 1 0

15. My child's teacher effectively communicates his/her expectations of the students.   5 4 3 2 1 0

16. My child's teacher effectively communicates the homework expectations for this class.   5 4 3 2 1 0

Section C: Additional Comments

If you have given your child's teacher a low rating on any of the above statements, please provide a constructive comment.

_____
Signature (optional)

FEAS encourages your input and participation in the education of your child. If you have any comments, ideas, questions, or concerns we would appreciate you contacting your child's teacher. Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey and for contributing positively to your child's school life.

FAR EASTERN AMERICAN SCHOOL
Teacher-to-Teacher Feedback
(2003-2004)

Teacher Name _____

Teacher ID				
0	0	0	0	0
1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9	9

Directions: Please respond on behalf of your colleague to the following statements. If you are unsure of an answer then mark "0" for "Do not know/Does not apply."

(5)Very Often (4) Often (3) Sometimes (2) Not Often (1) Never (0) Do Not Know; Does Not Apply

What is your experience with this colleague during this school year?

1. My colleague maintains collaborative and cooperative relationships with fellow teachers   5 4 3 2 1 0

2. My colleague participates in and supports team/departmental/committee decision- making.   5 4 3 2 1 0

3. My colleague uses helpful avenues and methods to resolve workplace concerns or problems.   5 4 3 2 1 0

4. My colleague demonstrates caring and respect for his/her fellow teachers.   5 4 3 2 1 0

5. My colleague demonstrates a positive attitude in working with others in the school.   5 4 3 2 1 0

6. My colleague willingly contributes ideas and observations that help our team/department improve.   5 4 3 2 1 0

7. My colleague has helped me improve professionally. I am learning from this person   5 4 3 2 1 0

8. My colleague shares ideas, methods and resources.   5 4 3 2 1 0

9. My colleague makes a positive contribution to students and school climate.   5 4 3 2 1 0

10. My colleague is receptive to new ideas.   5 4 3 2 1 0

11. My colleague is a good listener and values the ideas of others.   5 4 3 2 1 0

12. My colleague speaks about students in a professional manner.   5 4 3 2 1 0

13. My colleague does his/her fair share of our team/department/committee work.   5 4 3 2 1 0

Appendix G

FEAS Professional Growth and Evaluation Process
Assumptions:

In the fall of 1999 a strategic plan implementation team was charged to develop and implement a formative evaluation process using multiple input sources to promote ongoing, individualized professional growth for all teachers.

The implementation team developed this handbook as a guide for faculty to better understand this *formative evaluation process* using multiple input sources (known as 360° feedback) to promote ongoing, individualized professional growth for all employees. This handbook is updated annually to include changes from what we've learned about this complex process.

Implementation of a <u>formative process</u> featuring multiple input sources about teaching performance and student learning responds to the need for teachers to have a more robust source of performance data than solely their principal's observation and analysis alone. The assumptions of a multiple input, collaborative and formative system are:

<u>Assumptions</u>

❑ Multiple input approaches mean the teacher receives appropriate assessment information from principals, peers, students and parents or another appropriate constituency group, depending on job assignment.

❑ Teachers at FEAS have indicated on past surveys that they want more consistent feedback about their teaching performance from principals. They regard the clinical supervision model to be unhelpful in improving their teaching practices.

❑ Faculty want to take a more active role in their professional development, to be given information that relates directly to student learning, and to have choice in how they respond to formative assessment.

❑ When students provide feedback to their teachers about classroom climate and learning, there results a positive impact on student learning (Price, 1990, Wilcox, 1995).

❑ Effective teacher assessment is best accomplished using a judicial blend of assessment methods; hence blending multiple input feedback with annual goal setting, self-assessment, student learning data, and scheduled and unscheduled classroom observations by principals and/or peers.

- ❏ If multiple input feedback is beneficial for faculty, then its worth must be the same for administration.

- ❏ Teachers are at differing levels of orientation to the school. A new teacher to FEAS has different professional (and personal) needs than does a returning faculty member.

- ❏ The research on multiple input feedback indicates that the teacher's self-assessment is closely correlated to the results of student surveys; both relate positively to student learning outcomes (Manatt, 1997).

- ❏ Feedback from parents who are answering appropriate survey questions about their child's teacher, more times than not, provides supportive and positive feedback to the teachers.

- ❏ Once the current curriculum renewal work is completed assessment of student learning will be more fully developed toward obtaining timely achievement data for each grade level and course. Teachers need easily accessible data about student learning to help with planning of instruction and teaching.

- ❏ Setting annual goal(s) will be more meaningful for faculty when using multiple data sources. This data should help teachers set professional goal(s) for improvement of student learning and teaching performance. Linking data collection, analysis and self-assessment to goal setting is the most essential step in a formative assessment process.

- ❏ Sharing expertise is essential. Ask 1,000 teachers about what concerns them most in their jobs and 999 will say either the need for more time or the fact that their job features considerable isolation. Multiple input feedback promotes teamwork, looking outward rather than inward, and a sense of responsibility for people within our school to help each other improve instruction to students. The multiple feedback sources that we are using at the "Far Eastern American School" include:

  1. Principal/evaluator interaction and discussion
  2. Self-evaluation
  3. Student achievement data from internal and external assessments
  4. Feedback from colleagues
  5. Feedback from students
  6. Feedback from parents

Our school has worked closely with Dr. Richard Manatt from Iowa State University, who is the Director of the School Improvement Model project. He is an expert in the use of multiple feedback approaches toward assessment of teaching and student learning. Dr. Manatt's concepts about multiple input data gathering procedures are used as part of the FEAS model for teacher assessment.

The key components are to provide:
- meaningful feedback to faculty about their performance
- helpful discussions with colleagues and facilitators and evaluators
- every faculty member with time to reflect upon and assess his or her performance

Using the process described in this handbook, we hope to achieve the following *goals*:

FEAS Will Use a Professional Growth and Evaluation System To:

- Focus on the teacher's role in student learning and achievement;
- Help recognize and commend good teaching through discussion between the teacher and his/her facilitator and evaluator;
- Provide a clear process with support for continual and individualized professional development;
- Provide opportunities for teachers to help each other grow professionally;
- Implement and support the FEAS mission, beliefs, and values;
- Promote mutual trust and shared responsibility among faculty, administration, peers, students, and parents;
- Ensure that professional goal(s) are aligned with school-wide priorities;
- Communicate clear and specific performance standards and criteria;
- Require information on performance from multiple sources;
- Educate the TAS community about the process;
- Be fair and extend due process to all parties;
- Provide information to assist in personnel decisions, including assignment, transfers, and continuing employment.

Appendix H

Professional Growth Plan for 2004-05

Name_____   Grade/Team/Dept._____

Division_____   Academic Year__2004-2005_____

Professional Goal(s):
Reason(s) for your goal:

Linkage to Teaching Standards	Linkage to School-wide Priorities (Strategic Plan or Operation Plan)
☐ Effective Planning and Preparation (Standards 1-3) ☐ Productive Teaching (Standards 4-7) ☐ Learning Environment (Standards 8-10) ☐ Learning Community Responsibilities (Standards 11-15)	

What will you do to achieve your goal(s)?	Resources needed to achieve goal(s).

Assessment: How will I know when I have achieved my goal(s)?	Expected Day for Completion

Teacher Signature_____

Facilitator Signature_____   Date_____