

**KEY ISSUES IN THE TEACHER EVALUATION PROCESS OF A CATHOLIC
SCHOOL SYSTEM: IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE**

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This study examines teacher evaluation in a Catholic school system and the problematic and recommended practices that effect teacher formative development in the teacher evaluation process. The Department of Catholic Schools in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston in West Virginia expressed an interest in improving the teacher evaluation process in its school system. Informal comments from teachers and principals indicate that the process does not improve the formative development of teachers.

Historically, there has been limited literature about teacher evaluation in Catholic schools. Literature about teacher evaluation in general and in public schools, as well as one doctoral dissertation focusing on teacher evaluation in a single Catholic school, reveal that the formative development of teachers is a critical part of the evaluation process and that formative development is often lacking in the teacher evaluation process. The literature outlines both problematic practices that hinder teacher formative development in the evaluation process and recommended practices that promote teacher formative development in the evaluation process.

Three focus groups of teachers and three focus groups of principals representing the schools in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston were conducted by the researcher. Focus groups were chosen as the method of data collection to best explore and understand the full range of perceptions of the principals and teachers about the teacher evaluation process. The problematic and helpful aspects of the current teacher evaluation process and elements to promote teacher

formative development within the teacher evaluation process were discussed by the teachers and principals.

A close relationship was found between the problematic and recommended practice identified in the literature and by the focus groups. Additionally, the focus groups stressed the inclusion of Catholic Identity as the most important component of the teacher evaluation process. The larger significance of this study for the teacher evaluation processes in other dioceses as well as in public schools is discussed.

Based on information in the literature and the focus group discussions, the researcher discusses implications for policy, practice, and future research in the teacher evaluation process to improve the formative development of teachers in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston.

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Let us all continue to serve children well in all that we do.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The process for teacher evaluation in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston was developed in 2002 by a committee consisting of three principals and one central office administrator. The stated philosophy of the process is that, “Evaluation is a cooperative and continuous process. It is undertaken primarily to improve the quality of teacher instruction and pupil learning in light of the diocesan/school mission statements and to facilitate the professional growth of the individual teachers” (Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, 2002, p. 1).

Since its creation, both teachers and administrators have stated informally to the Department of Catholic Schools that the teacher evaluation process does not help teachers develop formatively, does not improve the quality of instruction, and includes too much paperwork. For these reasons, the superintendent began an initiative to improve the teacher evaluation process. The processes and programs for teacher induction and mentoring, student athletics, student health, and other student programs were also in need of updating. To address these needs, the superintendent created a new central office administrative position called Director of Programs.

I assumed the position as Director of Programs in the Department of Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston in August 2007 shortly after moving to Wheeling. In this central office administrative position, one of my first duties assigned by the superintendent was to determine how to address the concerns about the teacher evaluation process and to review the process overall and determine what improvements were needed. At the same time, I was

grappling with what topic to choose for my dissertation. As a teacher in the South Redford Public Schools near Detroit, Michigan, and as a principal at The Ellis School in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, I had worked extensively on teacher evaluation processes. I believed that my position in the diocese, interest in teacher evaluation, and dissertation presented a unique opportunity to pursue the topic of teacher evaluation as both a practitioner and as a researcher.

1.1 SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS RESEARCH

I approached this study with several research questions in mind. First, what did the teachers and principals in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston recognize as unique characteristics of their schools and the diocese that might effect teacher evaluation? What did the principals and teachers perceive to be problematic and helpful practice that effect teacher formative development in the teacher evaluation process? Finally, what elements of practice would the teachers and principals recommend that were not recommended by the literature and why would they recommend them?

I believed that this research was important for several reasons. First, it would provide information about teacher evaluation which could be beneficial to the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston as it sought to improve its teacher evaluation process. Second, it could provide valuable information about teacher evaluation that could be used by other dioceses wishing to improve their teacher evaluation process. Because there is a lack of information in the literature about teacher evaluation in Catholic schools, dioceses are in the unique position of needing to create a system of evaluation without drawing upon published information and local sources. There are personnel and curricular issues unique to Catholic Schools that cannot be addressed by general or public school teacher evaluation processes. These issues include the following:

Catholic school teachers typically receive substantially less compensation and benefits than their counterparts in public school; Catholic school teachers are often not unionized; Catholic school teachers are required to adhere to a higher standard of conduct and moral values than their counterparts in public school; and the Catholic school curriculum taught by the teachers includes the teaching of Catholic Identity both as a class and integrated throughout the curriculum. Third, this study would provide insight for school systems, both private and public, into how to utilize focus group research with teachers and principals to improve teacher formative development in the teacher evaluation process. Fourth, I recognized that the schools in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston were tremendously diverse and geographically spread out over the entire state of West Virginia. I believed that the findings of my study could potentially be useful to other school systems with similar circumstances. Finally, I recognized that my role as both the practitioner working to improve the process and as the researcher wishing to study the process was unique. I realized the need to carefully balance the assignment of my job while simultaneously conducting the best possible research. I believed that this study could serve as a model to administrators interested in conducting research within their school system to improve an aspect of their school system.

1.2 ORGANIZATION OF THIS DISSERTATION

Chapter One of this dissertation contains background information about the state, diocese, and schools that is pertinent to understanding the teachers' and principals' perceptions. Chapter Two reviews the literature related to both problematic and recommended practice in teacher evaluation in general and in public schools and relates the literature to the current evaluation process in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. Chapter Three discusses how focus group

interviews were utilized with teachers and principals to gain understanding of their perceptions of the current teacher evaluation process and how it could be improved to assist with teacher formative development. Chapter Four discusses the findings of the focus group interviews. Chapter Five provides implications for policy, practice, and future research. It provides recommendations for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston about how to improve the teacher evaluation process to promote the formative development of teachers.

1.3 OVERVIEW OF THE DIOCESAN SCHOOLS

The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston is located in the state of West Virginia. The diocesan boundaries correspond exactly with the state boundaries. There are 32 Catholic schools throughout the diocese: 7 are high schools and 25 are elementary schools. Elementary schools are configured as PreKindergarten-4th grade, PreKindergarten-5th grade, or PreKindergarten-8th grade. High schools enroll either grades 6-12, 7-12 or 9-12. Total enrollment in the schools in the 2007-2008 school year is 6,788 students. 99% of the students graduate from high school and 98% go on to pursue higher education. Overall, the schools are growing with seven schools undertaking building and/or renovation projects within the last year. More growth is anticipated in the coming years.

There are over 600 teachers and 35 principals and assistant principals who lead these schools. Approximately 90% of the teachers are certified and 40% of the administrators are certified. A very small percentage of the teachers and principals are religious sisters or brothers: Approximately eight of the teachers and five of the principals are religious. Each religious principal brings over 40 years of experience in the field of education and several have celebrated their 50th and 60th anniversaries as sisters.

Salary for teachers is based at 80% of the state pay scale established by the West Virginia Department of Education. All public schools adhere to this state-wide policy as a minimum standard. West Virginia has one of the lowest paying salary scales for teachers in the country and is currently ranked at 48th in the United States (Charleston Gazette, 2008). Teacher salaries in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston schools average in the high \$20,000's. Few schools provide health insurance or retirement benefits for teachers. While there is not a salary scale for principals, my observation is that all administrators both in the schools and central office in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston are paid significantly less than their counterparts in the West Virginia public schools.

There is tremendous diversity both throughout the state and among the schools. Schools and the areas in which they are located range from modern and urban to areas of extreme poverty and the rural conditions typical of the heart of Appalachia. Teacher and principal recruitment and retention in some areas are a challenge due to the low pay, lack of benefits, and quality of life in the area.

Most of the teachers and principals are native West Virginians or have lived a substantial part of their lives in the state. Many have family roots dating back for generations. Despite the hardships that have and continue to exist in the state, most teachers and administrators are typical West Virginians; they love their state and would not consider leaving.

The entire diocese, including the department of Catholic Schools, was in a period of extensive transition in the 2007-2008 school year when I conducted this study. Bishop Michael Bransfield was appointed in 2005 following many years of service in various roles and ultimately as Rector at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington D.C. From 2005 to 2008, most of the executive staff of the diocese had changed. Several lay staff was replaced by clergy. There was also substantial turn over in principals since 2005. Also, a great deal of

diocesan funds were being spent on building renovation, construction, equipment, and services for churches, schools, diocesan buildings, and clergy. This was the first time in many years that there was large scale capital expenditure in the diocese.

Superintendent, John Yelenic, had resigned early in 2008 and the schools were awaiting the arrival of the new superintendent, Sister Elaine Poitras, C.S.C., Ph.D. As an employee in the Department of Catholic Schools, I observed that Mr. Yelenic was a visible, welcome and trusted presence in every school. He promoted open conversation in every aspect of the Catholic schools. I observed that the school personnel were now anxious about the appointment of a new superintendent.

Simultaneous to the resignation of the current superintendent and the appointment of the new superintendent in 2008, the Bishop initiated the establishment of a diocesan school system. Prior to this time, each school was controlled locally by its principal and parish priest. The Department of Catholic Schools served in a consultant capacity to the schools. Now, power was being shifted away from the principal and parish priest at each school to the superintendent who was now responsible for signing the principals' contracts and having the authority to make decisions about each school.

I observed that many school personnel were worried whether the Bishop was attempting to exert greater control over them by first appointing a clergy superintendent over whom he had presumably more control than he would a lay superintendent and, second, by establishing a school system which the superintendent would control. They feared a loss of the autonomy and local control which they cherished so much. They did not understand the Bishop's reasons for these changes and the possible benefits to their schools.

As a newcomer to West Virginia, I found the school system, diocese, and state to possess characteristics that are unique, varied, and challenging. In addition to this background

information about the diocesan schools and myself, I believe that it can only be beneficial to the reader of this dissertation to have an understanding of state and diocesan demographics and history. For these reasons, the next section of this dissertation presents a more in-depth view of the state, the state history, the history of the diocese and its schools, and how all have influenced the administrators, teachers, students, and school communities that exist today in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston.

1.4 GEOGRAPHY OF WEST VIRGINIA

West Virginia's history has been profoundly affected by its geography of mountainous terrain, spectacular river valleys, and rich natural resources (Thompson, 1996). Its nickname, 'The Mountain State', describes it perfectly, for it has few large areas of level ground. The rocky Allegheny Mountains run across the eastern third of the state. The Blue Ridge Mountains lie at the eastern tip. Forests cover eighty percent of the land area, and major rivers cut through valleys in every direction. The mountains and rivers have always determined where and how people lived. These natural barriers have fostered an independent nature among West Virginians (Thompson, 1996).

These natural barriers have also posed barriers to travel in the state and had an insulating effect on the lives of people. In the 1840's Bishop Richard Whelan described the areas of Western Virginia as "quite unimproved, less so perhaps than many portions of the remote west, exceedingly mountainous, with bad roads, and a very uncultivated population" (Pyne, 2002, p. 8). Little changed in the years to follow and people in much of the state remained quite isolated. During his presidential campaign in 1960, John F. Kennedy was shocked by the poverty that he

saw when he visited West Virginia. He vowed that, if elected, he would provide funding that would help West Virginians break this cycle of poverty and isolation (White, 1961).

As a result, in the latter part of the twentieth century, federal funding was granted to build a system of highways, called Appalachian Corridors. These highways have promoted economic development and broken the isolation for West Virginians to have access to jobs, food, supplies, and medical care. It was during construction that the West Virginia Department of Transportation developed its motto: “Connecting West Virginia to the World.”

Even though there is a highway system to connect many parts of the state, the schools in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston are still challenged today by the physical distance between the central office administrators and some schools. The Department of Catholic Schools office is located in Wheeling in the northern panhandle of the state. The superintendent, assistant superintendent, three directors, and three secretaries are based in this office. Wheeling is located up to five hours by car from the farthest school. Ten schools are more than three hours away. Three schools are located between two and three hours away. The remainder of the schools is less than two hours away. All administrators in the department spend time in the schools. Yet, the distance makes it difficult for the administrators to monitor and to be a visible presence in the schools.

1.5 STATE AND DIOCESAN HISTORY

1.5.1 The Early Days

From the formation of the earliest communities, sectionalism developed in the West Virginia area which continued well into the 20th century. In Colonial times, the present-day West

Virginia belonged to the Virginia Territory. There were tensions between western and eastern Virginia due to laws considered to be unfair. Western Virginians attempted to secede many times. There was an initial reluctance of Catholics to settle in Virginia during the Colonial times due to the anti-Catholic laws enacted that declared their religion illegal. Behavior towards Catholics was openly hostile until the 20th century (Pyne, 2002). In 1846, the first bishop, Bishop Richard Whelan, moved to Wheeling because he saw promise for economic development and the Catholic community. It was this act that caused Wheeling to be the seat of the diocese and, many years later, the location for the Department of Catholic Schools office.

Although there had been several small Catholic schools in Western Virginia operated by laity since the late 1830's, Bishop Whelan took the efforts to a new level by securing the support of the Visitation Nuns order. On April 4, 1848 these nuns fulfilled one of the Bishop's goals of establishing an academy for girls called the Mount De Chantal Visitation Academy in Wheeling. This was significant because the clergy were to become the workforce that promulgated the Catholic schools through the 20th century (Pyne, 2002).

Bishop Whelan soon became convinced of the necessity to divide the Diocese, which included both the Virginia and Western Virginia areas, due to the vastness of the territory it covered. The Diocese of Wheeling was erected by Pope Pius IX on July 19, 1850 with the boundaries designated as being "that part of Virginia lying west of Maryland and the Allegheny Mountains" (Pyne, 2002, p. 12). In reflection, the Most Reverend Bernard W. Schmitt, Bishop of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston from 1999-2004, described the establishment of the diocese by stating that, "This simple act began the unfolding of a history that no one of that time could imagine" (Pyne, 2002, p. 4) as clergy, religious, and laity worked together to found and build parishes, missions, schools, hospitals, institutions and homes.

Tension between Virginia and Western Virginia continued with the approach of the Civil War and the election of Abraham Lincoln. On May 13, 1862, following many attempts at secession, West Virginia declared itself a state. The state motto *Montani Semper Liberi*, Mountaineers are Always Free, celebrates this radical and fierce declaration of freedom which continues to this day.

When the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad came under Union control, the Catholic population grew considerably (Pyne, 2002). As a result, Bishop Whelan sought to change boundaries to coincide with the state boundaries. However, his request was not accepted. His successor, Bishop John J. Kain, took the matter up again when he entered office in 1888, but met with the same outcome. A third attempt would finally result in an approval to his request but notification by the Holy See was misplaced and never sent. Although the change in diocesan border to match that of the state border was approved, it never occurred because the document failed to reach Wheeling. It would be nearly one hundred years before this matter was taken up again by Bishop Hodges in 1974 and the boundaries were changed (Pyne, 2002).

By the 1880s, West Virginia was in an industrial boom. The state provided large amounts of coal and salt to the new found factories throughout the country (Thompson, 1996). As coal mining and related work grew, there was considerable labor strife over working conditions and safety. Because of the living and working conditions in the late 1800s and early 1900s, miners began to demand a union. Armed guards patrolled the mining towns to protect mine property---and to punish union activity. Following a massacre at Matewan, President Woodrow Wilson declared martial law and sent in federal troops, but the strike managed to continue (TheUS50.com, 2007). A new strike near Blair caused a four-day battle called the Battle of Blair Mountain. Over 10,000 miners marched. They signified their union affiliation by wearing red bandanas around their necks, thus becoming known as “red-necks.” Federal troops

and aircraft were sent in and an air raid with bombing ensued. This is the only time in the history of the United States that the United States government dropped bombs on its own soil (TheUS50.com, 2007).

The boom in Catholic population continued to cause resentment with the majority of the population in West Virginia that was non-Catholic.

For the Catholics in the Diocese of Wheeling, the 1920s was the most intense period of anti-Catholicism the community had ever experienced. In West Virginia the Ku Klux Klan reportedly became so powerful as to gain influence over state politics, the public school system and the state university....Incidents of cross burnings were frequent and anti-Catholic speakers were greeted with standing-room only capacity crowds when they lectured around the state. (Pyne, 2002, p. 50)

This strong opposition served only to strengthen the conviction of the Catholics in their schools and parishes. This strong support is still very present in the schools today. Under Bishop Swint's leadership the system was developed and grew to include 67 schools by 1962. The Catholic schools remained a "system of schools" and not a "school system;" each school operated independently, with guidance from the diocese, and connected by one faith. In the latter, each school would have operated as a part of the diocesan school system.

Following World War II, the population in the coal mining regions of the state declined significantly. Population rates in the southern coal field counties such as Logan and McDowell dropped by approximately fifty percent from 1950 to 1960 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007). By 1985, West Virginia had the highest unemployment rate in the country. The steel mills were now also in trouble because of increased foreign competition. To date, there has been no recovery in the steel industries and the result has been an economic and political powerlessness among people in the region (Drake, 2001).

1974 was a pivotal year for the Diocese. Bishop Hodges petitioned to the Holy See that the Diocese boundaries be changed to coincide with the boundaries of the state and that

Charleston be named as the Co-Cathedral with Wheeling. Bishop Hodges believed that changing Diocesan boundaries to match state boundaries would help to unify Catholics in a state where anti-Catholic sentiment was still prevalent. Furthermore, it placed emphasis on Charleston, by developing it as a co-Cathedral to Wheeling and renaming the diocese as The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. Bishop Hodges believed that this would help to develop Catholicism in the southern part of the state while simultaneously acknowledging the role each city played in the development of the state (Hodges, 1974).

1.5.2 The Present

In recent years, West Virginia has experienced an unusual dichotomy. Like much of Appalachia, the region is “complex and perplexing...There is grotesque poverty and persisting ignorance, yet the area also has elite suburbs, billion-dollar multinational corporations, and major universities” (Drake, 2001, p. x). The region, “has such diversity that any generalizations must be in some ways misleading” (p. 217). Overall, the area does remain remarkably traditional in religion, values, politics, and economic preference. Because of this, residents are affected by problems that have resulted from the past while simultaneously celebrating significant growth and prosperity in some areas of the state (Drake, 2001). Despite this hardship, the state has had some significant growth. Coal fired power plants, forestry, and tourism are at an all-time high. There are also recent addition of an FBI forensics laboratory near Clarksburg, a Toyota plant in Buffalo and the I-79 technology corridor near Morgantown.

In his 2006 Pastoral Letter, *A Church that Heals*, Bishop Michael J. Bransfield noted that many West Virginians suffer from ill health. West Virginia is first in the nation in the number of individuals with high blood pressure and arthritis; second in high cholesterol; third in obesity; and fourth in diabetes. Life expectancy is 46th in the nation. Approximately 35 percent of the

working age population has no health insurance (Bransfield, 2006). Residents in some rural parts of the state are as much as two hours from a hospital. As a result of this letter, health programs across the diocese are growing to address the needs of people of all faiths: Catholic Charities West Virginia has expanded, the parish nurse program offers free training for nurses who wish to provide health care in their parish, and grants are being offered to schools, parishes and vicariates to improve and increase programs that promote healthy living.

In the 2007-2008 school year, there is a system of Catholic schools consisting of 32 schools, over 600 teachers, and approximately 6,788 students. The Department of Catholic Schools in Wheeling, established in the 1990s, includes a superintendent, assistant superintendent, three director administrators, and three secretaries. This office functions to unify all the diocesan schools in common mission, vision, and strategic plan. Until recently, each school has operated independently within this system of schools. Each principal's contract has been controlled and signed by the school's pastor and the Department of Catholic Schools served mostly in a consultant role. In 2008, Bishop Michael J. Bransfield moved toward developing a formal school system with more substantial control from the Department of Catholic Schools. The Bishop appointed the Very Rev. Anthony Cincinnati, STD as Vicar for Catholic Education. The contracts of all principals as well as other school decisions were now to be made by the Superintendent in consultation with the Vicar who provides assistance to the Bishop in decision making.

One of my first tasks when I arrived as Director of Programs in the Department of Catholic Schools in the summer of 2007 was to become acquainted with all 32 schools, the principals, and the local areas surrounding the schools. I spent several weeks traveling to visit the areas. I discovered that West Virginians are proud of many things in their state. There is tremendous beauty in the vast mountains, roaring rivers, and pristine wilderness. They are proud

too of their cities: The beautiful, gold dome on the capital in Charleston; the Suspension Bridge that pre-dates the Civil War and is still in use in Wheeling; and West Virginia University in Morgantown. There is pride, too, in the unique scientific and cultural aspects of the state. The National Radio Observatory in Greenbank, nicknamed “The Big Ear,” has satellite dishes (some bigger than a football field) aimed to the sky to measure and record sound waves from the heavens. Just to the north are Pocahontas County (known as the county with more bear than people) and then Greenbrier County and the famous Greenbrier Hotel. Established in the colonial times, it is the retreat for the famous and politicians particularly from Washington D.C. Beneath the hotel is a bunker built originally to house the president, legislators, and senate in the event of nuclear war.

While tourists are welcome here, new comers are questioned, doubted, and sometimes not trusted. I, too, felt subjected to this skepticism---always being asked “why” I was doing what I was doing for my job and “who” had told me to do things. I observed a tremendous cordiality among those who know one another. Being in West Virginia felt like a step back in time to an era when life was a little slower paced and people were more kind towards each other. West Virginians love that “life is old here” (Denver, 1975) and seek to preserve their ways.

I visited the state capitol in Charleston, and the experience is one that I can only describe as a beautiful and remarkable visit to a simpler time. As I entered the capitol, I was struck by the absence of any security---no metal detectors, no guards, and no cameras. Legislators, engaged in informal conversation of the day, were gathered in the main hall with beautiful rotunda and large marble columns while women were busy setting up their crock pots of pulled pork, beans, and home baked goods for purchase. The offices of the legislators were all open. The governor’s office was open and so we stopped there, too. Anyone could walk right in.

This evidenced to me the definite freedom in this state; a freedom to continue these traditions and ways of life that have gone on for so long. Although the state motto, *Montani Semper Liberi*, was established in the mid-1800s when West Virginia first became a state, Mountaineers today still insist on this freedom to live as they like.

Hollows were a new experience for me coming to West Virginia. Spelled “hollows,” the term is pronounced “hollers” in West Virginia. In a narrow valley, with mountains reaching to the floor, life is insulated and isolated from the outside world. A sense of claustrophobia is not an uncommon first feeling. Yet, with time, the hollers feel comfortable and comforting because they are a limiting environment; a place never changing with the same people, the same places, and the same beliefs day after day for lifetimes. Like a heavy warm blanket in winter, hollers cuddle people from the elements of the outside world allowing them to lead lives as they want. Life in these rural areas moves at a different pace. There isn’t much hurry to do anything. Folks take their time. They look out for each other and help one another through life.

My first school visit was in Martinsburg located about an hour and a half outside of Washington D.C. Many of the students’ parents commute to D.C. on a daily basis. The area is what one expects of a D.C. suburb with nice housing (more pricey than most of West Virginia but still a bargain compared with the Virginia suburbs), well-educated adults, nice shopping, and ample traffic. Compared with other Catholic schools in the state, this school is unique in that some families appear more urban and have more wealth and education. There is also a high English as a second language population.

My next stop was at the school in Morgantown. It is a new building well equipped with the latest technology, facilities, and materials that would rival any new school. The school sits atop the ridge of a mountain overlooking farmland and the highway far below. As I looked out in awe, I could imagine the children being inspired by the beautiful view from their classrooms.

It is such a gift. The families are well-educated in this university town. The teachers, too, are among the most highly educated in the diocese and aware of the latest trends in education. The principal and assistant principal are both sisters for over fifty years with the Sisters of St. Joseph order and maintain the charisms of the order.

In contrast to the Martinsburg and Morgantown schools, is the small school in Williamson approximately five hours from Wheeling, two hours south of the city of Charleston, and right on the Kentucky border. Williamson is a struggling area that had boomed during the coal mining of the early 1900s and is now experiencing the subsequent bust. Poverty, unemployment, and lack of education affect everyone here. It is the goal of many just to “get out” and move to a place that offers better opportunity and jobs. Williamson also occupies an interesting place in history: It is the site of the famous feud of many decades between the Hatfield and McCoy families. There are 11 Catholic children in the town and 9 attend the Catholic school. The school population is approximately 45 students Kindergarten through 6th grade. When I learned of these statistics, I said to the principal, “With those numbers, you are doing missionary work here because there are so many fewer students who are Catholic compared with the rest of the study body.” She responded by telling me that it was difficult situation because many people in these parts of the state still do not consider Catholics to be Christian (Sr. L. Jordan, personal communication, July 5, 2007).

In contrast, there are also more urban schools in Wheeling and Charleston with a high minority population. The unique aspect of these schools is that there are very few racial minorities in West Virginia. It is a very new experience for the teachers and principals at these schools to work with minorities.

All of the Catholic high schools have strong sports teams, so much so that it has brought about hard feelings among the public schools. Several years ago the public school principals

were so disgusted with the Catholic schools winning so many state tournaments that they voted the Catholic schools out of the league (the West Virginia Secondary School Activities Commission). Eventually, this vote was overturned by the State Board of Education.

Many students strive for athletic scholarships, but the PROMISE scholarship is also assisting many with attending college. PROMISE is a four year scholarship for West Virginia residents that covers full tuition at state related colleges and universities and a portion of tuition at private institutions towards four-year degree programs. In order to be eligible, a student must maintain a “B” average in high school and have a 22 composite and 20 in all subject areas on the ACT. In order to continue to receive the scholarship throughout four years in college, a student must maintain a “B” average while in college. With degree in hand, many young people seek to leave the state for better salary and benefits elsewhere. The question before the legislature now is how to keep these PROMISE scholars in West Virginia.

1.5.3 The Future

In 2007, the Department of Catholic Schools co-founded the Mid Atlantic Consortium of Catholic Schools with the Diocese of Richmond, Arlington, Washington D.C., Baltimore, and Wilmington. The consortium is lead by Executive Director, Mary Ellen Hrutka, Ph.D. and includes more than 115,000 students in more than 340 schools (MidAtlantic Consortium, 2007). Together, these dioceses have united with a common mission to make Catholic schools the schools of choice for Catholic children and their families and all who may desire an education rooted in the Catholic tradition and Gospel values (MidAtlantic Consortium, 2007). Dr. Hrutka, the Consortium board, and the Superintendents and other administrators of the dioceses meet regularly for discussion of how to realize this mission through joint projects and professional development for diocese administrators and teachers. The strategic goals of this consortium of

Catholic schools are: To articulate and strengthen the vital role of Catholic schools in faith formation, evangelization and academic excellence; to strengthen and improve management processes and governance models of schools in the Mid-Atlantic diocese to enhance academic excellence (MidAtlantic Consortium, p. 17).

In 2008, the Department of Catholic Schools drafted a new strategic plan of priorities. As a diocesan school system, all schools will focus on “Providing What No One Else Can Provide” by ensuring that all schools offer programs of academic rigor infused with the Catholic faith; “Attracting the Best ... Keeping the Best” by attracting and retaining administrators and teachers of the highest quality who are committed to the mission of Catholic school education; utilizing their “Calling Forth Leaders Program” and the “Leadership Academy” of the Mid-Atlantic Consortium to identify and train future Catholic School administrators; and providing a quality work environment, professional development opportunities, and fair and just salaries as well as health care benefits for faculty and staff.

2.0 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this literature review is several-fold. The first purpose is to discuss the limited information about teacher evaluation in Catholic schools. There are no substantial publications about teacher evaluation in Catholic schools by the National Catholic Education Association or other national Catholic organizations. There is one published dissertation about teacher evaluation in a single Catholic school focusing on the formative evaluation of teachers within the teacher evaluation processes (Green, 2001). The Department of Catholic schools has the written teacher evaluation processes from several dioceses in the Mid-Atlantic Consortium of which it is a member. Table 2-1 illustrates the occurrence of practice recommended in the literature to the written teacher evaluation processes in these dioceses, the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, and the West Virginia Department of Education.

Given the limited amount of information about teacher evaluation in Catholic schools, I sought sources about teacher evaluation in general and teacher evaluation in public schools. The second purpose of this literature review is to present this information which includes the following: a description of the history of formative development in teacher evaluation in the United States, the purpose of teacher evaluation, problematic practice in teacher evaluation, and recommended practice in teacher evaluation. The third purpose of this literature review is to compare the current teacher evaluation process in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston with the information present in the literature to determine both the problematic and best practice as it pertains to teacher formative development. It is important to remember that the literature focuses

on teacher evaluation in general and teacher evaluation in public schools which alone may or may not be applicable to teacher evaluation in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. Chapters four and five contain the findings of the literature and focus groups together as a means of determining recommended practice in the teacher evaluation process for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston.

The National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) is the main organization in the United States offering support, professional development, and resources for Catholic education. The NCEA does not have any publications specific to teacher evaluation. They do offer various conference sessions and books about school administration that cover briefly various aspects of evaluation. At a regional level, the Mid-Atlantic Consortium of Catholic Schools does not have any published literature on teacher evaluation.

Table 2-1 illustrates the occurrence of practice recommended in the literature about teacher evaluation in general or in public schools to the written teacher evaluation processes in several of these dioceses, the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, and the West Virginia Department of Education. I included the process from the West Virginia Department of Education in this table because many of the educators and administrators in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston have completed their education degrees in West Virginia and have training in state policies including the teacher evaluation process. In the table an “O” stands for an element that is optional.

Table 2-1: Practice by Dioceses and West Virginia Department of Education

Location	Observation	Goal Process	Goals Related to Organization	Differentiated Evaluation	Assistance Track	Teaching Skills Checklist	Teaching Framework	Portfolio	Multiple Data Source	Student Achievement	Self Reflection & Collaboration	Trained Evaluator	Formative Process	Summative Process
Arlington	*										*			*
Washington D.C.	*					*					*			*
Wheeling-Charleston	*	*		*		*					*			*
WV Dept. Of Education	*	O		*	*	*		O	O			*		*

The current teacher evaluation process in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston was developed in 2002 by a committee led by the Director of Curriculum and Instruction and three principals. This was the first teacher evaluation process in the history of the diocese. The written process includes: An introduction and statement of philosophy; a list of Professional Teaching Standards; instructions and timeline for completion of tasks; forms for pre and post observation conferencing, goal setting, goal attainment, teacher self-appraisal; an Individual Professional Growth Plan form; and forms for summative evaluation, formative evaluation, and observation. Unique to the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston (as compared with other diocese in the Consortium or the WVDE) is that it also has an annual goals process for all teachers, differentiated evaluation, and a teaching skills checklist. The WVDE has the option for a goals process, portfolio, and multiple data sources but these are neither annual nor required. In addition, the WVDE requires principals to attend professional development in performance evaluation of school personnel in order to receive principal certification. This is a recently added requirement that only a few of the principals in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston may have

completed. Finally, the process in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston is the only one that includes standards for Ministry of Catholic Education in the process.

The only publication regarding teacher evaluation in Catholic schools that I was able to locate is a study focused on improving the teacher evaluation process in a single Catholic school. The study was conducted 2001 at St. Anne's Roman Catholic School in Bristol, Virginia (a rural area in the Diocese of Richmond) as part of the dissertation *The Development of a Meaningful Teacher Evaluation Process in a Catholic Elementary School* written by the school principal, Jean R. Green. I spoke with Dr. Green about her research and study. She, too, was not able to locate published literature about teacher evaluation in Catholic schools. Her dissertation is the only publication that she knows in the country related to teacher evaluation and Catholic schools (J. Green, personal communication, November 5, 2007).

In her study, Green used the action research process to design, develop, and implement a new system of teacher evaluation that focused on teacher formative development in the school where she was principal. Twenty teachers participated in the two-year study, which included examining their current evaluation system and developing a new system.

When Green began as principal, she inherited a teacher evaluation process that was brief, based on a skills checklist, and primarily summative. She wanted to make the process better. She also recalled her own experience with teacher evaluation in Catholic schools:

As a teacher and as an administrator, I experienced all...of the difficulties in the evaluation process. As a teacher, I found administrative observations to be stressful experiences, causing me to feel as if I were putting on a performance rather than following my daily routine. I realized that administrators' comments were seldom helpful. Periodically, a principal gave harmful advice, notably when insisting on my using a strategy with a certain student that I had already tried and rejected. As an administrator, I found it extremely stressful to ensure that each step of the observation cycle...was meaningful and productive for each teacher. (p. 24)

Green yearned for a process that was meaningful to teacher formative development. She wanted a process that “probed more deeply into the teachers’ overall effectiveness, encouraging them to become more active participants in the evaluation cycle...a process that was more meaningful, and less stressful, to teachers” (p. 3). Green realized that what she was actually seeking was not a new method of teacher evaluation, but rather a process of teacher development. She states:

I wanted the teachers to reflect on their own practice, growing and improving as they identified their areas of strength and their areas needing improvement. I thought that teachers should be encouraged to meet and share their ideas with one another, their problems and their solutions. I hoped that through this sharing they would recommend helpful articles, books, and speakers to one another...I envisioned the faculty engaged in a continuous process of communication that would shape not only their daily instruction but also our entire school program. (p. 5)

Green and the teachers at her school expressed ideas that were very similar to the informal comments received in the Department of Catholic Schools from principals and teachers in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston: all stressed the need for the process of teacher evaluation to be more effective in the formative development of teachers. This realization led me to focus this dissertation on how the evaluation process in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston could be more effective in teacher formative development.

Furthermore, upon comparing the written teacher evaluation process in the other diocese and the one developed at Green’s school, I was surprised that the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston was the only school system to include some standards specific to the evaluation of teaching Catholic Identity. The administrator who led the development of the process in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston was a religious sister who was very focused on Catholic Identity. Upon further reflection, I realized that the lack of published literature could have

affected the development of the teacher evaluations in the other school systems because they did not reference materials about the inclusion of Catholic Identity in the teacher evaluation process.

2.1 THE HISTORY OF FORMATIVE DEVELOPMENT IN THE TEACHER EVALUATION PROCESS

Because the purpose of this dissertation is to examine effectiveness of the current teacher evaluation process in the formative development of teachers and how the process could be improved in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, it is helpful to have an understanding of the history of clinical supervision. Clinical supervision was the first attempt in The United States to help teachers develop formatively through the teacher evaluation process. It began as part of the Master of Arts Teaching program under the direction of Morris Cogan at Harvard University in the early 1950s (Cogan, 1973). The Cycle of Supervision consisted of eight phases: Establishing the teacher-supervisor relationship; the supervisor planning the lesson with the teacher; the supervisor and teacher planning the strategy of observation; the supervisor observing the instruction; the teacher and supervisor analyzing the teaching process; the teacher and supervisor planning the strategy of the conference; the conference between the teacher and supervisor; and the teacher and supervisor planning to bring about change in the teacher's teaching based on the observation and conference (Cogan, 1973). Cogan emphasized the importance of the supervisor's training in the process, the development of a collaborative, trusting relationship between the supervisor and teacher, and the open conversation between the supervisor and teacher about the teacher's teaching and how to improve the teaching.

Subsequently, Goldhammer (1969), Glatthorn (1990), and Glickman (1990) outlined their versions of the process based on Cogan's model and added significantly to the understanding and

development of the clinical supervision process. Goldhammer, who worked at Harvard with Cogan, later acknowledged that there were limitations to the clinical supervision process. He saw great possibility for error on the part of the supervisor that would adversely affect the teacher. He stated:

I can think of no better way to drive home the understanding that clinical supervision, while its future may be bright, is presently no panacea for educational reformers, than by showing, candidly, some of the things that go wrong (p. 282) ...and problems of the conference are innumerable. (p. 331)

Goldhammer outlined some of the major problems in each stage: The supervisor unnerves the teacher so badly before the class that the lesson suffers; hurried communication; miscommunication; projection; lack of accuracy in observation reporting; acting conspicuously in the classroom; misinterpretation of issues; lack of supervisor planning for conferences; input that is not helpful; and misjudging the benefits and limitations of goal setting. Goldhammer asserted that the key to preventing such mishaps is thorough training of the administrator in the process as well as the administrator's dedication to using the process in the best possible way.

Glatthorn's (1990) significant contribution to the clinical supervision process was to focus on the benefits of a differentiated model of supervision that would allow each teacher to develop formatively. He believed that adult development is most successful when the adult is empowered to guide his or her own development. He suggested using clinical supervision plus several teacher directed professional development modules: The Self-Directed Mode (the teacher works independently on professional development); Cooperative Mode (teachers work together to give one another feedback on their professional practice); and Intensive Mode (the supervisor works intensely with a teacher to remediate a problem).

While almost all public schools systems had written evaluations by the 1970s, few included the clinical supervision model (Stemnock, 1969). However, nationally there was initiative to include some of the practices recommended by Cogan, Goldhammer, Glatthorn, and

Glickman. National organizations began to advocate for a formative process that would engage teachers in the evaluation process as participants. Teachers also favored a formative process. A survey by the National Education Association at the time found that 93% of teachers favored the use of evaluation for the purpose of improving teacher performance (National Education Association [NEA], 1972).

The push for teacher formative development was an important element of the school reform movement in the latter part of the twentieth century. *A Nation at Risk* (National Council on Excellence in Education, 1983) focused on the deficiencies in schools and school reform (Stronge, 2002). It was the first national effort to focus on teacher formative development as a means of improving teaching in all types of schools---public, private, and parochial. The Recommendations on Teaching included improving teacher salary and working conditions, establishing mentoring programs, and constructing means for teachers to develop and achieve professionally (NCEE, 1983).

In 1986, the report of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future explored ways of improving teacher preparation and professional development. The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) was formed to enhance "teacher assessment for initial licensing as well as for preparation and induction into the profession" (Stronge & Tucker, 2003, p. 14).

In 1986, the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession issued its report, *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century*. It called for the establishment of a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) to develop standards for the formative development and certification of highly skilled veteran teachers. Their propositions included that teachers think systematically about their practice, learn from their experience and participate as members

of learning communities to have collaborative discussion about their professional practice (Stronge & Tucker, 2003).

The teacher evaluation process in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston has elements of this historical practice. There are elements of clinical supervision such as pre-conference, observation, and post-conference, yet the process does not include the training of administrators and kind of conversation outlined by Cogan. There is an element of differentiation which was suggested by Glatthorn; however, it is limited to differentiating the number of observations based on the teacher's years of experience. Finally, while there is a teaching skills checklist, there are not standards or rubrics to assist with formative development. The effectiveness of these historical practices is compromised in that they are not being used fully and in the way intended by their originators. In addition, some of these historic practices are as much as 40 years old, and the field of education has changed significantly during that period of time. For these reasons, it will be helpful to examine current recommended practice in this literature review and then determine its applicability to improving formative development of teachers in the teacher evaluation process in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston.

2.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHER EVALUATION

A review of the literature reveals that, like the early researchers, current researchers and practitioners are in agreement that teacher evaluation is important. With increasingly high stakes testing and standards, several sources assert that it is essential that administrators have a comprehensive personnel practice to effectively hire, evaluate, develop, and retain outstanding teachers for their schools (AASPA, 2002; Danielson, 1996; Danielson, 2007; Prybylo, 1998; Ribas, 2005). Prybylo (1998) states, "Evaluating teaching is undoubtedly one of the most

important tasks that administrators are called on to do” (p. 558). Ribas (2005) concurs with this and adds that evaluation is, “One of the most important tools districts possess for improving the quality of education for all students (p. 1).

Several sources believe that the principal plays a central role in teacher evaluation and the development of high quality teachers which effect student learning and the well-being of the school (Howard & McColskey, 2001, Peterson, 2000, Stronge, 2002,). Therefore, it is essential that administrators have training to effectively evaluate and develop teachers.

This information from these sources underscores the importance of having administrators trained in evaluation and a teacher evaluation process that promotes teacher formative development in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. Improving the formative development of teachers in the diocese through the evaluation process should have a positive impact on school environment and student achievement. This aligns with the informal comments from principals and teachers in the diocese that the process of formative development in the evaluation process is important to them and needs to be improved.

2.3 PROBLEMATIC PRACTICE IN TEACHER EVALUATION

A review of the literature reveals that authors are also in agreement that many problems exist in current teacher evaluation systems. The problems include: There is confusion about the purpose of evaluation (Danielson, 1996; Danielson, 2007, Ribas, 2005); teacher evaluation rarely improves performance (Arredondo, Brody, Zimmerman, & Moffet, 1995); the evaluation process is often outdated (Danielson, 1996; Danielson, 2007); the process is hierarchical with one-way communication from the administrator to the teacher (Boyd, 1989; Brandt, 1996; Brogan, 1997); the process is the same for novices and experienced practitioners (Danielson, 1996; Danielson,

2007); there is a lack of common language about teaching that is used by both administrators and teachers (Danielson, 1996; Danielson, 2007; Danielson & McGreal, 2000); administrators lack expertise about how adults learn; the teacher evaluation process focuses on summative evaluation while failing to focus on formative growth (Green, 2001); and there is a lack of precision in evaluating performance (Danielson, 1996; Danielson, 2007; Ribas, 2005). As a result, “current teacher evaluation is a meaningless exercise” (Danielson & McGreal, 2000, p. 7), “burdensome” (p. 2), “bureaucratic” (Stronge & Tucker, 2003, p.xii), a “perfunctory exercise” (Danielson, 1996, p. 10), an “empty exercise” (Boyd, 1989, p. 3), and a “superficial...a time-consuming charade” (Stronge & Tucker, p. 6).

The problems suggested by these authors align with the informal comments from principals and teachers in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston that the process is not helpful to improving teacher formative development and instruction. The following sections of this dissertation provide greater information about each of these deficiencies.

2.3.1 An Outdated System

Current evaluation practice is often out-dated. Danielson and McGreal (2000) state that “Many evaluation systems in use today were developed in the early to mid 1970s and reflect what educators believed about teaching at that time” (p. 8). In the past, the evaluation process was often based on the opinion of the administrator about the teacher’s teaching which led to a lack of precision in clinical evaluation systems. Used as the sole structure for supervising and evaluating teachers, the clinical supervision model is not as effective as multiple structures (Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Sweeney, 2001; Whitaker et al, 2000).

The teacher evaluation process in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston lacks precise language, relies upon the opinion of the administrator about the teacher's teaching, and uses of parts of the method of clinical supervision as the sole method for evaluating teachers.

2.3.2 The Process is Hierarchical

The evaluation process is also often fraught with hierarchical, one-way communication from the administrator to the teacher and is based on limited information (Danielson 1996; Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Sweeney, 2001). Traditionally, evaluation was a one-sided process dominated by administrators. Evaluation was an activity that was done "to teachers" (Danielson, 2001). Administrators would observe a teacher as little as one time and use this one observation to provide a written evaluation of the teacher. According to the Educational Research Service (1998), 99.8% of American public school administrators use direct classroom observation as the primary data collection technique. This approach often causes teachers to feel that evaluation was a stressful, isolating experience and that they are passive participants in the process. (Arredondo et al., 1995, Green 2001). This lack of involvement leads many teachers to distrust the process and to question the validity of the results (Boyd, 1989). According to Brogan (1997), all of these factors resulted in "an unauthentic context for professional growth and collaboration---often wrought with compromise or...confrontation" (p. 25).

While the teacher evaluation process in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston suggests that the administrator and teacher conference, no administrators have ever been trained by the diocese about how to conduct such a conference. Only a few principals have the new training from the WVDE about how to conduct evaluations. Furthermore, some principals have stated informally that they do not hold the conferences because they do not have time to do so and they do not see the value. The summative evaluations of teachers are based solely on the administrator's formal

observation of the teacher. Teachers receiving feedback only through reading what the principal has marked and written on their summative evaluations, without conversation with the principal, would be caught in the hierarchical process mentioned in the literature.

2.3.3 The Process is the Same for Novices and Experienced Practitioners

In many teacher evaluation processes, there is no differentiation in the process for novice and experienced practitioners. Danielson and McGreal (2000) assert that unlike other professions, teaching makes the same demands on novices and experienced practitioners. While other professions require a period of internship, “When the principal arrives to conduct an observation of a novice teacher, she holds the very same checklist as that used for experienced teachers” (p. 5). It is important to remember, however, that “from the standpoint of the public, it is not unreasonable to expect a skilled level of teaching in every classroom” (Danielson & McGreal, p. 5). The state, through licensing procedures, ensures a minimum competence (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). But today, parents seek far more. Ribas suggests that it is the role of the school to close the gap between the minimum standard and public expectation stating, “It is the role of each school district, through its procedures for teacher evaluation and professional growth, to ensure excellence” (p. 6). A teacher evaluation process that focuses on the formative development of teachers can accomplish this goal.

The teacher evaluation process in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston is the same for novices and advanced practitioners in all aspects except the frequency of observation. Teachers in their first three years of teaching are observed formally three times per year. Teachers in their fourth and fifth years of teaching are observed formally twice a year. Teachers in their sixth year and beyond are observed once a year. Aside from frequency of observation, the current process

does not use any other methods to differentiate the process to meet the needs of individual teachers.

2.3.4 The Lack of Clear, Common Language About Teaching

While professions establish a language of practice that captures the important concepts and understandings shared by members of the profession, this is often absent in the field of education (Danielson, 2007). Teachers and administrators do not have a common language for discussing teaching. This leaves teachers guessing “at the values and assumptions about good teaching on which their performance will be judged” (Danielson & McGreal, p. 4).

Most evaluation systems depend on a single dichotomous scale with terms such as “Satisfactory,” “Needs Improvement,” and the like. Some evaluation systems, on the other hand, have attempted to incorporate rating scales, that is, scales from “1 to 4” or levels representing “low, medium, and high,” or “needs improvement, satisfactory, and outstanding,” or “seldom, frequently, and always,” or similar headings. Though offering a promise of greater objectivity and specificity than a simple checklist of whether certain behaviors were observed or not, such systems typically fall well short of their potential because there is little agreement on what constitutes, for example, a “level 3” or “medium,” or “satisfactory” performance. That is, one person’s “satisfactory” might be another person’s “outstanding.” (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). Because of the lack of definition and common language, evaluation tends to be highly subjective. (Sweeney, 2001). Thus, teaching checklists, while better than no form of definition, are not optimal.

The teacher evaluation process in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston lacks a clear and common language about teaching. Teachers are evaluated in various areas with the scale of “Needs Improvement, Meets Standards, and Exceeds Standard” but there are no performance

level descriptors for each skill or knowledge area. Finally, there exists some confusion of terms because the words “observation” and “evaluation” are used interchangeably throughout the written evaluation document.

2.3.5 The Lack of Administrator Expertise

Administrators often have limited expertise in several aspects of teacher evaluation. First, administrators, particularly at the middle and high school levels, cannot possess in-depth knowledge in all subject areas. Teachers realize this and are frustrated that the administrator can neither help them nor make accurate judgment. Danielson and McGreal (2000) state:

It is true that all teaching environments share important characteristics, and that a thoughtful and well-trained observer can recognize these characteristics (or their absence) in a variety of settings. But knowledge of content, of content-related pedagogy, and the approaches to learning displayed by students at different developmental levels, are highly relevant to teaching. (p. 6)

Second, principals have limited expertise in helping adult learners to develop. Principal preparation programs often do not teach administrators the characteristics of adult learners or how to evaluate adults effectively to create positive change in performance (Costa & Garmston, 1993; Danielson & McGreal, 2000).

The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston has never offered any professional development for principals about the nature of adult learning. While some principals received training as part of an administrator preparation program, over half of the principals do not have administrative certification and do not have such training. In addition, administrators at the secondary level are responsible for evaluating teachers in all content areas.

2.3.6 The Focus on Summative Evaluation and Lack of Focus on Formative Development

Most evaluation systems focus heavily on summative evaluation and less on formative supervision. Ribas (2005) defines summative and formative supervision and evaluation by stating that:

Summative supervision and evaluation is a process designed to measure the level of success of teachers as compared to their district's curriculum and performance standards. Formative supervision is a positive, supportive and collaborative process designed to improve student performance and attitude by increasing the effectiveness and attitudes of the district's teachers. (p. 20)

This focus on summative evaluation has failed to promote professional growth of teachers making the evaluation process a "dead end" (Boyd, p. 2). With minimal feedback to promote growth and little analysis of the teacher's overall performance, professional growth is minimal (Boyd, 1989; Ellis, 1984; Radenbush, Eamsukkawat, Di-Ibor, Kamall, & Taoklam, 1993). Teachers value formative supervision because it provides the feedback about what they should improve and a process to help them improve (Searfoss, 1996).

The teacher evaluation process in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston focuses on summative evaluation. The written evaluation process provides no plan or process for teacher formative development, yet it contains forms for the principal to evaluate the teacher's formative development. Furthermore, the formative evaluation forms are identical to the summative evaluation forms. This adds further to confusion in the written process about how formative and summative evaluation should align.

2.4 FORMATIVE DEVELOPMENT IS A KEY PURPOSE OF TEACHER EVALUATION

Many authors concur that a formative process that promotes teacher growth and professional development is a main purpose of teacher evaluation (AASPA, 2002; Costa & Garmston, 1993; Danielson, 1996, 2001, 2007; Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Egelson & McColsky, 1998; Howard & McColsky, 2001; NAESP, 2001; Ribas, 2005; Stronge & Tucker, 2003). Authors agree that it is not sufficient to diagnose and inform teachers of the strengths and weaknesses. Rather, formative teacher evaluation needs to provide a structure for individualized professional growth through a process of self-assessment, goal setting, and feedback from such sources as peer review, peer coaching, and portfolio development (Egelson & McColsky, 1998; Howard & McColsky, 2001; Ribas, 2005).

The American Association for School Personnel Administrators (2002) proposes that one purpose of evaluation is to be part of a comprehensive personnel practice that promotes formative development beginning at the date of hire. The AASPA states:

An effective teacher assessment/evaluation program does not stand alone. Rather, it is part of a continuing cycle of improvement that includes hiring, induction and staff development processes. These processes are inextricably entwined; when each part is successfully carried out, it should result in greater teacher knowledge and skills and improved students learning. (p. 118)

The stated purpose of teacher evaluation process in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston is to improve the quality of instruction. However, the process does not acknowledge that differentiated teacher formative development is a key way to improve the quality of instruction a teacher is able to provide. Furthermore, there is not a comprehensive personnel practice in the Department of Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston that focuses on formative development beginning at the time of hire.

2.5 PRACTICES RECOMMENDED TO ENHANCE THE FORMATIVE DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS IN THE TEACHER EVALUATION PROCESS

A review of the literature reveals that authors discuss best practice in terms of three areas: Who conducts the evaluation, how they conduct the evaluation, and the elements that comprise the teacher evaluation process. These elements of teacher evaluation and the authors who recommend them are outlined in Table 2-2. A limitation of this table is that it shows the occurrence of an element by author but does not give a sense of how or to what extent the author discusses the element. These aspects are covered in the narrative of this chapter.

Table 2-2: Recommended Practice by Author

SOURCE	Stated Purpose/Philosophy	Clinical Supervision	Observation	Goal Process	Goals Related to Organization	Differentiated Evaluation	Assistance Track	Teaching Skills Checklist	Teaching Framework	Portfolio	Multiple Data Sources	Student Achievement	Self Reflection & Collaboration	Trained Evaluator	Formative Process	Conferencing & Coaching	Summative Process
Books:																	
AASPA	*		*	*		*	*	*		*		*	*	*	*		*
NAESP			*	*		*					*	*	*		*		*
Acheson & Gall	*	*	*			*									*		*
Cogan	*	*													*	*	
Costa& Garmston	*		*	*	*	*	*						*		*	*	*
Danielson	*		*	*		*	*		*	*	*		*		*		*
Danielson& McGreal	*		*	*		*	*		*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Glatthorn	*	*				*									*	*	
Glickman	*	*				*									*	*	
Goldhammer	*	*													*	*	
Ribas	*		*		*	*	*		*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*
Stronge	*		*				*	*					*				
Stronge& Tucker	*		*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*		*		*
Articles:																	
Blasé			*			*							*				
Brandt			*	*	*	*	*						*	*			
Dyer			*										*		*		
Egelson & McColsky																	
Howard & McColsky															*		
Knowles			*												*		
Sweeney			*										*				
Whitaker			*										*				
Wolf			*							*			*				

In his book *Good to Great*, Jim Collins (2001) asserts that great leaders begin the transformation process “by first getting the right people on the bus” (p. 63), training them adequately, and then figuring out what aspects or elements should be the focus for formative development. I have been discussing this book and its ideas recently with the principals in the diocese and the principals have begun to implement some of Collins’s principles into their professional practice. Following Collins’s principle, I will present the “who” of teacher evaluation first (who conducts the evaluation and how they conduct it) and then the “what” (or elements) of teacher evaluation. Following each recommended practice, there is discussion of how the current process of teacher evaluation aligns with that element.

It is important to remember that the literature focuses on teacher evaluation in general and teacher evaluation in public schools, which alone may or may not be applicable to teacher evaluation in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. Chapters four and five include the findings of the literature and focus groups together as a means of determining recommended practice in the teacher evaluation process for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston.

2.5.1 Trained Evaluator, Self- Reflection, and Collaboration

Many administrators begin their career in education as teachers of children in PreKindergarten through twelfth grade. From their degree programs and teaching experience, they develop expertise in how school age students learn. In order to lead collaborative conversations with teachers about their professional practice, principals need training about how to work with teachers as adult learners (AASPA, 2002; Brandt, 1996; Costa & Garmston, 1993; Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Knowles, 1980; Ribas, 2005). Brandt (1996) asserts, “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” (p. 2). Knowles (1980) adds that adult

learners need to know why they need to learn something, learn through experience, tend to approach learning as problem-solving, learn best when the subject content is of clear and immediate importance, come to the learning process with intentions and expectations, have competing interests between their personal and professional lives, and already have their patterns of learning. (p.20). Danielson and McGreal (2000) add that adults work most successfully when they are in an environment that encourages them to initiate their own growth. They state:

If provided with a safe and respectful environment, most teachers will choose to concentrate their efforts at professional growth in those areas in which they have the greatest need. The principles of adult learning show that when people use self-assessment and self directed inquiry in professional development, they are more likely to sustain their learning, in more disciplined ways, than when outsiders impose professional development requirements. When people select their own problem to be solved, their own project to pursue, they devote greater energy to it than if someone else has chosen the issue. (p. 25)

Because adult learners work best in a collaborative environment of trust, rapport, and open conversation, it is important to examine how the literature suggests such an environment can promote teacher formative development and evaluation. Several authors concur that best practice in teacher evaluation empowers the teacher and calls for collaborative effort between teachers and between the teacher and administrator to help each teacher improve his or her professional practice (AASPA, 2002; Blasé & Kirby, 2001; Brandt, 1996; Costa & Garmston, 1993; Danielson, 1996, 2001, 2007; Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Dyer, 2001; NAESP, 2001; Ribas, 2005; Stronge, 2002; Stronge & Tucker, 2003; Sweeney, 2001; Whitaker, 2000; Wolf, 1996). This “new paradigm... emphasizes a trusting environment in which growth and empowerment of the individual are the keys to...success” (Costa & Garmston, 1993, p. 5). Such an environment also promotes positive feelings which “contribute to a positive sense of self and enable teachers to function at their highest level” (Blasé & Kirby, 2001, p.6).

The authors also agree that, in addition to more conversation and collaboration between the teacher and principal, the conversation and collaboration between teachers in schools

promote professional growth. In this type of environment, “teachers do not work in isolation: Their doors are open and they freely exchange perspectives on their teaching strategies” (Danielson & McGreal, 2000, p. 26). When teachers collaborate in this way, “they create, for themselves, a community of learners” (Brandt, 1996, p. 8).

This collaboration among teachers can take the form of peer coaching. Glickman (2002) defines peer coaching as “a structure whereby fellow teachers, as each other’s colleagues, conduct cycles of clinical supervision with each other with the overall coordination of a facilitator/leader” (p. 14). Before implementing the program, Glickman (2002) recommends training for teachers about the purpose and procedures of peer coaching, determining the focus of the observations, defining the parameters of observation, and developing an action plan. In addition, teams of teachers need to be prearranged, a facilitator teacher for each team should be chosen, and the administrator should decide how to monitor the groups’ progress.

Collaboration among teachers can also take the form of what Glickman (2000) calls “critical friends.” Critical friends offer ways to build purposeful groups of teachers with facilitators who “look at samples of student work or instructional problems/concerns together over the course of a school year or more” (p. 17). A “tuning protocol” or agenda is used to keep the meetings focused on the instructional question at hand. In this way, a teacher may bring forth an instructional issue evidenced in student work and receive feedback from colleagues on how to improve their teaching.

Finally, the use of action research teams can be tailored to meet the needs of the school. The administrator has a guiding hand in determining what issue should be investigated, how it should be investigated, and who will do the investigating. Working collaboratively, the teachers and principal establish the research agenda, classroom action plans, data collection methods, and progress reports (Glickman, 2000). The administrator conferences frequently with the team

throughout the process to provide support and suggestions. At the end of the research process, the administrator and group meet to discuss the findings and process.

2.5.2 Conferencing and Coaching

During conferencing sessions, administrators have conversations with individual teachers to reflect on each teacher's professional practice. This can include the administrator and teacher working together to set goals for the teacher, as well as the administrator observing the teacher on many occasions and providing frequent feedback (Blasé & Kirby, 2001). Reflecting on her dissertation research, Green (2001) found this type of interaction to be helpful. She states:

I discovered over the last three years that the more involved the teachers were in the process of evaluation, the less stressful it became for them and for me...We were more comfortable in our interactions with each other.
(p. 24)

Through conferencing with and coaching each teacher individually, the principal has the possibility of not only promoting the growth of the individual teacher, but of the school as a whole. Senge (1990), in his book *The Fifth Discipline*, asserts that "Organizations learn only through individuals who learn" (p. 139). Costa and Garmston (2002) call this type of growth "holonomy" because it combines holistic and autonomous professional practice. Holonomy exists when individuals have the knowledge and skills to act both autonomously and in concert with a group for the benefit of both themselves and the group. This dichotomous relationship can create tension and conflict. This stems "from the internal drive to self-assertiveness, which conflicts with a yearning to be in harmony with others and the surrounding environment" (p. 19). Holonomous persons "self-regulate" (p. 19), while simultaneously being informed and influencing the entire system. When this occurs, individuals are "at once independent and interdependent---they are holonomous" (p. 13). In coaching, one of the goals of the principal can

be to help teachers develop holonomy so that they growth both individually and in a way that supports the school and district mission, vision, and strategic plan.

While authors agree that teachers need someone to serve in the role of coach to help them develop professionally, they also agree that it can be difficult for one person, such as the principal, to serve teachers effectively as both a coach for the formative process and evaluator for the summative process (Costa & Garmston, 2002; Howard & McColsky, 2001, Saphier 1993). Glickman provides some guidelines for the principal who serves as both formative coach and summative evaluator. Operating under the assumption that these two roles are in conflict, Glickman conducted interviews with teachers that yielded some surprising results. He found that the administrator can perform roles both as coach and evaluator under three conditions: a trusting relationship has been established between the administrator and teacher, the teacher knows for certain which of the two functions is being performed---coaching or evaluation, and the administrator's behaviors are scrupulously consistent with each of the functions (Costa & Garmston, p. 15).

According to Costa & Garmston (2002), developing trusting relationships is essential for coaching to work well. Inquiring, speculating, constructing meaning, self-evaluating, and self-prescribing can only occur when the coach "helps create a low-stress environment where the teacher feels comfortable to create, experiment, reason, and problem solve" (p. 36). Characteristics of a trusting environment include, "Maintaining confidentiality, being visible and accessible, behaving consistently, keeping commitments, sharing personal information about out of school activities, revealing feelings, expressing personal interest in other people, acting nonjudgmentally, listening reflectively, admitting mistakes and demonstrating professional knowledge and skills" (p. 36).

Trusting relationships can be seriously damaged when “someone is discourteous or disrespectful, makes value judgments, overreacts, acts arbitrarily, threatens or is personally insensitive to another person” (Costa & Garmston, p. 36). Kopersmith and Hoy found the principal’s behavior and how the principal is perceived by teachers to be influential in maintaining trusting relationships. Teachers are more likely to trust the administrator if he is responsible for his behaviors, be perceived as person first and role second, and be recognized as non-manipulative. Furthermore, when teachers have faith in the principal they often trusted each other and the central office personnel as well. With trust in place, principals and teachers have the foundation for successful dialogue in coaching and conferencing (Costa & Garmston, 2002).

Authors also concur on the value of conferencing to engage the teacher in self-reflection and to establish collaboration between the principal and teacher that focuses on the teacher’s growth (Costa & Garmston, 2002; Danielson, 1996, 2007; Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Ribas, 2002; Stronge & Tucker, 2003). Ribas (2005) and Stronge and Tucker (2003) agree that effective questioning and listening during conversations with a teacher give the evaluator much of the evidence he/she needs to make judgments and impact statements about the teacher’s performance. Costa and Garmston (2002) offer a method of conferencing based on listening and carefully constructed conversation, called cognitive coaching, which they define in this way:

Coaching is a conveyance, like a stagecoach. To coach means to convey a valued colleague from where he or she is to where he or she wants to be... Changing these inner thought processes is prerequisite to improving overt behaviors that, in turn, enhance student learning...Skillful cognitive coaches apply specific strategies to enhance another person’s perceptions, decisions, and intellectual functions. (p. 2)

Cognitive coaching has three major components: The planning conference, the observation, and the reflecting conference. Of these three, Costa and Garmston see the planning

and reflecting conferences as a great opportunity for the principal to dialogue with the teacher in a way that promotes the teacher's professional development. They state:

Though the observation is important, the coach's greatest help is offered to teachers in the Planning and Reflecting Conferences. In the Planning Conference, the coach asks a series of mediational questions to engage the teacher's metacognition during the teaching phase...In the Reflecting Conference, the coach will return to these same types of questions to guide the teacher to recall his thinking during the lesson (p. 109)...A direct correlation exists between the levels of syntactical structure of questions and the production of thought. Effective coaches deliberately use questions in ways that produce desired mental processes in the mind of the teacher. (p. 222)

The principal's goal in the reflecting conference is to engage the teacher's analytic abilities. The coach invites the teacher to compare the desired, planned lesson with the actual lesson that occurred. This kind of coaching leads teachers to be more flexible in their instruction. Teachers know that they can discuss with the principal why they deviated from their original plan. In a trusting, nonjudgmental relationship, teachers are free to take risks, use their intuition, be creative, and be vulnerable in conversation. Teachers come to realize that there is no such thing as a mistake; each lesson is a learning experience for both teacher and students.

The teacher evaluation process in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston promotes teacher self-reflection by requiring teachers to complete a self-appraisal form about their professional practice each year. Completion of this form is done in isolation by the teacher and submitted to the principal. The process does not permit for the collaborative cognitive reflection, conferencing, and coaching methods outlined in this literature review. Because of the small size of most of the schools, the principal would need to serve the dual role as both coach and evaluator. It would be helpful for the principals to have training in cognitive coaching and working with teachers as adult learners in order to promote teacher formative development within the evaluation process.

It is my experience as both a teacher and administrator that administrators often do not receive training, even in degree and certification programs, about how to structure conferences in a way that helps a teacher to develop formatively. As a result, the conversation between administrators and teachers about the teacher's professional practice is very limited. Yet, as an administrator in public, Catholic, and private schools, I found that conferencing with teachers was the most effective means to help the teachers to develop formatively. I believe there are several reasons for this. First, there is opportunity for frequent contact between the administrator and teacher working in the same school. The administrator can easily hold both scheduled and informal conferences with a teacher to discuss goals and professional practice. This frequent contact allows the principal to work with the teacher to shape their shared vision for the teacher's professional practice, goal setting and achievement, and alignment with school and district initiatives. This frequency of contact is beneficial to development of the teacher's skills. Second, because there is no cost or travel involved with conferencing as a means of formative development (as there would be with sending a teacher to a workshop or class for formative development), conferencing is a way for the principal to provide professional development for teachers within the school setting at no additional expense to the school. With limited funding in my schools, I viewed conferencing as the least expensive and most convenient means of helping teachers to develop formatively. Third, the administrator who has the skills to conference effectively can differentiate each conversation to meet the individual needs of the teacher. Each conversation becomes a "private lesson" between the administrator and teacher in which the administrator can give individualized attention to the needs of each teacher.

2.5.3 Differentiated Evaluation

A review of the literature revealed that authors concur about the benefit of differentiating the evaluation, supervision and professional development system for teachers, just as instruction is differentiated for school age students (AASPA, 2000; Blasé & Kirby, 2001; Brandt, 1996; Costa & Garmston, 1993; Danielson, 1996, 2001, 2007; Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Glatthorn, 1984; NAESP, 2001; Ribas, 2005; Stronge & Tucker, 2003). This includes differentiating conversation, collaboration and coaching to meet the needs of the individual teacher, as well as selecting which components of an evaluation process can best help the teacher to grow. Danielson (2001) states, “Many newly developed systems of teacher evaluation use a differentiated approach; they rely on different activities, procedures, and timelines for different groups of teachers.” (p. 14).

Brandt (1996) asserts that, if we expect teachers to differentiate instruction for students, administrators must provide a role model by themselves differentiating evaluation for teachers. He states:

I see it as part of something much bigger: A movement to reexamine what the school stands for and how we express that to the adults who come to work there every day. We can't pride ourselves on individualizing instruction for students and then treat all adults exactly alike. (p. 8)

Authors believe that differentiated evaluation is needed to best meet the varied needs of each teacher. It is clear that new teachers have different needs for growth than more experienced teachers. The American Association of School Personnel Administrators (2002) states:

From research, as well as practice, we learn that teachers move through several stages of development as they progress toward becoming a master teacher. The evaluation process should be flexible enough to differentiate between teachers, based upon their experience and their training. (p. 119)

Evaluation of experienced teachers can take place in a variety of ways. Danielson (2001) suggests that experienced teachers can “engage in self-directed professional growth

activities, alone or with colleagues” (p. 14). Brandt (1996) suggests an individualized growth track including goal setting and long-term projects for more experienced teachers:

Beyond the intensive work with beginning teachers we’ve been talking about, most districts are creating what might be called a professional growth track for all tenured, experienced teachers---and this is where we’re seeing some of the biggest changes. These programs are usually built around some version of individual goal setting, based on the recognition that it’s absolutely essential for people to set their own goals. But what we used to call individual goals are now often referred to as professional development plans---long-term projects that teachers develop and carry out. Once a teacher is in this professional growth track, it’s assumed that he or she is meeting all of the basic expectations of the district. (p. 4)

Glatthorn (1984) suggests giving teachers a choice of four types of supervision rather than having the administrator choose how the supervision will be differentiated. The four types of supervision are: Clinical supervision, cooperative professional development, individual teacher self-directed development, and administrative monitoring through informal observation.

2.5.4 Assistance Track

The authors concur that, from time to time, a teacher can experience difficulties in meeting basic expectations. In these times, best practice is to differentiate the evaluation process by creating a plan of assistance for the teacher to develop formatively in the area of weakness (AASPA, 2002; Brandt, 1996; Costa & Garmston, 2002; Danielson, 1996, 2001, 2007; Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Ribas, 2005; Stronge, 2002; Stronge & Tucker, 2003). Brandt (1996) summarizes the assistance track by saying:

If the problem is serious enough, the teacher will be placed in the assistance track: An in-house, good-faith effort to show that the people in the district care about the teacher and want to help before any kind of legal action is even considered...At level one, the teacher and the principal or other supervisor try to work it out together, maybe through classroom visits and coaching. If that’s not enough, the plan provides for establishing teams, composed mostly of other teachers, who begin to work with the teacher. (p. 6)

Danielson and McGreal (2000) begin the process similarly with what they call an “awareness phase.” This is an informal contact in which the principal contacts the teacher to express concern or gather more information. Often, there is an established time frame to bring closure to this stage.

If improvement does not occur, the plan must enter a more formal phase. “A key component of this more intensive stage is the development of an action plan or improvement plan” (Danielson & McGreal, 2000, p. 124). At this point, a group of people with special expertise may be identified to assist the teacher. Often this group will consist of teachers and/or administrators who assist the teacher in formative development. The summative evaluation role remains the responsibility of the administrator. When the teacher accomplishes the basic expectations, he or she is removed from the assistance track by the administrator. In the event that the teacher does not show improvement, the administrator is faced with deciding to move to yet another approach or prepare for the teacher’s dismissal.

Differentiating the evaluation process to help teachers develop formatively and utilizing an assistance track are practices that are used minimally in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. Based on the written evaluation process, the only differentiation that occurs is that the novice teachers are observed more frequently than veterans. Furthermore, there is no structured assistance track.

2.5.5 The Goal Setting Process

The use of a goal setting process is another component of best practice in teacher evaluation and formative development. A review of the literature revealed that some authors believe this is an essential component of teacher evaluation (AASPA, 2000; Brandt, 1996; Costa & Garmston, 2002; Danielson, 1996, 2001, 2007; Danielson & McGreal, 2000; NAESP, 2001; Stronge &

Tucker, 2003). Stronge and Tucker (2003) assert that purpose of goal setting is “ to focus attention on professional or instructional improvement based on a process of determining baseline performance, developing goals, identifying strategies for improvement, and assessing results at the end of the plan’s time period” (p. 75). The process should make explicit the connection between teaching and learning; to focus attention on student learning outcomes; to provide a tool for school improvement; and to improve instructional practices and teacher performance. The goal process should help the teacher grow individually as a professional and should ensure that the teacher’s goals support the growth of the school including the mission, vision, and strategic plan (Brandt, 1996; Costa & Garmston, 1993; Ribas, 2001). Brandt (1996) states:

If professional development is to have the impact it should, you can’t have everybody doing whatever they want; there’s got to be focus. Particularly if there is a product involved or resources are needed to carry out the plan, it has to mesh with building or district goals. (p. 5)

Goal setting with all teachers is best accomplished as a dynamic interaction between the individual teacher and the administrator. The administrator and teacher conference in dynamic conversation, listening fully to one another, and together create goals for the teacher. Because people are motivated to accomplish a goal when they have ownership in creating the goal, a key strategy in performance improvement is for the principal to assist teachers in the shaping and focusing of their goals to align with both their own needs and the school and district initiatives. (Stronge & Tucker, 2003). In this way, the principal uses the conferencing and coaching discussed earlier in this dissertation to differentiate the goal process to meet the needs of each individual teacher. When the teacher and administrator work together to establish the teacher’s goals, the goals:

Become goals of the teacher and the administrator. It’s not that they’re the teacher’s goals and the administrator’s job is to monitor the teacher; now the teacher and administrator work on the goals together. And at the end

of the year or whatever the time frame is, the two sit down with their notes, with the data they've gathered, and together they write up what's been accomplished, their reflections, and where they're going next. (Brandt, p. 4)

The teacher evaluation process in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston does include a goal process. Teachers are asked to write one goal in May of the school year that will be the focus for the upcoming school year. The process suggests that it is helpful if the teacher aligns the goal with suggestions from the teacher's evaluation for the current school year. At the conclusion of the following school year, the teacher completes a form to provide evidence of goal accomplishment. Having multiple goals, individual goals related to school or district initiatives, and conferencing or coaching are not part of the current written process.

2.5.6 Frameworks for Teaching

Several authors concur about the value of using a framework for teaching (Danielson, 1996, 2001, 2007; Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Ribas, 2005; Stronge & Tucker, 2003). The teaching framework, "seeks to define what teacher should know and be able to do" (Danielson, p. 1). Frameworks include performance level descriptors ranging from an unsatisfactory to expert for each skill or knowledge area. An evaluator using a framework would note where the teacher's skills fall in the continuum of expertise from unsatisfactory to expert.

The origin of teaching frameworks began in the 1970s with a combination of Madeline Hunter's work and research in process-product and cognitive science. States soon began developing their own frameworks and assessment systems and, by 1990, systems were in place in Florida, North Carolina, and Connecticut. Several national teaching organizations have since developed national models (Danielson, 1996).

There are several reasons to have a framework. A framework provides a common language among educators about aspects of teaching and excellence. In this way, teachers can reflect and have conversation among themselves and with administrators about the domains of teaching and levels of performance. Teachers can read the performance level indicators for various levels and think to themselves, “Oh, I can do that” (Danielson, p. 6). Knowing how to define and recognize the next higher level of professional practice, the teachers and administrators can conference and make adjustments in the teacher’s professional practice in order to achieve that next higher level. Furthermore, the framework permits the discussion to be nonpersonal with the administrator citing evidence for certain levels of performance. If the teacher disagrees, he or she may offer evidence to the contrary based on the rubric of the framework (Danielson & McGreal, 2000).

In developing a framework, it is natural for teachers and administrators to question how many domains, performance indicators, and levels of performance should be in each domain. Most sources indicate four to five goals. Ribas (2005) believes that the ideal number of performance indicators is four to seven. Stronge (2002) uses five. INTASC identified 10. The NBPTS requires 5 key principles. ETS’s Praxis III is built around four domains and 19 criteria. Danielson (1996) *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching* organizes teaching into four domains and 22 components (Danielson & McGreal, 2000).

The teacher evaluation process in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston includes a teaching checklist of skills that a teacher should demonstrate. In the summative evaluation process, the administrator rates the teacher on each item in the checklist on a grading scale of “Needs Improvement, Meets Standards, and Exceeds Standards.” A teaching framework that includes performance level descriptors for each skill or knowledge area is not part of the current process. There are not any written definitions of skills at each level of accomplishment. This

prohibits principals and teachers in the diocese from having common language about the quality and levels of professional practice of teachers.

2.5.7 Multiple Data Sources

Authors recommend the use of multiple sources of data or 360-Degree Feedback, rather than observation alone, to gather information about the teacher's performance (Danielson, 1996, 2001, 2007; Danielson & McGreal, 2000; NAESP, 2001; Ribas, 2005; Stronge & Tucker, 2003). Stronge and Tucker (2003) describe the need for using multiple data sources by stating, "Given the multi-faceted nature of teachers' positions and in order to accurately and comprehensively evaluate a teacher, their performance should be documented with multi-faceted data" (p. 64). Advantages include, "Increased validity, increased reliability, decreased subjectivity, increased comfort level of both evaluator and teacher, expanded performance portrait" (Stronge & Tucker, p. 64). Ribas (2005) states that multiple data should include informal observations of the teacher in teaching and nonteaching situations, data from parent and student reviews of the teacher, and student achievement as documented through testing and authentic assessments.

While using multiple data sources or 360-degree feedback presents a more comprehensive view of a teacher's professional practice, there are drawbacks if it is misused. According to Dyer (2001), feedback should be used in a formative developmental process, not to evaluate. A coaching or mentoring session should accompany the sharing of feedback with the teacher. The coach's role is to help the teacher think deeply about the findings and then work together with the teacher to create a goal or action plan based on the feedback to help the teacher develop professionally. The feedback data should be shared with only the teacher and the process must remain confidential. The names of those providing feedback on the teacher's practice should not be shared with the teacher or anyone else.

The teacher evaluation process in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston currently relies on the administrator's observation of the teacher as the sole element for collecting data about the teacher's professional practice for the evaluation process. Using multiple sources would provide a greater amount of information about the teacher's teaching, which the principal could use in conferencing and coaching sessions with the teacher.

2.5.8 Portfolios

Authors consider the use of portfolios to be a best practice in the use of multiple data sources for teacher evaluation (AASPA, 2002; Danielson, 1996, 2001, 2007; Ribas, 2005; Stronge & Tucker, 2003; Wolf, 1996). Because of the substantial writing and support for the using portfolios as a multiple data source, this section provides information about the use them to assist teacher formative development in the teacher evaluation process.

The AASPA describes a portfolio as:

A purposeful collection of materials that document or are representative evidence of a teacher's knowledge and skills in areas previously identified...the portfolio should document a teacher's current performance in each of the targeted critical areas of teaching and measure attained growth for each goal. (p. 170)

Although portfolios can be time-consuming to construct and cumbersome to review, they have many benefits to offer. They capture the complexities of professional practice in ways that traditional evaluation cannot (AASPA, 2002; Wolf, 1996).

Too often, good teaching vanishes without a trace because we have no structure or tradition for preserving the best of what teachers do. Portfolios preserve tangible evidence of good teaching. They allow teachers to retain examples of their good teaching so they can

examine them and have self-reflection and collegial interactions based on documented episodes of their own teaching (Wolf, p. 34).

Constructing portfolios requires reflection and careful thought. Wolf (1996) and the AASPA (2002) concur that a portfolio should include a narrative plan written by the teacher outlining the annual objectives that have been mutually defined or selected by the teacher and the administrator. This plan may include specific evidences thought to verify the acquisition of new knowledge or skills. Most portfolios also contain teaching artifacts and written reflections. This includes, “Materials which support the acquisition of new knowledge or skills [including] videotapes, audiotapes, student products, teacher products, feedback from students, parents, peers and administrators, etc.” (AASPA, p. 170) and...”lesson plans, anecdotal records, student projects, class newsletters... annual evaluations, letter of recommendation, and the like” (Wolf, p. 35).

The teacher and administrator or peer team of teachers reviews the portfolio during the evaluation. Since the teacher must reflect and decide what items merit being included in the portfolio, the process becomes a structured self-assessment and opportunity for reflection and analysis (Stronge & Tucker, 2003; Danielson, 1996). AASPA (2002) contends that portfolios should be linked to the goal process. It states, “The most critical knowledge and skills identified in the teacher’s annual goals should be evaluated based upon the corresponding evidence statements supported by the documentation contained in the portfolio” (p. 171).

In the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, portfolios would give a more complete view of the teacher’s professional practice than observation alone. Teachers would also have the opportunity to reflect on their professional practice through deciding what materials to include in the portfolio. If the teacher has the opportunity to share the portfolio with the administrator in a conference, the administrator can structure the conference to promote the teacher’s further self-

reflection and collaborative conversation between them to promote the teacher's formative development.

2.6 PROBLEMATIC PRACTICE AND RECOMMENDED PRACTICE IN THE CURRENT TEACHER EVALUATION PROCESS IN THE DIOCESE OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON

Based on the review of literature, the written evaluation process in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston has elements of both problematic and recommended practice. The current teacher evaluation process for teachers in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston appears in its entirety in Appendix A. What follows is a summary of both the problematic and recommended practice in the current teacher evaluation process based on the information presented in the literature review. It is important to remember that the literature focuses on teacher evaluation in general and teacher evaluation in public schools which alone may or may not be applicable to teacher evaluation in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. Chapters four and five will discuss the findings of the literature and focus groups together as a means of determining recommended practice in the teacher evaluation process for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston.

2.6.1 Problematic Practice

There are many elements of problematic practice in the current teacher evaluation process. Although the process states that a purpose is to help teachers develop formatively, the process includes little opportunity for teachers to develop formatively especially through reflection and collaborative conversation with peers and administrators. There is a lack of clear, common

language about teaching. There is no framework to define levels of performance for each skill. While there is a teaching skills checklist, it does not correspond entirely with the evaluation form. The words “observation” and “evaluation” are used interchangeably in parts of the written evaluation process. There is no definition of any terms used in the evaluation process which would allow for a common understanding between teachers and administrators.

Formative development is evaluated using the same criteria and forms as the summative evaluation, yet there is no process for formative development. There is no process for conferencing or coaching. The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston does not offer any training to principals about teacher evaluation or use of the teacher evaluation process to promote teacher formative development.

Evaluation is differentiated only by the frequency of observation. Teachers in their first three years of teaching are observed formally three times per year. Teacher in their fourth and fifth years of teaching are observed formally twice per year. Teachers beyond their fifth year are observed formally once per year. While there is more required observation for newer teachers, the remainder of the process the same for novices and veterans. There is no differentiation in the process to meet individual teacher needs nor is there an assistance track. An optional form for Individual Growth and Development is included in the process, yet there is no explanation of this form, its purpose, or when and how to use it.

Formal observation of the teacher’s teaching by the administrator is the sole method of collecting data about the teacher’s professional practice. Multiple data sources, including portfolios and student achievement, are not used in the teacher evaluation process. The goal process limits the teacher to having one goal annually which prevents teachers from opting to have more goals if they desire. The one goal is an individual goal of the teacher, and there is no consideration of school or district initiatives. Furthermore, the teacher develops the goal and

submits the goal to the principal without any collaborative discussion among the teacher and colleagues or the administrator about the goal.

2.6.2 Recommended Practice

The current evaluation process acknowledges that the purpose of the evaluation process is to improve the quality of instruction. To achieve this purpose, the process has several components. There is a form for teachers to complete annually, which requires them to reflect and appraise their professional practice. The process includes a pre-observation conference, observation, and post observation conference and there is a worksheet for the principal to use while observing the teacher and another form to evaluate the lesson observed. There is a goals process. Teachers write their goal on the Goal Form and complete a Goal Attainment Form at the end of the school year reflecting on their accomplishment of the goal. There is a teaching skills checklist included in the evaluation process. This list is called The Professional Teaching Standards and consists of standards in Ministry of Catholic Education, Instructional Performance, Classroom Environment and Management, and Professional Responsibilities. The summative process includes a structured and easy to read summative evaluation form which the principal completes annually. The content and structure of this form is aligned with the content and structure of the observation form. After the principal completes the summative evaluation form, the teacher signs at the end of the form to acknowledge receipt. The teacher may provide feedback and comments to the principal on the summative evaluation within ten days of receiving the summative evaluation form.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of teachers and administrators in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston in the State of West Virginia about the effectiveness of the current teacher evaluation process in the formative development of teachers and how the process could be improved. The collection of data was accomplished through focus group discussions with teachers and with principals. This chapter states the research questions, problem, defines the use of the focus group research process, describes the setting and participants, and describes the procedures used in the focus groups and the research questions discussed.

3.1 STATEMENT OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND PROBLEM

I approached this study with several research questions in mind. First, what did the teachers and principals in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston recognize as unique characteristics of their schools and the diocese that might effect teacher evaluation? What did the principals and teachers perceive to be problematic and helpful practice that effect teacher formative development in the teacher evaluation process? Finally, what elements of practice would the teachers and principals recommend that were not recommended by the literature and why would they recommend them?

Principals and teachers have indicated through informal comments to the central office of the Department of Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston that the teacher evaluation process is not effective in helping teachers develop formatively. A comparison between the current written process and the literature reveals that the current process has elements of practice that are both problematic and recommended for teacher formative development. The problem to be solved is: How could the teacher evaluation process be changed to improve the formative development of teachers in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston? Attending to this question also sheds light on how the teacher evaluation process in other schools systems can be utilized to improve teacher formative development.

3.2 CONTEXT

3.2.1 Defining Focus Group Research

Morgan (1998) states that “focus groups are fundamentally a way of listening to people and learning from them” (p. 9). Focus groups “promote self-disclosure among participants... [which allows the researcher] to know what people really think and feel” (Krueger & Casey, 2000, p. 7). Focus group interviews have five features. Focus groups are “(1) people who (2) possess certain characteristics and (3) provide qualitative data (4) in a focused discussion (5) to help understand the topic of interest” (p.8). Several authors concur that focus groups typically consist of 4 to 12 participants (Kitzinger & Barbour, 1999; Krueger, 1994; Krueger & Casey, 2000; Morgan 1998; Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990; Wilkinson, 2003). Krueger and Casey assert that it is best to “plan three to four focus groups with any one type of participant” (p. 26), which provides a more accurate account of the participants’ perception than one or two groups. Focus group interviews

should be considered when trying to: understand the range of ideas or feelings that people have about something; understand the differences in perspectives between groups or categories of people (often, people in power see a situation or issue differently from those who are not); encourage ideas to emerge from a group; and gain information on qualitative data already collected (p. 24).

There are both advantages and disadvantages to focus groups. Morgan (1998) believes that focus groups are an ideal method of gathering data when exploration, discovery, understanding, interpretation, and meaning are sought. Scheuereen (2004) believes that the benefits associated with focus groups include the following: A wide range of information can be gathered in a relatively short time span; the moderator can explore related but unanticipated topics as they arise in discussion; and the focus group does not require complex sampling techniques. Stewart and Shamdasani (1990) add that focus groups provide data in the participants' own words allowing a deeper level of meaning to be ascertained as well as subtle nuances. Furthermore, the results are easy to understand and more accessible to decision makers and focus groups allow the researcher to interact directly with the participants which is conducive to asking and answering follow-up questions (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). Participants are more likely to be candid in a group setting than individual interviews because the researcher's attention is on the group rather than the individual. This means that participants will not be identified with their particular comments. Furthermore, participants may respond to all the questions or only those that interest them (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990).

Disadvantages of focus groups include that the sample is not randomly selected and the quality of data is influenced by the skills and motivation of the moderator, therefore, the results cannot be generalized or treated statistically (Scheuereen, 2004). Stewart and Shamdasani (1990)

add that results can be influenced by the presence of a dominant or opinionated member in a group who may cause the more reserved member to be hesitant to speak.

3.2.2 The Use of Focus Group Research in This Study

In this study, I sought to explore and gain insight into the beliefs of teachers and administrators in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston in the state of West Virginia about the effectiveness of the current teacher evaluation process in the formative development of teachers and how the current process could be improved. I chose focus group methodology for several reasons. First, I was interested in exploring the full range of perceptions of teachers and principals as groups about the current teacher evaluation process and how it could be improved. I anticipated differences in perspectives between teachers and principals and wanted to understand these differences. I anticipated that the teachers and principals might view problematic and recommended practice quite differently from the literature given that the literature focused on teacher evaluation in general and in public schools and the principals and teachers would be focused on teacher evaluation in their Catholic schools. Given my position as an administrator in the Department of Catholic Schools, I wanted to learn how my perceptions on the issues of teacher evaluation compare with those of the teachers and principals in our diocese. I entered the focus groups with excitement and eagerness to learn from the individual and collective wisdom of these experts.

I was also interested in observing how the ideas would emerge from the group and how ideas would develop as members of the group discussed each question. I believed that group discussion was more conducive to sharing than individual interviews. Prior to this research, I conducted individual interviews with teachers and principals in this diocese regarding school and principal evaluation. I had also conducted focus group discussions with the teachers and

principals regarding teacher induction and mentoring and principal mentoring. I found that both teachers and principals were more comfortable and more apt to share openly their thoughts in a group setting and that a group setting gave them the option to participate or not participate on certain questions. In the mentoring focus groups which I had conducted, there was a distinct synergy of ideas as teachers and principals became more comfortable speaking up about their ideas to get group feedback. Because the members knew they were helping to develop these programs, they had a great sense of “buy in” to wanting to participate and see the program improve. Because teachers and principals had a positive experience in these focus groups and had developed trust in me as a moderator, I anticipated that they would be just as dynamic, if not even more excited, to participate in these teacher evaluation focus groups. I also anticipated that both principals and teachers would have the same sense of “buy in” in wanting to participate to see the teacher evaluation program improve.

I was also interested in pursuing focus group research because I see it as a positive step forward for Catholic schools. The Catholic church has for centuries been rooted in a structure of personnel hierarchy. The Pope is at the top of the hierarchy, with cardinals, bishops, monsignors, priests and brothers, nuns, deacons, and lay people. Each group follows directives of the higher groups in accordance with their vows of obedience. For many years, Catholic schools were staffed primarily by clergy. Nuns and priests were the teachers and administrators. The hierarchy of the church permeated the schools.

Today, in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston as well as in most dioceses in the United States, the clergy make up a very small percentage of the school personnel. Superintendent John Yelenic, worked very collaboratively with all personnel and promoted discussion. Employees now have a “voice.” Because I believe there is a need to continue the development of collaborative conversation among employees, I was interested in using focus groups to both

promote such discussion in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston and to serve as a role model for other school systems. The focus groups for this study not only helped me to collect data for this study but also helped the teachers and principals to have the reflective and collaborative discussion as a means to increase their formative development. Ultimately, such discussion can give the teachers and principals a “voice” in practice and policy.

3.3 PARTICIPANTS AND SETTING

Six focus groups were planned for a total of 64 teachers and principals from the 32 schools in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. One principal and one teacher from each school were invited to attend. There were three focus groups consisting of teachers and three focus groups consisting of administrators. Teachers and administrators were not combined within any of the focus groups.

A recruitment letter (see Appendix B) was emailed to the principal at each school. The letter requested the principal’s attendance and asked that the principal select one teacher to attend from their school who: Was a veteran teacher (which the Diocese defines as a teacher with more than three (3) years experience); was willing and interested in participating in the revision of the teacher evaluation process; and was interested in making a positive contribution to the revision of the teacher evaluation process. Principals and teachers were welcomed to attend any of the three sites. A principal and teacher from the same school did not need to attend the same site. All sites had the same start and end times for the focus groups. The letter requested that the principal RSVP both their and their teacher’s attendance to me.

One teacher focus group and one administrator focus group was held in each of three locations around the state in order that none of the participants would have to drive more than

two hours one way. Most participants drove approximately 30 minutes one way to their site. The locations of the focus groups were: The Blessed John XXIII Pastoral Center in Charleston, West Virginia; the St. Francis Parish Hall in Morgantown, West Virginia; and the Pope Paul VI Pastoral Center in Wheeling, West Virginia. Each focus group convened for one and a half hours. At each site, the principals convened from 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and then had a work related meeting from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and the teachers convened from 12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. and had a work related meeting from 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Lunch was served for all participants from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

3.4 PROCEDURES

An informational letter for participants about this research project as well as about their rights as research subjects were given to participants at the beginning of each focus group meeting (see Appendix C). The letter explained that there were no foreseeable risks associated with this project nor were there any benefits to the participants. There was no compensation for participants. Focus group discussion would be recorded in order to analyze the responses for patterns and neither the participants nor their responses would be identified in any way. Participation was voluntary and the participant could withdraw at any time. After reading the letter, participants were given an opportunity to ask questions about the informational letter and their rights and to withdraw from the study if they wished to do so. None of the participants withdrew from the study.

I followed these systematic steps in each of the six focus groups. Six questions were posed to each of the six focus groups. Each participant received a written copy of the six questions. I then posed each question orally in the order presented allowing for discussion of

each before moving on to the next. Participants could read along with my oral reading and/or listen to my reading of the questions to suit their learning styles. I chose to limit my involvement in the focus group discussion to reading the questions, answering any questions from subjects who needed clarifications on the questions, and redirecting conversation back to the question if the conversation became irrelevant to the question posed. My goal was to keep the discussion focused on the subjects and to limit the possibility of my perceptions and bias from affecting the conversation.

Six questions were posed to the focus groups:

- 1) Are there unique characteristics in the diocese and schools in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston that effect teacher evaluation?
- 2) What are these characteristics?
- 3) What are the most and least beneficial components of the current teacher evaluation process? Which of these effect the formative development of teachers? How do they effect formative development?
- 4) How should formative and summative evaluation be aligned in a teacher evaluation process?
- 5) How could the teacher evaluation process be improved?
- 6) How could the teacher evaluation process be utilized to improve teacher formative development?

Participants sat at tables arranged in a square fashion with all participants facing one another and the center for the discussion. I collected all data through audio recording and my own handwritten notes (which included key points in the discussion, notable quotes, and my observations of body language and mood of group members). I used professional quality transcriptionist tape recorders. I used two recorders in case one would fail to record. One recorder had an internal microphone and the other had an external “pen-type” microphone that would pick up more quiet voices. I used professional quality transcriptionist tapes without leader

and high quality resolution. One tape was used for each focus group with a total of six tapes being used altogether.

Originally, I had planned to do a Transcript Based Approach for the data analysis. In this approach, an unabridged transcript of each focus group discussion is made from the audio recording by a transcriptionist. However, following the focus group sessions, I realized that a Tape-Based Abridged Transcript Approach (Krueger, 1998; Krueger & Casey, 2000) to capturing data would be more efficient and yield more relevant data. Krueger and Casey (2000), describe this approach by stating that it, “Relies on listening to a tape recording of each focus group and then developing an abridged transcript of the relevant and useful portions of the discussion...It is a condensed version of the focus group discussion with irrelevant conversation removed” (p. 131).

There were several reasons why I chose the Tape Based-Abridged Transcript Approach rather than the Transcript Based Approach. First, there was a fair amount of irrelevant conversation that took place during the focus groups. The principals and teachers rarely get the opportunity to be together and talk in groups. While all six groups answered thoroughly all of the focus group questions, they also tended to get off topic at times to discuss other issues of interest to them, a common complaint or compare situations in various schools. These discussions were not relevant to the focus group questions posed. I periodically redirected the groups, yet I was faced with the challenge of whether more frequent redirection from me would stifle the comfortable environment and openness of conversation. Because there was irrelevant conversation in all six groups (which is discussed later in this chapter), I felt that a complete transcript, in the Transcript Based Approach, would include too much irrelevant information which would cloud the pertinent information and not be useful for this study. Second, I felt very comfortable using the Tape Based-Abridged Transcript Approach. Krueger and Casey (2000)

state that “only someone with a thorough understanding of the purpose of the study can develop an abridged transcript...this abridged transcript should be prepared by a member of the research team” (p. 131). This expertise is needed to sort through what information is pertinent and should be included in the abridged transcript. Because I am the primary researcher and have a very thorough understanding of the purpose of this study, I felt comfortable with developing the abridged transcript. Finally, with my background and degrees in music, I have developed a large capacity for aural memory and dictation. I am an aural learner with strong aural comprehension and weaker reading comprehension. Because the Tape Based-Abridged Transcript Approach involved listening to the tapes and creating an abridged transcript, it was a much more natural and effective approach to data analysis for me than reading a more lengthy full transcript of the sessions.

In the weeks following the focus group interviews, I listened to the tapes and made written note of the counter number on the tape recorder that corresponded to the asking of each of the six questions in each of the six focus groups. I listened to the responses in all six focus groups for the first question. I created an abridged transcript by transcribing into written format quotations that both did and did not align with the recommended and problematic practices of evaluation as outlined in the literature. Quotes from teachers were marked with a “T” and quotes from principals were marked with a “P.” The tape counter number was indicated next to each quote. When quotes did not fit into specific categories of problematic or recommended practice, they were set aside and later the categories were dissected to ensure that they should not be broken down further or new categories should be created. Quotes were marked with colored highlighters which gave a visual reference to categories of recommended and problematic practices and groups of teachers and principals. The aforementioned steps for analysis continued

in a cyclical progression until the data from responses to all six questions had exposed all the themes embedded in the focus group sessions.

I used a Long-Table Approach to organize the data (Kruger, 1998; Krueger & Casey, 2000). I laid out the six focus group questions across the top of a long table. I made two color hard copies of the transcript (showing the colors of the highlighters), cut the transcripts apart into individual quotes, and arranged quotes from the six focus groups under each of the six questions. I put quotations with the same highlighted color together. I then used the computer to word process a compiled list of the comments and also to write a descriptive summary of what both the principal and teacher groups said in response to each question. I summarized the trends and patterns that aligned with these role alike groups and across role alike groups. (Krueger & Casey, p. 136). I used this summary to systematically address the research questions and present the findings in Chapter 4.

4.0 FINDINGS

The Department of Catholic Schools in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston in West Virginia expressed an interest in improving the teacher evaluation process in its school system. Informal comments to the department have indicated that the process does not improve the formative development of teachers.

Historically, there has been limited literature about teacher evaluation in Catholic schools. Literature about teacher evaluation in general and in public schools, as well as one doctoral dissertation focusing on teacher evaluation in a single Catholic school reveal that the formative development of teachers is a critical part of the evaluation process and that formative development is often lacking in the teacher evaluation process. The literature outlines both problematic practice that hinders teacher formative development in the evaluation process and recommended practice that promotes teacher formative development in the evaluation process.

In this study, I explored teacher evaluation in the Catholic school system of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston to determine how to improve the formative development of teachers through the teacher evaluation process. I approached this study with several research questions in mind. First, what did the teachers and principals in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston recognize as unique characteristics of their schools and the diocese that might effect teacher evaluation? What did the principals and teachers perceive to be problematic and helpful practice that effect teacher formative development in the teacher evaluation process? Finally, what

elements of practice would the teachers and principals recommend that were not recommended by the literature and why would they recommend them?

Focus groups were chosen as the method of data collection to best explore and understand the full range of perceptions of the principals and teachers. A recruitment letter (see Appendix B) was emailed to the principal at each school. The letter requested the principal's attendance and asked that the principal select one teacher to attend from their school who: Was a veteran teacher (which the Diocese defines as a teacher with more than three (3) years experience); willing and interested in participating in the revision of the teacher evaluation process; and interested in making a positive contribution to the revision of the teacher evaluation process.

Six focus groups were conducted with a total of 44 teachers and principals. There were three focus groups consisting of teachers and three focus groups consisting of administrators. Teachers and administrators were not combined within any of the focus groups. One teacher focus group and one administrator focus group was held in each of three locations around the state in order that none of the participants would have to drive more than two hours one way. Each focus group convened for one and a half hours. The principals convened in the morning. Lunch was provided for all participants at noon. Then the teachers convened in the afternoon.

The remainder of this chapter provides information collected from the focus groups, a comparison of the focus group comments and the literature, and my reflections on focus group discussions and literature. The chapter is organized into this introduction followed by five sections. The first section compares the informal comments received by The Department of Catholic Schools about the current teacher evaluation process to the focus group comments. The second section reports on the focus group perceptions of problematic practice in the current teacher evaluation. The third section reports on the elements and practice focus groups

recommend as part of a teacher evaluation process. The fourth section reports on elements and practice that the focus groups believe would support Catholic Identity in the teacher evaluation process. The fifth section reports on discussion that arose during the focus group sessions that was unrelated to the focus group questions. A reflection is included at the conclusion of each section to further describe and explore the findings.

4.1 RAPPORT AND PERCEPTION OF UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS

A total of 44 teachers and principals participated in the six focus groups. In Charleston, there were 8 principals present in the principal focus group and 7 teachers present in the teacher focus group. In Wheeling, there were 9 principals present in the principal focus group and 11 teachers present in the teacher focus group. In Morgantown, there were 4 principals present in the principal focus group and 5 teachers present in the teacher focus group. All of the registered participants showed up for the focus group sessions. Five principals did not respond to the invitation to participate. Three principals and two teachers contacted the researcher the day of the focus groups with their regrets of not being able to attend due to urgent situations in their schools. Other principals contacted the researcher well in advance of the focus group sessions to express regrets due to their need to be present at other personal or school functions.

The rapport among all participants during the sessions and during meals and breaks was both cordial and professional. I felt and observed a palpable and visible joy among principals and teachers who had not seen one another in some time as they greeted. They greeted me with the same sense of happiness and welcome. They told stories of their schools and families to one another and took time to “catch up” on all that was new.

Each session began with a prayer. The teachers and principals are accustomed to beginning their meetings in this way and everyone participated. Participants responded to all six of the questions posed to them. During the sessions, all participants listened attentively to one another and participated actively in conversation. All participants appeared comfortable in voicing their opinions openly, honestly, and without hesitation. I felt a sense of goodwill and trust between participants and between the participants and myself. They appeared to truly enjoy the conversation.

A number of participants brought notes or resources from their school about teacher evaluation to share at the focus group sessions. Some participants discussed that, in preparation for attending the focus group, they had spoken with other teachers or the entire faculty at their school to gather ideas about the current teacher evaluation process.

All six groups identified characteristics they believed were unique to the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston and their schools. Catholic Identity was cited in each group as the most unique characteristic of their schools and every group responded “we are unique because we are Catholic schools.” They described Catholic Identity by saying that “our religion is part of everything we do.” The “ethics and morals of the staff, students, and parents,” and “charisms and certain qualities” of various religious orders reflect the Catholic Identity. One group of principals had a particularly dynamic discussion as their ideas built one upon the next. One principal stated, “I am convinced that each one of our schools rests in Christ Jesus and is animated by that and consequently our thinking is always bigger. I think the demise of public education has been the removal of God from the equation.” He went on to say:

16 out of 100 students in West Virginia receive a Bachelors degree. The Catholic numbers are not at all like that and why aren't they? Because it is a faith filled community. We never lose sight that we're teaching for time and eternity.

To this, another principal responded that Catholic education “Is our life and calling and our kids know it and our moms and dads know it and the people who come to the school buy into it.” A third principal added, “It’s that covenant agreement of parent-child-community for the total formation of the child.” A fourth principal addressed the sentiment of parents whose children are attending public school by stating, “Parents coming from public school see and identify this immediately and say, ‘This is what I want for my child.’” The remainder of the principals in the group indicated agreement and support of these comments both verbally and by nodding their heads up and down.

All groups also identified that their schools are unique because they differ in size of the school building, configuration of the building, and number of staff and students. Principals of larger schools felt “spread thin” and that this affects the amount of time and energy they put into teacher evaluation. Several participants cited that the distance among the schools causes them to be unique because “being spread out and not having contact with other schools you may see more unique patterns of how the principals do the evaluations.” One principal stated, “I think our culture in West Virginia is unique and this effects teacher evaluation.” None of the other principals in the groups gave indication of agreement or disagreement with the statement.

Many participants expressed gratitude to the researcher for conducting the sessions and for their opportunity to participate. They expressed that the conversation was “helpful” and that “similar opportunity for conversation should be offered on a variety of topics every year.” Furthermore, many participants indicated an interest to participate in further discussion and shaping of a revised teacher evaluation process. They suggested that sessions could be conducted as part of the fall principal and teacher meetings. Several participants requested to receive the findings of this study upon its completion.

4.1.1 Reflection

I was glad to see the same sense of joy among the teachers and principals at these focus group meetings as we typically see in our annual principal and teacher meetings. Everyone appeared genuinely glad to participate in the discussion and seemed to enjoy each other's company. The conversation was highly engaging and reflective: participants freely exchanged ideas both during the sessions and at breakfast and lunch just like at annual meetings. The comradeship and interest in conversation appeared to influence the participants' openness.

This positive rapport brought answers to some questions that I had in my dual role as a researcher and practitioner in this study. As a researcher, I understood the value of focus group methodology, the need for the informational letter to participants and recording the conversations. Yet, I anticipated that those participants from more rural parts of the state might not have experience with research projects and might not understand or agree with such protocol. As Director of Programs, I did not know if the participants would be concerned that their participation could somehow influence their employment and that this might effect their participation. The topic of teacher evaluation can be sensitive; principals often dislike doing evaluations and teachers dislike being evaluated. I anticipated that it could be a difficult topic to discussion. In fact, none of these issues turned out to be a concern in any of the focus groups and the participation, comments, and rapport in all six focus groups were both open and positive.

The teachers and principals who attend meetings always seem to appreciate and enjoy the opportunity to be together with colleagues from other schools. As Director of Programs, this is evident to me at all of our meetings and was evident in the focus groups through the amount and quality of participation, thanks and gratitude expressed by participants for conducting the sessions, and request for more opportunities to have professional discussion. I believe that the geographic distance between schools and the tradition of each school operating independently

has had an isolating effect on teachers and principals: The principals and teachers have little in-person contact with colleagues at other Catholic schools. Now that the schools will be functioning together as a system, the possibility exists for teachers and principals to have a greater support and resource network through their colleagues.

I noticed that the teachers and principals who shared notes and resources from their schools at the meetings did so with a great sense of urgency. I was struck by the fervency of their comments, but upon reflection I was not surprised: This was the first time that groups of teachers and principals had been asked to collectively give input about policy in the newly formed school system. They may have wanted to take advantage of the focus group time as an opportunity to make the teacher evaluation process better and perhaps to show the quality of their professional expertise.

Through these focus group discussions, I believe that the teachers and principals also demonstrated that collectively they are a valuable resource to the Department of Catholic Schools in the development of system policy and procedure. Individual teachers and principals had between 3 and 45 years of experience in Catholic education. Together, the principals and teachers provided a wealth of information that can be beneficial to the development of a new teacher evaluation process. Both teachers and principals appeared to be eager to give input about the teacher evaluation process and able to share their great amount of professional expertise. Given the eagerness to participate, the professionalism of the discussion, and the wealth of knowledge shared during the conversation, I believe the teachers and principals have the potential assist with development of the teacher evaluation process and perhaps other policy as well.

Although I wished that more teachers and principals had attended the focus group meetings, I was not surprised that about one-third of those invited did not participate. As

Director of Programs, I have observed that everyone in our office voices complaint that it is difficult to get the schools to attend and even respond to emails or phone calls requesting information. There are always a significant number of principals and teachers absent from meetings. Because attendance is an issue at all meetings, it is difficult for me as a researcher to determine how the presence of those principals and teachers who did not participate would have influenced the findings of this study if they had attended. I can only speculate that their attendance would have an influence on the conversation.

I attribute the lack of attendance to the attitude of autonomy that exists among the principals. I have observed that they have become so accustomed to operating their school independently that they do not see benefit to working together with the Department of Catholic Schools office and together as a system. Being a school system is a brand new concept for many of the teachers and principals who have spent their whole lives in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston with schools operating independently.

Another possible reason for lower attendance is the concern among principals that the meetings offered by our office have, in the past, lacked substance. One principal spoke with me during lunch at one focus group to share that the only goal of one meeting he attended was to make principals feel good about their work. He wished for more substantial content and professional development at meetings. He was so grateful for the focus group meeting because he felt that he learned a great deal by exchanging ideas with colleagues and that it would help him be a better principal. Others at the table expressed agreement and a similar sentiment (Anonymous personal communication, May 2008). Perhaps attendance at meetings would be better if the content of the meetings better suited the needs of the principals and teachers.

Typically, when there is a meeting or some information our office requires from the principals, the secretaries send numerous email reminders and often do phone call reminders.

For this study, I chose to give only one reminder by email. In making this choice I attempted to balance my roles as practitioner and researcher. As a researcher, I believed that multiple reminders could cause participants to feel they are being pushed too hard to participate which would be contrary to the informational letter to participants which emphasizes their voluntary participation. As a practitioner, I believe that an invitation and one reminder are sufficient notice to professional personnel such as teachers and principals. I did not want to give multiple reminders because I believe it sends a message that this is the professional expectation.

Collectively, the principals and teachers have many years of experience as Catholic educators. It was clear from their comments in the focus groups that they value Catholic education: They spoke with great conviction about the importance of Catholic education at the focus groups just as I have seen them do at other meetings. The use of focus group discussion allowed for the participants comments to build one on the next in a cumulative fashion. As the comments were shared, the conviction of the tone also intensified. Each group ultimately requested of me that Catholic Identity be mentioned in this study as a unique characteristic of their schools which is important to teacher evaluation. This was the only factor that any group requested that I be certain to include in the findings. The content and fervency of the discussion evidenced their belief that Catholic Identity unifies each of their schools in common beliefs and missions. Because the principals and teachers have both great conviction and experience in Catholic education, the potential exists for them to share their expertise about how Catholic Identity should function in the schools.

Given the wealth of experience in Catholic education of the participants, I anticipated that they would both interact in the groups in a manner that reflected the Catholic faith and that they would articulate clearly what makes their school unique by being Catholic. The positive, respectful, and reflective nature of all focus group conversations was evidence of the principals'

and teachers' ability to live and model the essence of Catholic Identity. Yet I was surprised that the principals and teachers did not articulate clearly how Catholic Identity functions in their school or how it should function in the teacher evaluation process. Their conversation about Catholic Identity lacked depth: While the teachers and principals discussed how much they wanted Catholic Identity to be a more significant part of the evaluation process, none verbalized detail significant enough to make a change in what already exists. It appears that the teachers and principals have learned to live and model the Catholic faith from their lifetime involvement in the church, but have not become conversant in the aspects of Catholic Identity as they pertain to their schools.

I believe the reason for this diffuse sense of Catholic Identity is that there has been a lack of professional development and discussion for all school personnel surrounding Catholic Identity and how it should be manifest in schools. If the schools are unique because they are Catholic, then the principals and teachers should know what this means and be able to articulate it. It is also necessary for them to have clear and common language and understanding surrounding Catholic Identity if it is to be included in the evaluation process, taught as part of religion class, and infused across the curriculum.

Finally, I was surprised by the responses of the teachers and principals to the question of whether there are unique characteristics in the diocese or school that affect teacher evaluation. I constructed the question with an inherent inference: Compared with what are the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston and its schools unique? Being new to West Virginia, I have been so struck with the unique qualities of the state and diocese compared with other places I have lived and worked.

In retrospect, I realize that I made an assumption that the principals and teachers would also believe that the diocese and state have unique characteristics compared with other places

and dioceses in the country. In reality, the participants' comments were very focused on their individual schools. They did not view the schools, diocese, and state collectively as having unique attributes. I believe there could be several reasons for this. The concept of a school system is still new and foreign to many of the principals and teachers which could have been why they did not discuss the unique characteristics of the schools as a whole. Rather, they perceived this question to ask about the uniqueness of their individual schools because they are accustomed to thinking of their own school independent from others. Also, many of the teachers and principals are native West Virginians or have lived in West Virginia for many years. The limitation of their experience to the state and diocese could be why they do not think of how their diocese and schools are unique compared with other places.

One principal out of all of the participants responded that the schools were unique because the culture of West Virginia is unique. This was the type of response I had anticipated would come from all of the focus groups regarding the unique characteristics of the schools and diocese. I believe this principal was more keenly aware of the unique culture in West Virginia than anyone else who participated of cultural differences because she has lived in other parts of the country and now serves the most remote school in the diocese. It could be that her perspective is broader than other participants given that she has lived and worked in these vastly different places.

4.2 THE RELATION BETWEEN FOCUS GROUP COMMENTS AND INFORMAL COMMENTS ABOUT THE TEACHER EVALUATION PROCESS

The Department of Catholic Schools received informal comments from principals and teachers that the current teacher evaluation process was not effective in teacher formative development,

did not improve the quality of instruction, and included too much paperwork. Many individuals in all six focus groups cited the amount of paperwork involved in the current process as problematic. No teachers or principals expressed a different or opposing viewpoint that the paperwork was helpful. Many teachers in all groups gave the exact same comment stating, “It is too much paperwork.” Teachers conveyed their concern that completing the paperwork takes time away from having valuable conversations with their principals about teaching. One teacher stated, “People see it as ‘let’s just get this paperwork out of the way.’” A common belief arose among the teachers that “the evaluation process should not be about paperwork on our part or the part of the principal.”

Many principals admitted to either not using the forms in the current evaluation process or significantly altering the forms to lessen the amount of paperwork. One principal stated that she felt so overwhelmed by all of the forms that she just “whited much of it out.” Upon hearing this, other principals in the same group admitted to having also altered the forms to lessen paperwork. One representative comment was, “The paperwork is overwhelming and I don’t use it.” Several principals in each of the other two focus groups admitted to not using the forms and appeared visibly relieved to find out that they were not “the only one doing this!” Another principal stated, “I use my own form. I have created my own form.” Many principals expressed ardently that they did not want to use the forms but felt “obligated” to do so. Principals who did not use the forms described having more time for collaborative conversation with the teachers about professional practice. They described the conversations as “wonderful.”

There were many comments from participants in all six of the focus groups that concurred with the informal comments about the lack of effectiveness in teacher formative development in the process. Principals and teachers focused their concern on the quantity of forms in the current process and that forms have little effect on teacher formative development

and quality of instruction. Many principals expressed a common feeling that the entire evaluation process has “little effect on teachers” because it “doesn’t help them.” Teachers and principals in all groups explained that frequent conversation between the teacher and administrator is “very helpful” for the teacher to develop formatively. One principal summarized her feelings by stating that with the current process she had to “change her method of doing evaluation. I use to write ‘love letters’ to teachers. It gave them remarkable feedback based on the wonderful conversations we had all year long.” She went on to describe that the teachers appreciated the written feedback and how they used it as a tool in conversation to help the teacher “grow.”

4.2.1 Reflection

When I read the written teacher evaluation process, I saw the same issues expressed by the informal comments to the Department of Catholic Schools. The paperwork appeared excessive and there was little focus on teacher formative development. I was not surprised that the principals and teachers comments were similar to the informal comments and my observations. I was surprised, however, to hear that principals were altering the written process and forms. Upon reflection, I considered that the principals were accustomed to operating their schools independently and viewed policy and procedure established by the Department of Catholic Schools as more of a suggestion than a requirement. They were simply doing what they believed was best for their school. Because they have not been involved in helping to create the policies and procedures, they also may have felt little ownership of them. This lack of ownership may have caused them to feel further removed from using policy and procedure at their schools. I believe that the principals’ effort to create new forms for the teacher evaluation process is

evidence that they both want an effective, efficient process and that they have ideas about how to make the process more effective.

4.3 THE FOCUS GROUPS IDENTIFIED PROBLEMATIC PRACTICE IN THE CURRENT TEACHER EVALUATION PROCESS

All six focus groups identified problematic practice in the current teacher evaluation process. There was a very close alignment between the problematic practice identified by the focus groups and the literature. All of the problematic practice identified by the focus groups was also cited in the literature as problematic practice. Table 4-1 illustrates the occurrence of focus group discussion of problematic practice. It does not give a sense of how or to what extent the groups discussed the element. These aspects are covered in the narrative of this section.

The problematic practice outlined in the literature included: There is confusion about the purpose of evaluation (Danielson, 1996, 2007; Ribas, 2005); the evaluation process is often outdated (Danielson, 1996, 2007); the process is hierarchical with one-way communication from the administrator to the teacher (Boyd, 1989; Brandt, 1996; Brogan, 1997); the process is the same for novices and experienced practitioners (Danielson, 1996, 2007); there is a lack of clear, common language about teaching and precision in evaluating performance (Danielson, 1996, 2007; Danielson and McGreal, 2000; Ribas, 2005); administrators lack expertise about how adults learn and how to conduct evaluations (Costa & Garmston, 2002; Danielson, 1996, 2007; Danielson and McGreal, 2000); and the teacher evaluation process focuses on summative evaluation while failing to focus on formative growth (Danielson, 1996, 2007; Danielson and McGreal, 2000; Green, 2001; Ribas, 2005). The problematic practice the groups identified included: All six groups asserted that there is a lack of clear common language and precision in

evaluating performance; the process is the same for novice and veterans; and there is focus on summative evaluation rather than formative development. All three teacher focus groups and one principal focus group conveyed that there is a lack of administrator expertise in knowing how to utilize evaluation to enhance teacher formative development. None of the groups described the process as hierarchical or that there is confusion about the purpose of evaluation. Rather, they expressed an understanding and agreement with the philosophy and purpose outlined in the current evaluation process. Finally, several principals in one group stated briefly that the process is out-dated but did not elaborate on how it is outdated.

Table 4-1: Problematic Practice by Focus Group

SOURCE	Outdated System	Hierarchical Process	Process same for novice and veteran	Lack of clear, common language and precision	Lack of Administrator Expertise	Focus on summative evaluation rather than formative	Confusion about purpose of evaluation
Charleston Teachers			*	*	*	*	
Morgantown Teachers			*	*	*	*	
Wheeling Teachers			*	*	*	*	
Charleston Principals			*	*		*	
Morgantown Principals			*	*		*	
Wheeling Principals	*		*	*	*	*	

4.3.1 Lack of Clear, Common Language About Teacher Evaluation and Precision in Evaluating Performance

The focus groups gave several examples of how the lack of clear language and precision are problematic in the current evaluation process. The “Exceeds Standards” performance rating was a concern for all three groups of principals because they believed that it is not applicable in all areas of performance. Group members cited several examples. One principal asked, “How can you exceed standards in professional dress? Wear fur coat and pearls? ” Another principal responded that concerning dress he gives only the “Meets Standards” marking because he is “not comfortable with judging that someone exceeds standards in dress.”

In another principal focus group, principals asked one another, “How can you exceed standards on maintaining certification?” One principal proceeded to explain, “If a teacher has masters, I given them an Exceeds Standards.” The principals agreed that the performance indicators “need to be relevant to the area of performance.”

Teachers in all groups raised the point that the criteria on the evaluation form are not specific enough to be helpful to them. Several groups discussed that the evaluation method is imprecise because “there really is no rubric for performance.” They believed that a written definition of each teaching element at each level of performance is needed to give “the specific details for a teacher to know what needs improvement.” Principals expressed concern that, “What one principal considers being Meets Standards, another principal could consider Exceeds Standards.” They asserted that because they are spread out geographically from one another and have little opportunity to have a dialogue about common language, it is possible that teachers across the diocese are evaluated differently based on the subjective opinion of individual principals.

Finally, one teacher noted a correction to be made on the summative form. She stated, “There is a discrepancy between the list of teaching elements on the observation and summative forms. I think that every bit of those points should reflect on the summative evaluation. That’s a big mistake.” Other teachers in the group concurred that more precise alignment between the observation and summative forms is needed.

The comments from the focus groups about the current evaluation process are similar to the literature which asserted that the lack of clear, common language about teaching and precision in evaluation hinders the collaborative discussion between teachers and administrators about professional practice (Danielson, 1996, 2007; Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Ribas, 2005). The comments also supported the assertion in the literature that there is little agreement on what constitutes each level of performance. That is, one person’s “satisfactory” might be another person’s “outstanding” (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). Because of the lack of definition and common language, both the focus groups and the literature aligned in belief that evaluation can be highly subjective (Sweeney, 2001).

4.3.2 The Focus on Summative Evaluation and Lack of Focus on Formative Evaluation

All six groups felt there is a lack of focus on teacher formative development in the current process. They again cited that the paperwork involved in the current process “distracts both the principal and the teacher from being able to focus on formative development.” All three groups of principals agreed that the current process “does not encourage formative development.” A representative comment from many teachers was that, “We could help teachers focus on areas they need growth if there was less paperwork.”

The comments from the focus groups about the current evaluation process aligned with the literature which asserts that evaluation systems need to focus more on formative supervision

(Danielson, 1996, 2007; Danielson and McGreal, 2000; Green, 2001; Ribas, 2005). The literature did not cite that excessive paperwork hinders the evaluation process, but it could take time away from principals and teachers engaging in dialogue and feedback to promote professional growth. These concerns were cited by all six of the focus groups and the literature (Boyd, 1989; Ellis, 1984; Radenbush, Eamsukawat, Di-Ibor, Kamall, & Taoklam, 1993).

4.3.3 The Lack of Administrator Expertise

All three teacher focus groups and one principal focus group cited lack of administrator expertise as problematic to the teacher evaluation process and formative development of teachers. None of the principals identified in what ways they feel deficient in evaluating teachers. However, one group of principals cited the lack of a principal mentoring program as the cause of a lack of expertise among administrators in knowing how to evaluate teachers. One stated, “There is no formal principal mentoring program. New principals need more direction.” Another principal responded, “I think had I been mentored differently. My own mentoring wasn’t there. There needs to be a lot stronger mentoring for our new principals...someone coming into their school and helping.” In another group, a principal stated, “All of this ultimately goes back to principal mentoring. We need a veteran principal to come into the building of new principal and help them.”

Two participants cited that lack of degrees and certification in education and administration are a concern. These comments pertained to only two administrators. One principal stated, “This is very hard for me because I don’t have an education degree and your experience in the classroom.” In a different group, a teacher stated about a different administrator, “My administrator doesn’t have a degree in education and doesn’t have the background to tell me how to improve.”

A common belief arose among the teachers that principals lack training and expertise in how to communicate with teachers in the evaluation process. Specifically, the teachers cited that their principals “did not seem to know how to communicate what the teacher needs to improve or how to improve it.” One stated that there is a, “Need to give principals skills on good communication. Find an evaluation system where you can train them how to say it.” In another group, a teacher stated that, “It would be beneficial for principals to have a workshop by other principals on how to communicate criticism to teachers.” Other teachers expressed frustration that administrators do not know enough about their subject area to help them.

The comments from the focus groups about the current evaluation process are similar to the literature which asserts that administrators cannot possess in-depth knowledge in all subject areas and that teachers are frustrated because the administrators cannot help them develop expertise in teaching their subject areas (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). Second, the comments from the focus groups are also similar to the literature which asserts that administrators have limited expertise in helping adult learners to develop and in conducting evaluations (Costa & Garmston, 2002; Danielson, 1996, 2007; Danielson & McGreal, 2000). While the principals and teachers cited that the diocese has not provided stronger mentoring programs or workshops to improve administrator expertise, the literature asserts that the gap exists in principal preparation programs which often do not teach administrators the characteristics of adult learners or how to evaluate adults effectively to create positive change in performance (Costa & Garmston, 1993; Danielson & McGreal, 2000).

4.3.4 Reflection

The focus group comments are very similar to the problematic practice outlined in the literature. There was clear consensus among all groups that the language in the current

evaluation process is unclear and imprecise and that the process does not promote formative development. Also, all of the teachers' focus groups seemed especially concerned about the lack of administrator expertise in the evaluation process. I believe that this close relationship between the literature and the beliefs of the teachers and principals about these practices indicates that, in fact, these practices are problematic in the current teacher evaluation process and the diocese should consider changing them. The data, gathered through my observations of the focus groups and from their comments, provides further insights which may be helpful to the diocese as it seeks to revise the teacher evaluation process.

All three groups of teachers expressed frustration about the lack of administrator expertise in teacher evaluation. The tone and intensity of the conversations were rather harsh. It appeared that the teachers felt frustrated and that they believed that the principals as a whole did not have the professional skill to help them develop professionally through the evaluation process.

In contrast, only a few principals discussed their lack of expertise in evaluation and attributed it to a lack in their own mentoring. Except for one principal who admitted to having no degrees or certification in education, the principals did not discuss that lack of degrees in education administration and certification among principals could be an issue. There could be several reasons why the principals did not raise these issues. In the past, teachers and principals in Catholic schools were often not certified. Given that many of the principals have been involved with Catholic education since their own childhood, it is possible that they have accepted lack of certification as the norm. Perhaps, on the other hand, they are aware that degrees and certification could help them with being better evaluators and they do not want to raise the issue for fear that they would be required to obtain administration degrees and certification. Further research by the diocese could explore the effectiveness of degree programs

alone or combined with mentoring programs and workshops on improving administrator expertise.

The tone and intensity of the conversation that principals had about the lack of clear, common language and precision in the evaluation process was also harsh. They sounded disgusted with having to rate professional dress and certification on the current rating scale. Their comments showed that they had given thought and made a good faith effort to use the process as written, but they were frustrated because they felt required to use a process that made no sense to them. Furthermore, it seemed that the principals were frustrated by an inner conflict: They truly wanted to be in compliance with using the process but this aspect of the process was so problematic that they felt it was necessary to change it. Perhaps this was especially frustrating to them being the leaders of Catholic schools because they felt a strong desire to follow the authority of the diocese and church. Unable to do so, they felt conflicted.

Throughout the focus group discussions, there were many references to the need for the teacher evaluation process to be more focused on formative development of teachers. Both the teachers and principals cited the amount of paperwork in the process as the culprit. The teachers also cited lack of administrator expertise. Clearly, both groups felt the time completing the paperwork could be better spent by the teacher and principal having more informal observations and collaborative discussions about the teacher's professional practice.

Overall, the participants spent far less time discussing these problematic practices compared with discussing how to improve the process. For example, although they felt that it is problematic that the current evaluation process is mostly the same for novice and veteran teachers, the groups spent far more time discussing how the process could be improved through differentiated evaluation. For this reason, the reflection on the discussion of recommended practice is lengthier than this section on problematic practice. None of the focus group

conversation ever became a “gripe session” and I never had to redirect conversation. It is possible that the participants felt a sense of accountability for the conversation knowing that it was being tape recorded and the results would be reported in this study. It is also possible that the principals and teachers viewed the focus group sessions as a rare opportunity to give input into policy development and this motivated them to remain focused on improving the process.

4.4 THE FOCUS GROUPS IDENTIFIED RECOMMENDED PRACTICE WHICH SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE TEACHER EVALUATION PROCESS

All six focus groups identified recommended practices which should be included in the teacher evaluation process. Table 4-2 the recommended practice by author and by focus group. The focus groups also recommended a practice not revealed as a recommended practice in the literature review: Two groups of teachers and one group of principals discussed having performance incentives for teachers who have “outstanding performance.”

Table 4-2: Recommended practice by author and focus group

SOURCE	Stated Purpose/Philosophy	Clinical Supervision	Observation	Goal Process	Goals Related to Organization	Differentiated Evaluation	Assistance Track	Teaching Skills Checklist	Teaching Framework	Portfolio	Multiple Data Sources	Student Achievement	Self Reflection & Collaboration	Trained Evaluator	Formative Process	Conferencing & Coaching	Summative Process
Books:																	
AASPA	*		*	*		*	*	*		*		*	*	*	*		*
NAESP			*	*		*					*	*	*		*		*
Acheson & Gall	*	*	*			*									*		*
Cogan	*	*													*	*	
Costa & Garmston	*		*	*	*	*	*						*		*	*	*
Danielson	*		*	*		*	*		*	*	*		*		*		*
Danielson & McGreal	*		*	*		*	*		*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Glatthorn	*	*				*									*	*	
Glickman	*	*				*									*	*	
Goldhammer	*	*													*	*	
Ribas	*		*		*	*	*		*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*
Stronge	*		*				*	*					*				
Stronge & Tucker	*		*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*		*		*
Articles:																	
Blasé			*			*							*				
Brandt			*	*	*	*	*						*	*			
Dyer			*										*		*		
Egelson & McColsky																	
Howard & McColsky															*		
Knowles			*												*		
Sweeney			*										*				
Whitaker			*										*				
Wolf			*							*			*				
Focus Groups:																	
Charleston Teachers	*		*	*	*	*	*						*	*	*	*	*
Morgantown Teachers	*		*	*		*	*						*	*	*	*	*
Wheeling Teachers	*		*			*	*			*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Charleston Principals	*		*			*	*		*			*	*		*	*	*
Morgantown Principals	*		*	*	*	*	*		*				*		*	*	*
Wheeling Principals	*		*	*	*	*	*		*		*		*	*	*	*	*

4.4.1 Observation

All six groups conveyed that administrator observation of teachers is beneficial to helping teachers develop formatively. Principals and teachers in all six focus groups also voiced ardently that they value informal observations more than formal observations. A common definition of formal observation arose in the groups to mean a pre-arranged and scheduled observation of classroom teaching lasting approximately 30 minutes. A common definition of informal observation arose in groups as an un-announced or impromptu observation of a teacher in a variety of settings (classroom, recess, school events etc.) lasting a shorter period of time.

Principals in all groups cited that formal observations “did not give a sense of how a teacher is performing on a daily basis.” For this reason, the principals felt that formal evaluations are “much less helpful than informal observations.” Several principals stated that they only do formal observations because “it’s required” and they consider it “a necessary evil.” In another group, a veteran principal speculated that a newer principals might be more comfortable doing formal observations because they are “more structured than informal observations.” In contrast, none of the newer principals made this assertion about themselves.

One principal acknowledged that “a formal observation can seem contrived because the teacher is so nervous.” To alleviate this anxiety the principal described his process at length by stating:

I give teachers a letter before I observe, “Dear colleague, Please do not be nervous on the observation day.” I don’t ever want them to be nervous and the way you do that is by being in the classroom all the time. You should be able to walk into a classroom at anytime and they are so accustom to seeing you that they ignore you. I really observe students more than teachers. It is important to see what kind of learning is taking place. It really isn’t observing a teacher at all. It’s observing students. Psychologically that is so reassuring for teachers. It takes them away from the microscope and they don’t consider themselves specimens. This guy really wants to see what the kids are learning...that’s all we want to see when we walk in a classroom.

Many teachers conveyed that they prepare and teach a lesson far better than their normal everyday routine for their formal observation.” They felt that, “Formal observation is out of the ordinary.” One stated that informal observations are better, “Rather than me knowing that the principal is coming so I can put on this real good dog and pony show.” Most teachers also cited a preference for informal observations because they show the principal how they “interact on a daily basis.” They discussed their common feeling that frequent informal observation and timely feedback from the principal allows for a more “continuous process of evaluation.”

One group of principals discussed that they like doing “walk-about” observations. They defined a walk-about as an unannounced, informal observation in which the principal walks into a classroom for a brief period of time (5-10 minutes) and observes. All principals in the group agreed that this is a good way of monitoring teacher performance on a daily or weekly basis. One principal added, however, “There is a time for walk-about but I wouldn’t want that to be the only thing.”

All three groups of teachers expressed that the most valuable aspect of both formal and informal observations is getting feedback from their administrator on their teaching. Many felt that “feedback should be given soon and after every observation.” One teacher stated, “I need feedback soon. I like it the same day.” None of the principals raised the issue of feedback.

The focus group comments about observation are similar to the literature in that both assert that observation is an essential part of the evaluation process (AASPA, 2002; Acheson & Gall, 1997; Blasé, 2001; Brandt, 1996; Cogan, 1973; Costa & Garmston, 2002; Danielson, 1996, 2001, 2007; Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Dyer, 2001; Knowles, 1980; NAESP, 2001; Ribas, 2005; and Stronge & Tucker, 2003; Sweeney, 2001; Whitaker, 2000; and Wolf, 1996). The literature advocates for using both scheduled formal and frequent informal observation followed by a timely opportunity for the observer and teacher to dialogue about the observations. While

the focus groups found the formal observations to be less helpful than informal observations because they are planned and not spontaneous, the literature points out that there is benefit to both. Planned observations allow the administrator to observe the teacher's practice at its highest level. Informal observations allow the administrator to observe the teacher's daily practice. It is then the responsibility of the administrator to initiate dialogue with the teacher to focus on improving the daily practice to more closely match the highest level of practice observed (Danielson, 2007; Ribas, 2005). Like the teacher focus groups, the literature asserts that the dialogue between administrator and teacher about what was observed is essential to teacher formative development.

4.4.2 Differentiated Evaluation

Both teachers and principals articulated that a teacher evaluation process should be differentiated to meet the needs of individual teachers but most did not articulate how this should be structured. A few teachers and principals suggested that evaluation could be differentiated based on the number of years of teaching experience. In one group, a principal stated, "I have a form for teachers 1-5 years of experience and another form for teachers who have been around longer." In another group, a principal commented, "I think your 'need improvement' people are the ones who have been with you 1-5 years where you're still trying to form them. Do teachers who are with you for 20-25 years need improvement? If they needed improving, you wouldn't have them on staff." To this, another principal responded, "It can be hard to change that old dog."

A few teachers felt differently. They believed that the process should be differentiated because "even good veterans need suggestions. Even veteran teachers need help so they don't get stale." One veteran teacher added that veterans, "Need stroking. We need to hear praise more often."

Principals in one focus group felt that differentiating evaluation included the principal providing career counseling to struggling teachers. One stated, “As administrators it is our job to find the right niche for people who don’t know what their’s is. If you are not able or willing to do that, you are not a good administrator.” To this, another responded, “You have to guide them for their own personal success. We all worked with people who are frustrated with what they do and 9 out of 10 times it’s because they’re misplaced.” Another principal discussed that he asks teachers who are struggling, “Do you really picture yourself doing this for the next 40 years? Let me help you. Let’s find another job for you. You bring so much to the table. This isn’t the right table. Let’s find where you belong. Maybe you’re just in the wrong pond. He continued by saying, “This type of conversation is characteristic and part of our Catholic identity. You couldn’t do this in a public school.”

The comments from the focus groups concur with the literature about the benefit of differentiating the evaluation, supervision and professional development system for teachers (AASPA, 2000; Blasé & Kirby, 2001; Brandt, 1996; Costa & Garmston, 1993; Danielson, 1996, 2001, 2007; Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Glatthorn, 1984; NAESP, 2001; Ribas, 2005; Stronge & Tucker, 2003). This includes differentiating conversation, collaboration and coaching to meet the needs of the individual teacher as well as selecting which components of an evaluation process can best help teachers to grow as they move through several stages of development as they progress toward becoming a master teacher (AASPA, 2002). The focus groups differed from the literature in their belief that a significant goal of differentiation should be to compliment the work of veterans who are performing. They also felt that it is difficult to change the performance of veterans who are struggling even with a structured evaluation system. Finally, they felt that evaluation should provide career counseling for the teachers. This idea is not present in the literature, but it is somewhat akin to the idea of providing assistance.

4.4.3 Assistance Track

In addition to differentiating evaluation, all focus groups felt that the evaluation process should assist teachers who are struggling. None of the groups described how such a process might work nor did they label the action as an assistance track or other term. The principals' discussion included their opinions as to when and under what circumstances a teacher should be placed on an assistance track. Some felt that a teacher should not be placed on an assistance track if the teacher is having a "temporary personal difficulty." Others felt that the assistance track should begin more quickly stating that the teacher's performance should never be "at the expense of the kids."

All six focus groups agreed that the number of years a teacher has been teaching and past record should not exclude a teacher from being placed on an assistance track or being dismissed. Principals discussed that letting go of a teacher who has been in the building for many years is very difficult and "the hardest thing in the world to do" both "emotionally" for them and because "you have to document everything." Even though it is difficult, one principal acknowledged that "evaluation is all about supporting the best things that happen in your building. You have to be able to hire and fire." Many teachers felt that their principals were often not addressing the long-term teacher who has problematic performance. They stated that their principals were more focused on "helping newer teachers" and while "assuming that veterans are doing just fine."

The focus group comments are similar to the literature which suggests that teachers who are struggling with professional practice be given assistance which helps them to develop formatively (AASPA, 2002; Brandt, 1996; Costa & Garmston, 2002; Danielson, 1996, 2001, 2007; Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Ribas, 2005; Stronge, 2002; Stronge & Tucker, 2003). The groups align with the literature in their belief that assistance should be used on a short term basis to improve performance. The literature defines and describes the structure of the assistance

track. In contrast, while the focus groups discussed the necessity of providing assistance to a struggling teacher, they did not discuss how assistance for a struggling teacher would be structured.

4.4.4 Self-Reflection and Collaboration

All focus groups felt that an evaluation process should give teachers an opportunity to self-reflect and discuss their professional practice collaboratively with both colleagues and the administrator. One teacher described her feelings about having collaborative discussion with the principal by stating, “Evaluation isn’t paperwork on our part or their part. It’s personal. We want to see each other. You’d like to talk to them and say ‘Here is what I’ve done, what do you think of it?’” Many other teachers and principals in all focus groups gave similar comments and they asserted the similar belief that “conversation between the principal and teacher and between teachers should happen many times throughout the school year.” The teachers went on to say how much they “appreciate” and “enjoy” the feedback that they get from their administrator and that the collaborative conversation between teachers and administrators, “empowers teachers by giving them more ownership in the process.” One principal pointed out that the discussion is also valuable because “it gives the teacher an opportunity to explain why something happened...I am not an expert in every subject and sometimes this explanation after an observation is very helpful.”

One group of principals discussed how generational differences among faculty affect conversation. One principal described that “it is difficult to have conversations with younger teachers about their performance because they think they know it all.” She continued:

It blows my mind when new teachers rate themselves as outstanding in every area. So what are your goals going to be if you’re outstanding in every area in your first year? But I think we’re working with a different generation of teachers.

How do we get new, young teachers to understand that they're not outstanding in every area?

To this, another principal responded, "There is no doubt in my mind that they're overconfident and think they don't need improvement." A third principal added, "The young people do not have the work ethic....first year teachers who walk out the door at 3 o'clock without a book in hand. If you're sick you take off even if it's just a headache." In contrast, none of the teachers raised these issues.

All three teacher focus groups stressed the importance of principals giving feedback to veteran teachers. Most veteran teachers felt that their principals were not giving them enough feedback. Some veterans acknowledged that they saw this as a sign of trust and compliment that; "Our principals know we are doing a good job." Yet, they would still "like to have more frequent verbal feedback."

The comments from the focus group related to the literature in the emphasis of the importance of collaborative conversation between teachers and administrators and the need for administrators to have training in how to lead such discussions (AASPA, 2002; Brandt, 1996; Costa & Garmston, 1993; Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Knowles, 1980; Ribas, 2005). While the focus groups discussed that generational differences can provide challenges in conversation, the literature did not make any mention that the age or generation of those involved in conversation would have an affect on the conversation. Instead, the literature discussed characteristics of adult learners, the use of peer groups, and cognitive coaching to promote teacher self-reflection and collaborative discussion to promote their professional development.

4.4.5 The Goal Setting Process

Teachers acknowledged the value of collaborative discussion with their administrators to set annual goals. They liked having the principal “help establish goals” because...“sometimes it is hard to come up with your own.” In addition, a principal can help to suggest resources a teacher may use to accomplish a goal. Both teacher and principals discussed the importance of the teacher’s individual goals aligning with overall needs of the school. They felt that the administrator is the person who has the complete picture of the strengths and needs in a school. One teacher stated that it would be helpful hear the administrator say in a faculty meeting, “Hey, we need some teachers kind of focusing on this...then maybe someone else can help in this area.” Principals and teachers agreed that the administrator could use the goal setting process as professional development for staff by “identifying common needs of teachers and arranging workshops or other means to help teachers grow.” One principal added that she does an end of the year review at a faculty meeting and that, together, she and the faculty set goals for their entire faculty. She stated:

I do a year-end review with all teachers...We ask what did we accomplish? What should we stop doing? What recommendations do you have to improve the next school year? What are your recommendations for staff development for next year? Teachers write individually then meet and star what we agree on and that becomes the focus of what we do the next year.

Teachers and principals also discussed what they felt to be an ideal number of goals. Most felt that having only one goal per year is not enough because “it limits teachers.” Although both teachers and principals agreed that multiple goals are helpful, they did not agree about the number of goals that should take place per year. Some felt that “one goal is enough” while others suggested that “The number of goals should not be limited. The evaluation system needs to be flexible enough to accommodate the different needs of our schools and teachers.”

Principal discussion also focused on when goals should be set. They felt that it is better to set goals with teachers in the spring for the coming school year rather than wait until fall. They felt that goals should be based on the current year's evaluation and discussed in the spring, "When it is fresh on our minds."

The comments from the focus group about the goal setting process bear a close relationship with the literature. Both believe that a teacher should have multiple goals, that goals should be established through a dynamic conversation between the teacher and administrator, and that the goals of the teacher should align with goals of the school or district (AASPA, 2000; Brandt, 1996; Costa & Garmston, 2002; Danielson, 1996, 2001, 2007; Danielson & McGreal, 2000; NAESP, 2001; Stronge & Tucker, 2003). The literature went beyond the focus groups in asserting that a significant purpose of goal setting is to improve instruction. The focus groups tended to focus on the goal process improving the teacher's professional practice but did discuss how improvement of teacher professional practice affects student learning.

4.4.6 Frameworks for Teaching

As part of their professional development this year, all principals read and discussed the book *Enhancing Professional Practice* (Danielson, 2007). All three principal focus groups stated that such a teaching framework would be "very helpful" to the evaluation process. One principal added, "It is more rubric than what we have now. I love the chart." Others responded that the framework helps to make the discussion of teaching "clearer" by defining the elements of teaching at different levels of performance. None of the teachers mentioned teaching frameworks; however, they had not been introduced to the Danielson book.

The comments of the principals about the value of teaching frameworks in defining elements of teaching at different levels of performance is closely related to the literature

(Danielson, 1996, 2001, 2007; Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Ribas, 2005; Stronge & Tucker, 2003). The literature goes beyond the focus groups to describe how the frameworks can be used in collaborative conversation between teachers and administrators to not only understand the summative evaluation but to also enhance teacher formative development.

4.4.7 Multiple Data Sources

There was little discussion in the groups about the use of multiple data sources, portfolios, or student achievement as an element of teacher evaluation. One teacher stated, “Our principal has us do portfolios. They’re a lot of work but they really help me to see all that I accomplished in the year.” Another teacher stated, “My principal uses parent and student surveys to collect information about our teaching.” The teacher did not state if she felt this practice was helpful or not helpful or how the survey information is used.

In contrast, the literature discusses the importance of using multiple data sources because they provide more information than observation alone (Danielson, 1996, 2001, 2007; Danielson & McGreal, 2000; NAESP, 2001; Ribas, 2005; Stronge & Tucker, 2003). The literature also points out the drawbacks if multiple data sources are misused.

4.4.8 Performance Incentives

Both teachers and principals raised the idea of having incentives for teachers who have outstanding performance. One teacher said, “Our salaries are well below and we don’t have benefits. There should be incentives to try to be a better achiever.” Another teacher stated, “I come from a business background and am surprised there are no incentives for teachers to improve performance.” Both teachers and principals felt that there should be a, “Way to

acknowledge those who go way above and beyond” compared with “others who just scrape by.” All teacher groups discussed that a monetary reward “would be best and most appreciated because salaries are so low.” Although this issue was raised in several groups, the discussion in each was quite brief. There was no discussion about how an incentive program would function within the teacher evaluation system or possible drawbacks to an incentive system.

4.4.9 Catholic Identity

As mentioned earlier, all groups felt that Catholic Identity is an important part of the teacher evaluation process. All groups conveyed that faith formation “should pertain to both Catholic and non-Catholic teachers,” that both Catholic and non-Catholic teachers “should be expected to participate in faith formation during the school day” and that all teachers “should be evaluated on their teaching of religion classes and religion across the curriculum.” Some teachers acknowledged that this does not occur in every school. In addition, some teachers acknowledged that faith formation should be taught across the curriculum in every subject and not every teacher is doing this. They acknowledged that some teachers “do not have training” and that it is “difficult for the non-Catholic teachers.”

Teachers and principals also felt that working in a Catholic school “demands a higher level of ethics, morals and commitment to values from both teachers and principals compared with public school.” They felt that teacher ethics should be addressed in the evaluation process. One teacher stated that in a Catholic school, “Professional ethics are different because they come under the moral guideline of the church’s teaching.” One teacher acknowledged that Catholic Identity should shape both the conversations between the principal and teacher during the evaluation process and how the principal interacts with the teacher. He stated, “The dialogue that goes on and the evaluation of teachers should be in the context of a fairly loving

relationship. There's that sense that this is a fellow Christian and that would have some bearing on how the evaluation goes.”

At the end of every focus group discussion, I asked if there were any further comments. There were a few comments in each group. However, all groups requested that I note that they “would stress the importance of Catholic Identity” in the teacher evaluation process.

4.4.10 Discussion Unrelated to Focus Group Questions

During each focus group session, there was conversation that did not pertain to the questions posed. During such conversation, the rapport of the group remained consistently cordial, professional, and attentive. This superfluous conversation arose spontaneously and appeared to be evidence of the group members' comfort in thinking and voicing their questions, thoughts and opinions with each other. In some cases, the conversation provided a brief respite as group members told stories and reminisced. For example, during one principal focus group, several veteran principals engaged in conversation about their early teaching experiences. One stated, “I had 50 children in third grade.” To this, another principal responded, “I had 83 first grade students in one room.” A third principal responded about her own experience as a student by stating, “I was in a first grade with 105 children in the basement of the rectory. But those were the days when parents supported you and we behaved.” During a teacher focus group, a teacher began discussing the benefits and drawbacks of her classroom being located in the basement of the school. Other teachers in the group described the physical layout of their school buildings and compared facilities.

In addition to these conversations, other conversations took place during the focus groups that did not pertain to the questions posed. They cannot be included in this dissertation because they would identify the participants to those who know them. The participant information letter

stated to the participants that, “Neither you nor your responses will be identified in any way” in the study. These additional comments and actions from the participants did not appear to have a significant effect on the discussion of the focus group questions.

4.4.11 Reflection

The focus group comments are similar to the recommended practice outlined in the literature review. There was clear consensus among all groups that teacher formative development is an important part of the teacher evaluation process. The groups felt that the process should include observation, differentiated evaluation, an assistance track, teacher self-reflection and collaborative discussion with the administrator and among colleagues. Also, the principals’ focus groups expressed a great deal of support for including a teaching framework in place of the current teaching skills checklist. The teachers again expressed that it is important to train administrators in how to conduct evaluation. There was also a great deal of discussion about the benefit of a goals process with goals pertaining to the individual teacher’s professional development and the development of the school as a whole. All of these elements were considered essential by to formative development.

The teachers and principals based their comments primarily on experience in their schools and what they believe would be helpful in their schools. There were few comments based on professional development sources which I believe again indicates a possible lack of professional development in the area of teacher evaluation. While there was little discussion among the focus groups about the benefits of other practices recommended in the literature such as portfolios, multiple data sources, and student achievement in relation to teacher evaluation, this does not necessarily mean that these practices are inappropriate for Catholic schools. Further investigation would be needed to determine their applicability and usefulness.

All focus groups expressed support for informal observation because they believe it gives a more accurate assessment of a teacher's daily performance. None of the focus groups demonstrated an understanding that formal observation provides an opportunity for teachers to participate in a cycle of clinical supervision that will prepare them and perform a lesson at their highest level. They also did not discuss that informal and formal observations can be used together by the teacher and principal to discuss how the teacher's daily performance can be improved to more closely match their best performing level exhibited during the formal observation. Following one of the sessions, I mentioned all of this to a group of principals and they responded that they had never thought of this before. The group also thanked me for sharing this idea. Again, I see this positive response as indicative that the principals are interested, receptive, and grateful for professional development suggestions.

Goal setting was discussed both in terms of the benefits of teachers having goals to promote their professional practice and also goals that would promote the school and school system. One principal expressed a unique way of setting goals through having a focus group discussion with the faculty in which she asked questions to help them discuss issues from the current school year. They then went on to use this discussion to shape goals for the entire faculty for the coming school year.

All three principal focus groups advocated for the use of a teaching framework. Because the conversation in all groups was very open and honest, I believe the principals would not have hesitated to say if Danielson framework they studied this year was not helpful. Rather, they expressed that the framework would expand the current teaching skills checklist by providing more definition of terms and common language which they could use in discussion with teachers. Again, I see this as evidence that the principals are both ready and willing to participate in professional development and apply ideas to improve their professional practice.

The use of multiple data sources was only discussed by a few teachers whose principals use multiple data sources. Given that the use of multiple data sources is not part of the current teacher evaluation process, it could not be expected that teachers would recommend this practice based on their current experience. Those teachers experiencing multiple data sources are working with principals who decided to alter the teacher evaluation process. However, I believe it is noteworthy that the choice of altering the evaluation process by some principals introduced a practice into the diocese that was recommended by the literature and that several teachers believe is helpful. Again, I believe that this is evidence that participants do want a teacher evaluation process that functions well and helps them to grow professionally.

Based on the discussion about performance incentives, it can be summarized that some teachers and principals feel that good teaching should be rewarded and the best reward is monetary compensation. It would have been helpful if the participants had given more detail about how such a program would function. Because this conversation was so brief, the participants also did not consider if there are drawbacks to such a system. It seemed that they moved very quickly to consensus that performance incentives should be used. Given that their salaries are low, I believe that they were attracted to this practice because it offered more compensation.

When the principals and teachers recommended practice, they did so with reference to their experience in their schools. They spoke about practice which they had created and used successfully in their schools. They also spoke hypothetically about practice they believe would be helpful in their schools by referencing how their experience in their schools supports the use of the practice. Only one of the participants discussed recommended practices from a theoretical standpoint by quoting professional sources, classes or conferences he has read and attended. This could be indicative that teachers and principals are not experiencing professional

development opportunities. Given their low salaries and minimal funding from schools for professional development, it is possible that they cannot afford professional development opportunities. Further study would be needed to determine the extent that principals and teachers participate in professional development and how professional development could be used to improve the formative development of principals.

Because some of the recommended practices are similar to practices in the Catholic faith, it is also possible that the principals and teachers recommended practice based on not only their professional experience, but their spiritual experience as well. All groups expressed how much they both benefited from and enjoyed reflective, collaborative conversation about professional teaching practice. They also expressed that the teacher evaluation process should be differentiated to meet the formative development needs of individual teachers and an assistance track should exist to help teachers who are struggling. Finally, a teacher expressed that the evaluation process should take place in within the context of the “fairly loving” relationship between the principal and the teacher. These elements of practice are also present in the Catholic faith which encourages self-reflection, commitment to self-improvement, and collaborative spiritual discussion both in preparation and as part receiving the sacraments. For example, in the sacrament of reconciliation, Catholics self-reflect on their sins, confess and discuss these sins with a priest, perform penance which the priest determines based on the needs of the person to atone for the sins committed, and discuss with the priest a differentiated plan of improvement. The conversation between a person and priest in reconciliation is often not only done in a fair and loving context, but it also has elements of cognitive coaching as the priest helps the person think about sin and how to improve their actions. The principals and teachers bring to teacher evaluation a substantial experience in self-reflection, conferencing and coaching because they have already experienced it as an integral part of their Catholic faith.

Finally, acting in the dual role of practitioner and researcher, I felt the need to balance my involvement when the groups discussed issues that were not related to the focus group questions posed to them. As a practitioner, I realized that if I intervened in some way, it could be perceived as an attempt to control the groups. As a researcher, I realized that my involvement in discussion could sway opinions of the participants which could influence their responses. Because I wanted neither of these to occur, I chose to limit my involvement to reading the questions during the focus group discussion. When discussion veered off the topic of the focus group questions, I permitted such discussion to continue, continued to record it and take notes, and maintained my same neutral demeanor. On several occasions when the discussion veered off topic for what felt like a long period of time and I saw no evidence of it returning to the focus group questions soon, I chose to gently redirect the attention of the participants back to the focus group questions by asking if anyone had any further comment related to that question or if everyone felt ready to move on to the next question.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY, PRACTICE, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The ultimate goal of this study was to identify how the current teacher evaluation process in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston could be improved to promote teacher formative development. This chapter will discuss implications for policy and practice and provide recommendations for future research.

The Department of Catholic Schools should continue to use a teacher evaluation process. The literature and focus groups are in agreement that it is an important practice to effect the formative development of teachers and improve instruction for students. The current purpose and philosophy adequately reflect practice recommended by both the literature and focus groups. The Department of Catholic Schools should continue the initiative to revise the teacher evaluation process. Significant problematic practice has been identified compared with the literature, focus group comments, and the researcher's review of the written process. The literature and focus groups also revealed recommended practice to be included in the revised process.

A revised process could support a complete personnel process including recruitment, hiring, induction, mentoring, evaluating, and retention and would align with the new priority plan. Further research into these other areas of personnel practice would be helpful to determine if and how to construct such a comprehensive personnel process for the diocesan schools. This new process should focus on teacher formative development as an important means of improving the quality of instruction for all students. The process of revision may begin immediately as

personnel in the Department of Catholic Schools, principals, and teachers have indicated through statement and action that they are ready to support a change. Furthermore, the teachers and principals in the focus groups indicated an interest in continuing to be involved in changing the process. These groups could be further convened to assist with the revision process. This type of inclusion will give greater ownership of the policy development to the principals and teachers which will have a positive effect on their desire to utilize the process as written.

Elements of problematic practice in the current teacher evaluation process should be removed in the new process. The literature and focus groups identified that problematic practice in the current process includes: A lack of clear, common language and precision in evaluating performance; a lack of administrator expertise in evaluation; little differentiation of process for novice and veterans; and focus on summative evaluation rather than formative development. Furthermore, an examination of the written teacher evaluation process revealed that the terms “observation” and “evaluation” are used interchangeably. These terms have distinct and different meanings. They should be defined more clearly and terminology should align on the observation and evaluation forms. Finally, all focus groups identified the need to reduce the paperwork and improve teacher formative development. A reduction in the amount of paperwork will permit more time to be used on recommended practice to promote formative development.

There is close relationship between the informal comments about the teacher evaluation process received by the Department of Catholic Schools and comments from the focus groups. This does not necessarily indicate that all informal comments received by the Department of Catholic Schools are representative of the thoughts of teachers and principals collectively. However, the diocese may wish to examine informal comments in the future to determine if they

are representative of the opinions of the teachers and principals in the diocese and if the comments are accurate.

The Department of Catholic Schools should consider including practice recommended by the literature and focus groups in the revised teacher evaluation process. Such development could begin by discussing clinical supervision as the first effort to help teachers develop formatively through the evaluation process. Many of the veterans may have studied this process in earlier years. Making the connection from this known practice to the newer practices will help them to understand how and why formative development has changed over the years.

In addition, the Department of Catholic Schools should provide training for all administrators in how to conduct teacher evaluation and how to utilize the process to improve teacher formative development. Administrators would also benefit from completing degree programs in education administration or school leadership and obtaining K-12 Principal Certification in West Virginia. These degree and certification programs will provide the principals with training and a broad base of knowledge and skills in all aspects of school administration, including teacher evaluation, that could be beneficial to the principals and the schools they lead. Further research by the diocese could address the effectiveness of degree programs alone or combined with mentoring programs and workshops to improve administrator expertise.

Training for principals in methods of cognitive coaching is also recommended because it is effective in promoting teacher formative development and has a natural fit with Catholic practice. Cognitive Coaching includes techniques for leading collaborative conversation with others to help them self reflect and think differently to improve their practice. This training can also focus on the administrator's role in helping teachers become holonomous and function to the highest level of their individual and combined levels. Finally, since most administrators must

serve as both coach and summative evaluator for teachers, this training will help administrators to understand the conflict inherent in these roles and how to manage both successfully.

The diocese should utilize a differentiated evaluation process that meets the needs of individual teachers and the diversity of the individual schools. The process can be differentiated in several ways. First, it can allow for a flexible number of goals within an acceptable range of goals for each teacher. In this way, the teacher and principal can use the goal setting process to differentiate the kind and amount of professional development for the teacher. Second, the process can offer options to veteran teachers about how they are evaluated. Working with the administrator in the goal setting process, the veterans in good standing may select how they wish to demonstrate their accomplishment. This could be done using standard administrator observation or by using collaborative peer groups to develop professionally. Third, the individual principals could choose the methods of differentiation that best suit the current needs of the school. For example, in order to accomplish a priority plan, a principal may decide there is benefit to the school for several teachers to engage in an action research project to solve a current issue in the school (such as in the Green dissertation). Finally, the process should provide an assistance track that provides help for teachers who are struggling professionally. Teachers and administrators who serve in the role to support the struggling teacher should receive professional development about the duties and limits of their role.

Goal setting is best accomplished as a dynamic interaction between the individual teacher and the administrator in which both listen and converse with one another to create goals for the teacher. A key strategy for administrators will be to help the teacher assist in shaping the goals while still allowing the teacher to retain substantial control and ownership of the process. In this way, the administrator can use the conferencing and coaching techniques discussed earlier in this dissertation to differentiate the goal setting process to meet the needs of each teacher. Goals

setting should take place in spring of the school year and should follow as a logical progression from the teacher's evaluation of the current year. In addition, the diocese should consider the benefit of requiring each teacher to set goals that focus on his or her professional development as well as goals aligned with school or diocesan initiatives. The goals process should help the teacher grow individually as a professional and should ensure that the teacher's goals support the growth of the school, the school's strategic plan, and the priority plan of the school system.

The Department of Catholic Schools should continue the professional development for administrators about using teaching frameworks and should consider the use of a framework for teaching in the evaluation process. Such a framework would include performance level descriptors ranging from unsatisfactory to expert for each skill or knowledge area and provide clear, common language. The framework by Danielson (2007) could be used as a model for developing such a framework with four to five levels or further research could be conducted to determine if another model would be more helpful. The skills and performance levels indicated in the framework would then be as the basis for creating an observation form and a summative evaluation form. Teachers could use the framework to self-identify their areas of strength and potential growth. Looking at the performance level descriptions a teacher could determine what is needed to reach the next level of a certain skill. In collaboration, teachers could observe one another and then have discussion about areas of strength and potential growth. In conference and coaching sessions, administrators should share their observations of the teacher's performance in relation to the framework and discuss how to reach the next level.

The teacher evaluation process should continue to utilize observation. The literature recommends formal observation in conjunction with pre and post conferencing. The focus groups recommended that formal observation was not an accurate representation of daily teaching because teachers were both nervous and taught at a higher level than they would usually

perform. Professional development should be provided for both administrators and teachers about the value of utilizing formal and informal observation to help teachers close the gap between their daily performance and their highest level of performance. Further professional development can focus on utilizing pre and post conference discussion as essential to this process.

The use of multiple data sources can be used to gather a broader base of data. This would allow for a more accurate and comprehensive analysis of the teacher's performance than a single observation by the administrator. Based on the literature, multiple data sources could include portfolios, frequent informal observations, parent or student reviews of teacher performance, and results of student assessment. It is important to note that, while the literature recommended the use of multiple data sources, the focus groups had little discussion about multiple data sources. Further research is needed to determine the applicability of multiple data sources to the teacher evaluation process in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston.

Because all focus groups showed little understanding of the unique cultural, political, demographic, and geographic complexity of the diocese, further research on how to raise awareness would be helpful. Such understanding is important for several reasons. As the diocese conducts professional development with teachers and principals about teacher evaluation, it is important that both groups view that resources may need to be adapted to meet the unique characteristics of the diocese. One possibility is that the teachers and principals could read Chapter 1 of this dissertation as background information and then participate in a guided discussion in which they discuss the unique characteristics of their diocese. As time and resources permit, teacher and principal professional development could include teachers and principals visiting schools throughout the diocese to appreciate the vast differences. Because many of the principals and teachers are from West Virginia and have been educated in the state,

opportunities for teachers to attend professional development outside the state would bring fresh ideas and methods to the school system.

The diocese should consider providing professional development for teachers and administrators about Catholic Identity. All groups expressed that Catholic Identity is an important part of the evaluation process, yet they also struggled to define what they mean by Catholic Identity and how it should be present in the teacher evaluation process. Working together, the Department of Catholic Schools, the principals, and the teachers can cultivate a common and thorough understanding about Catholic Identity and how it should exist in the schools. Once this understanding exists, further discussion can take place about how Catholic Identity should be present in the evaluation of teachers.

The Department of Catholic Schools should dialogue about the benefits of holding non-Catholic teachers to the same standards of performance as Catholic teachers in teaching religion and integrating religion throughout the curriculum. The perception existed in the focus groups that non-Catholic teachers are held to a less rigorous standard. Also, there was concern that this lack of rigor had a negative effect on student instruction. Further investigation is needed to determine if having two standards is optimal.

Once a new teacher evaluation process is created, the Department of Catholic Schools could consider piloting it for a period of one year. During this time, administrators and teachers should be asked to adhere to the process as created and not deviate from the process. At the conclusion of the year, the focus groups of teachers and principals could be convened to discuss how the process should be improved before implementing a final process. In this way, teachers and principals will have the opportunity to give input for change to the process rather than attempting to make the changes at the school level.

More communication and direct supervision from the Department of Catholic Schools may also help the schools with this transition to being a school system. The Department of Catholic Schools can seize this transition as an opportunity to both restructure itself to provide greater support to the schools and also to include teachers and principals in the development of policy and procedure. In this way, the administration will not only be able to gather valuable information based on the professional expertise of the teachers and principals, but it will also be able to model the same type of professional and collaborative conversation and Cognitive Coaching the principals can utilize during the teacher evaluation process. If principals and teachers give input to the development policies and procedures, they are more likely to develop processes that work for their schools and feel greater ownership to use them. Finally, an increase in direct supervision from the Department of Catholic Schools of each school can ensure the processes are being used as intended. With more direct supervision, problems with policy and procedure can be also be assessed more quickly and the Department of Catholic Schools can then respond to remedy the process for all schools.

The Department of Catholic Schools should consider how it provides for supervision of the teacher evaluation process as well as other initiatives given the geographic distance between the Department of Catholic Schools Office in Wheeling and each of the 32 schools. Further research could help to determine if having central office administrators located in different parts of the state would allow for close central office proximity to the schools and be more conducive to frequent formal and informal observations and monitoring at each school. In this way, the Department of Catholic Schools may be able to more readily assist individual schools in making the adaptive change to being part of a school system.

The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston should appreciate that the change from a system of schools to a school system involves both technical and adaptive change. Currently, anxiety and

misunderstanding exists among the schools about the changes being made. While the technical changes can happen quickly, it takes time and training for people to assimilate, understand, and develop the knowledge and skills to adapt to change. Changing and unifying processes, such as the teacher evaluation process, involve adaptive change. Appropriate time and training should be given to personnel to allow for the development of ownership and understanding of the new process. Finally, the Department of Catholic Schools should examine if using a traditional model of a school system is appropriate. Further research is needed to determine how to define and structure the new school system in a way that addresses and meets the needs of size, diversity, and culture of the individual schools and diocesan system as a whole.

The Department of Catholic Schools should consider the benefit to the school system and employees of conducting focus groups as a means of understanding perceptions, building buy-in for change, and offering collaborative professional dialogue. All focus groups indicated to the researcher that they enjoyed participating in such discussion and would like to have further opportunity to do so. Furthermore, their collective wisdom, expertise and many years of experience provided a wealth of knowledge for this study.

Once the new teacher evaluation process has been implemented successfully, the Department of Catholic Schools could work collaboratively to provide leadership to other diocese in the Consortium about improving teacher formative development in the teacher evaluation process. At the annual meeting, a workshop could be held that allows for a sharing of the new teacher evaluation process and the research behind it. Furthermore, in collaboration with the Consortium, the diocese could suggest the need to The National Catholic Education Association for more research and published information and professional development about teacher evaluation in Catholic schools.

APPENDIX A

DIOCESE OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON TEACHER EVALUATION PROCESS

AUGUST 2002

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EVALUATION PROCESS FOR TEACHERS

PHILOSOPHY

The professional staff evaluation program for schools in the Diocese of Wheeling/Charleston is based on the philosophy that evaluation is a cooperative and continuous process. It is undertaken primarily to improve the quality of teacher instruction and pupil learning in light of the Diocesan/School Mission Statements and to facilitate the professional growth of the individual teachers.

PURPOSE OF AN EVALUATION PROGRAM

The primary purpose of professional staff evaluation in the schools of the Diocese of Wheeling/Charleston is to improve instructional performance and effectiveness.

Specific purposes of the evaluation program are:

1. To determine the performance as well as the potential of the individual to perform effectively;
2. To facilitate the achievement of the philosophy and goals of the schools in the Diocese of Wheeling/Charleston;
3. To provide an opportunity for the administrator to affirm the strengths of staff members and offer means of improving performance;
4. To facilitate communication and cooperation between the administrator and teacher.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR EVALUATION

The principal of each school is responsible for the evaluation of professional staff members. The process followed should be based on both Diocesan and local evaluation guidelines and policies.

PROCEDURES

A. PERSONNEL

1. Teachers new to the school are to be formally observed at least three times each year for the **first three years** of employment in the current school.
2. Teachers in **year four and five** are to be formally observed at least twice each year until the sixth year of employment within that school.

3. After the fifth year all teachers are to be observed formally at least once a year or as necessary due to:
 - a. new curriculum
 - b. change of text
 - c. new grade level
 - d. change of teacher assignment within the current building
4. Formal and informal supervision is to occur on a regular basis.

B. INSTRUMENTS

1. The Summative Evaluation Report (pages 8, 9, and 10)
 This instrument is to be rated with the following codes and by written comments on the indicators observed:
 - ES –exceeds standards
 - MS – meets standards
 - NI – needs improvement
2. Forms 1A and 1B in appendix A are to be used by the teacher to set goals based on the evaluation and to evaluate the attainment of the goals.
3. Forms in appendices B, C, and D are optional forms that may be used to assist in the formative evaluation during the year. All supporting formative classroom observation forms and reports should be attached to the Summative Evaluation Report for filing on the local level. Only a **copy of the Summative Evaluation Report is to be sent to the Catholic Schools Office.**

SCHEDULE, DISTRIBUTION AND FILING

The following is a suggested timeline to assist principals in meeting the April 1st deadline according to policy

August

- The evaluation process should be reviewed with all teachers and each teacher should have a copy of the process.
- **New** teachers, in consultation with the principal, write goals for the upcoming year using form 1A. Returning teachers set those goals in May based on the evaluation of that school year.

September through March 1

- Formal and informal observations are to be conducted by the principal
- Teachers **employed one to three years** are to be observed **formally** three times within the year.(suggested months –September, November and January)

- Teachers in **year four and five** are to be observed **formally** two times by **March 15** (suggested months – October and January)
- Teachers with **five years experience or more** are to be observed formally one time **by March 15**. (suggested months February and March)

March 1 or earlier

- Teachers are to complete Form 1B (Goal attainment).

March 15 or earlier

- **All formal observations and formative evaluations and follow-up conferences should be completed by this date.**

April 1

- The formal Summative Evaluation Report must be completed, reviewed and signed by **April 1**.
- Written reactions to the summative evaluation ratings may be submitted by the teacher and attached to the summative report within ten (10) days of the summative evaluation conference.

- The original Summative Report is placed in the teacher's personnel record at the school. A copy must be given to the teacher and one sent to the Diocesan School Office by **April 15th**.

- The content of the evaluation report is confidential. The teacher must authorize the release of this evaluation.

April – May

- Goals are set for the upcoming year, in collaboration with the principal based on the evaluation or need using Form IA. After year three, a teacher, after discussion with the principal, may set goals based on the areas(s) that the teacher believes he/she needs to improve or to grow as a professional

Diocese of Wheeling/Charleston

Guidelines for Assessing the Professional Teaching Standards

MINISTRY OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION STANDARDS

- A. FULFILLS REQUIREMENTS AS DIRECTED BY DIOCESE OF WHEELING/CHARLESTON RELIGION CERTIFICATION PROGRAM, FAITH HARVEST.
- B. WITNESSES TO THE PHILOSOPHY AND MISSION OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION ESTABLISHED BY THE DIOCESE OF WHEELING/CHARLESTON AND THE LOCAL SCHOOL
 - Integrates Christian values throughout the curriculum
 - Supports the school effort to form a strong faith community
 - Stresses reverence in daily prayer and in religious celebrations
- C. WITNESSES TO CHRISTIAN COMMITMENT THROUGH PERSONAL EXAMPLE
 - Willingly attends and assists in the preparation of school liturgies and prayer services
 - Works to accomplish the school mission
 - Models the importance of Christian living through prayer and service to others
 - Models for students the development of a relationship with God.
- D. INFUSES CATHOLIC PHILOSOPHY IN ALL AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM

Interacts with students in a manner consistent with Christian values.

- Reveals an understanding of and consideration for the individual interests, needs, and differences of people
- Adheres to Diocesan Guidelines for integration of religious principles in all areas of the curriculum

INSTRUCTIONAL PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

A. DEMONSTRATES COMPETENCE IN SUBJECT MATTER AND IMPLEMENTS DIOCESAN/STATE CURRICULUM GUIDELINES

- Selects appropriate materials to achieve specific objectives
- Demonstrates adequate advance preparation and organization of lesson procedures and materials

B. SPECIFIES CLEAR AND APPROPRIATE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Stresses the importance of pupils' understanding of the subject matter
- Prepares lesson plans with a systematic and orderly progression
- Checks students' understanding of the objectives
- Utilizes review component to relate the new learning to previous learning

C. USES A VARIETY OF APPROPRIATE INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNIQUES

- Provides for a variety of learning styles
- Extends and enriches various learning experiences

D. TEACHES IN A MANNER THAT INVITES STUDENTS TO THINK CRITICALLY AND CREATIVELY

- Encourages students to make choices about learning and be accountable for their choices
- Implements guided practice

E. USES A VARIETY OF ASSESSMENT METHODS

- Appraises student learning levels, interests, and needs
- Uses information in cumulative folders and other school records
- Uses individual and group observations
- Consults with parents
- Utilizes appropriate diagnostic instruments
- Consults with students individually regarding performance
- Consults with previous teachers, team teachers, and/or specialists
- Makes referrals based on appropriate assessment and student needs
- Maintains accurate documentation of student classroom performance and behavior

F. EFFECTIVELY INTEGRATES TECHNOLOGY INTO THE CURRICULUM

- Uses a variety of technological tools including: Microsoft Office, digital and video cameras, Internet, subject specific software, printers, probes, projections devices, smart board and scanners
- Integrates technology across curricular areas

- Demonstrates a willingness to learn more about integrating technology from colleagues and professional development opportunities
- G. RESPONDS TO PRINCIPALS SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING OVERALL PERFORMANCE

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT/MANAGEMENT

- A. CREATES AN ENVIRONMENT OF MUTUAL RESPECT AND RAPPORT ESTABLISHES RAPPORT THAT DEMONSTRATES CARE, ACCEPTANCE, AND RESPECT FOR THE INDIVIDUAL
- Maintains appropriate level of concern and involves students
- B. ESTABLISHES A CLASSROOM FOR LEARNING
- Exhibits evidence of organization and care of classroom materials and equipment
 - Gives attention to over-all classroom appearance
 - Maintains an attractive environment relative to the curriculum
 - Displays students' work
- C. EFFECTIVELY AND CONSISTENTLY MANAGES GOOD CLASSROOM ROUTINES
- D. EXHIBITS CONTROL AND CALMNESS WHEN DISCIPLINING STUDENTS IN POSITIVE CONSISTENT APPROACH
- E. ADHERES CONSCIENTIOUSLY TO STUDENT/TEACHER TIME ON TASK.

PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. DEMONSTRATES AN AWARENESS OF CURRENT TRENDS IN EDUCATION:
- Through professional reading
 - Through participating in courses, workshops and conferences
- B. MAINTAINS CERTIFICATION ACCORDING TO DIOCESAN POLICY.
- C. INTERACTS WITH STUDENTS IN A MANNER CONSISTENT WITH CATHOLIC VALUES
- Fosters an open atmosphere in which others feel free to express themselves
- D. WORKS COOPERATIVELY WITH ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

- Projects a friendly, cooperative attitude toward administration and colleagues with a willingness to share ideas
- E. INTERACTS WITH PARENTS/STAFF IN A MANNER THAT IS PROFESSIONAL AND CHRISTIAN
- Maintains proper communication with parents/guardians
 - Uses written and oral communication that is clearly and professionally stated; spelling and grammar are correct
 - Obtains approval from the principal for all written communication
- F. INTERACTS WITH MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY IN A WAY THAT REFLECTS CATHOLIC VALUES
- Contributes to overall positive climate of the school
 - Listens and responds to the concerns of others
 - Responds to constructive criticism
- G. MAINTAINS AN APPROPRIATE AND NEAT APPEARANCE
- Dresses in a manner that is professional and has an overall neat appearance
 - Models what is expected of students

NAME _____ GRADE/SUBJECT _____

SCHOOL _____ DATE(S) OF OBSERVATION _____

SUMMATIVE EVALUATION REPORT

The administrator must make comments on **all NEEDS IMPROVEMENT (NI)** ratings and are encouraged to make recommendations and/or commendations in all areas.

Code: ES –Exceeds Standards
MS –Meets Standards
NI – Needs Improvement

Check the appropriate column using the code outlined in the directions.

I. MINISTRY OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION STANDARDS

	ES	MS	NI
A. Fulfills requirements for Religion Certification			
B. Witnesses to the philosophy and mission of Catholic education established by the Diocese of Wheeling/Charleston and the local school			
C. Witnesses to Christian commitment by personal example			
D. Infuses Catholic philosophy in all areas of the curriculum			

COMMENTS:

II. INSTRUCTIONAL PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

	ES	MS	NI
A. Demonstrates competence in subject matter and implements Diocesan/State Curriculum Guidelines			
B. Specifies clear and appropriate learning objectives			
C. Uses a variety of effective and appropriate instructional techniques			
D. Teaches in a manner that invites students to think critically and creatively			
E. Uses a variety of methods to assess student learning			
F. Effectively integrates technology into the curriculum			
G. Responds to principal's suggestions for improving instruction or overall performance			

COMMENTS:

III. CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT/MANAGEMENT STANDARDS

ES MS NI

A. Creates an environment of mutual respect and rapport			
B. Establishes a classroom for learning			
C. Effectively and consistently manages good classroom routines and procedures			
D. Exhibits control and calmness when disciplining students using a consistent and positive approach			
E. Adheres conscientiously to student/teacher time on task			

COMMENTS:

IV. PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES STANDARDS

ES MS NI

A. Demonstrates an awareness of current trends in education			
B. Maintains certification according to Diocesan policy			
C. Interacts with students in a manner consistent with Catholic values			
D. Works cooperatively with administration and staff			
E. Interacts with parents/guardians in a manner that is professional and reflective of Gospel values			
F. Interacts with other members of the school community in a manner that is professional and reflective of Catholic values			
G. Maintains a neat and appropriate appearance			

COMMENTS:

This teacher is teaching grade(s) _____ Subjects _____

This teacher has current WV certification in the grades and subjects she/he is currently teaching. Yes ____ Date of expiration _____ No ____

Highest degree earned _____ Date _____ Major _____

This teacher is teaching Religion Yes ____ No ____

This teacher is certified in Faith Harvest to teach Religion Yes ____ No ____

This teacher has participated in professional development in the following areas **this year** (Please include Religious formation classes as well as other areas of professional development) (Indicate if college credit was received for any professional development.)

Years of teaching experience teacher has completed **in the Diocese** at the end of this present school year. _____ years

I have received a copy of this evaluation report and understand that I may file with the Principal for placement in my folder any comments I wish to make regarding it. I also understand that a copy of my remarks must be given to the evaluator; an indication that this has been done must be noted on my statement. My signature does not imply my agreement or disagreement with this evaluation.

TEACHER COMMENTS:

PRINCIPAL COMMENTS:

Based on this evaluation, the teacher will set goals for the following year using Form 1A.

Teacher's Signature/Date

Principal's Signature/Date

FORM 1A

YEARLY GOAL
(to be completed by teacher)

Name _____

Date _____

Complete a separate sheet for each goal.

Proposed Goal:

Action Plan – specific plan to implement goal with timeline:

Resources that might be needed:

Action Plan Adjustments:

Teacher: _____
Date: _____

Principal: _____
Date: _____

FORM 1B

GOAL ATTAINMENT EVALUATION

Teacher's Assessment of self-improvement.

Fully achieved _____ Partially achieved _____ Not achieved

Teacher's Comments:

Principal's Comments:

Date of Conference: _____

Teacher: _____

Principal: _____

PRE-OBSERVATION CONFERENCE

Teacher _____

Class _____ Date _____ Time _____

What is your plan for this lesson?

Describe how this lesson fits into the overall objectives for the unit.

POST-OBSERVATION CONFERENCE

Teacher _____

Class _____ Date _____ Time _____

Did you accomplish the objectives that you had hoped to accomplish during your class?

Observer comments:

What parts of the lesson, if any, do you feel were not as successful as you had anticipated? Please include your thoughts on factors that may have contributed to the diminished success.

Observer comments:

FORM 1

Diocese of Wheeling/Charleston

Formative Teacher Evaluation

Teacher _____ Grade(s) _____

Subject(s) observed _____

Date(s) of Observation _____ Date(s) of Conference _____

I. Ministry of Catholic Education

II. Instructional Performance

III. Classroom Environment/Classroom Management

IV. Professional Responsibilities

Principal's signature/date _____

Teacher's signature/date _____

FORM 2

NAME _____ GRADE/SUBJECT _____

SCHOOL _____ DATE(S) OF OBSERVATION _____

FORMATIVE EVALUATION REPORT

The administrator must make comments on **all NEEDS IMPROVEMENT (NI)** ratings and are encouraged to make recommendations and/or commendations in all areas.

Code: ES –Exceeds Standards
MS –Meets Standards
NI – Needs Improvement

Check the appropriate column using the code outlined in the directions.

I. MINISTRY OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION STANDARDS

	ES	MS	NI
A. Fulfills requirements for Religion Certification			
B. Witnesses to the philosophy and mission of Catholic education established by the Diocese of Wheeling/Charleston and the local school			
C. Witnesses to Christian commitment by personal example			
D. Infuses Catholic philosophy in all areas of the curriculum			

COMMENTS:

II. INSTRUCTIONAL PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

	ES	MS	NI
A. Demonstrates competence in subject matter and implements Diocesan/State Curriculum Guidelines			
B. Specifies clear and appropriate learning objectives			
C. Uses a variety of effective and appropriate instructional techniques			
D. Teaches in a manner that invites students to think critically and creatively			
E. Uses a variety of methods to assess student learning			
F. Effectively integrates technology into the curriculum			
G. Responds to principal's suggestions for improving instruction or overall performance			

COMMENTS: _____

III. CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT/MANAGEMENT STANDARDS

	ES	MS	NI
A. Creates an environment of mutual respect and rapport			
B. Establishes a classroom for learning			
C. Effectively and consistently manages good classroom routines and procedures			
D. Exhibits control and calmness when disciplining students using a consistent and positive approach			
E. Adheres conscientiously to student/teacher time on task			

COMMENTS: _____

IV. PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES STANDARDS

	ES	MS	NI
A. Demonstrates an awareness of current trends in education			
B. Maintains certification according to Diocesan policy			
C. Interacts with students in a manner consistent with Catholic values			
D. Works cooperatively with administration and staff			
E. Interacts with parents/guardians in a manner that is professional and reflective of Gospel values			
F. Interacts with other members of the school community in a manner that is professional and reflective of Catholic values			
G. Maintains a neat and appropriate appearance			

COMMENTS:

Principal's signature

Teacher's signature

FORM 3

OBSERVER'S WORKSHEET

Teacher _____ Date _____

Subject _____

Observer _____

- A. Instruction Mode:

- B. Concept, skill or value focus:

- C. Instructional objective as perceived by observer:

- D. Student participation:

- E. Motivation toward discussion, listening,
working at task, or doing assignment:

- F. Learning outcomes demonstrated:

Overall comments:

Evaluator

Date

Teacher's Comments:

Teacher

Date

FORM 4

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION RECORD

Name: _____ Grade Level _____ Subject: _____

Observer: _____ Position: _____ Date _____

ES- Exceeds Standard

MS- Meets Standard

NI-Needs Improvement

<i>Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport</i>	ES	MS	NI
<i>Establishing a Culture of Learning</i>	ES	MS	NI
<i>Managing Classroom Procedures</i>	ES	MS	NI
<i>Managing Student Behavior</i>	ES	MS	NI
<i>Organizing Physical Space</i>	ES	MS	NI
<i>Communicating Clearly and Accurately</i>	ES	MS	NI

<i>Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques</i>	ES	MS	NI
<i>Engaging Students in Learning</i>	ES	MS	NI
<i>Providing Feedback to Students</i>	ES	MS	NI
<i>Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness</i>	ES	MS	NI

Teacher's Self-appraisal

Please complete the following information and return to me so that I may include all your successes and accomplishments in your evaluation report.

Name: _____

School: _____

1. What progress have you made toward the goals you set for this school year?
2. What is the most significant accomplishment you have had this year?
3. Describe any special strategies, techniques, and programs you have pursued/initiated.
4. What has been your greatest challenge? How have you attempted to meet this challenge?
5. In what interdisciplinary units have you participated in planning and implementing?
6. How are you helping to achieve our school-wide goals?

7. What techniques have you used to communicate with and involve parents?
8. What strategies for positive behaviors/classroom management have you employed?
9. Discuss your committee contributions and sponsorships.
10. Describe your professional growth this year. Please include courses, conferences, workshops and presentations.
11. Anything else you would like to share?

NAME: _____ DATE _____

INDIVIDUAL PROFESSIONAL GROWTH PLAN

The purpose of the Professional Growth Plan is to provide a structure for self-improvement. It should identify specific needs that correlate with the management or instruction indicators listed below.

Check performance area in which need was identified.

Management Indicators

- Classroom Management
- Classroom Climate
- Organization
- Record Keeping

Instruction Indicators

- Explains Purpose
- Encourages Response
- Supervision
- Adopts Varied

Teaching

- Content Area Knowledge
- Provided Sufficient Directions

Techniques

- Evidence of Learner Success
- Performance/Conduct

Recommendation:

Estimated Date of Completion: _____

Teacher's signature

Date

Evaluator's signature

Date

Successfully Completed

Date _____

Satisfactory Progress

Date _____

Unsatisfactory Progress

Date _____

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

COMMITTEE:

Carroll Morrison – Principal, Notre Dame High School
Marilyn Richardson – Principal, St. Michael Parish School
Dr. Judith Stechly – Principal, Wheeling Catholic Elementary School
Sister Mary Lou Palas S.C. – Director for Curriculum and Instruction K-12

Special thanks to the following:

Sister Kathleen Callaghan – Diocese of Wilmington, Delaware
Sister Patricia Ann Foley SSJ – Principal, St. Francis Central School
C'Ann Reilly – Principal, Our Lady of Peace School
Karen Kovacs – Diocesan Computer Services
Catholic Schools Office Staff

APPENDIX B

RECRUITMENT LETTER FOR FOCUS GROUPS

March 14, 2008

Dear Principals in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston:

You and one teacher from your school are invited to attend the teacher evaluation focus group meeting we discussed at the fall Principals' Meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to gather perceptions from principals and teachers about the current teacher evaluation process and how it can be improved.

Per your request, I am holding meetings in three (3) locations (Wheeling, Morgantown, and Charleston). You may choose whichever location works best for you. You and your teacher can attend the same location or different locations---your choice. You will attend the morning session at 8:30 am and one teacher from your school whom you select will attend the afternoon session at 12:30 pm. Please select one teacher from your school who:

- Is a veteran teacher (which our Diocese defines as a teacher with more than three (3) years experience).
- Is willing and interested in participating in the revision of the teacher evaluation process.
- Can make a positive contribution to the revision of the teacher evaluation process.

Please use the form below to email your RSVP to me at agaudino@dwc.org by April 9.

Please call me if you have any questions. I look forward to working with you and the teachers!

All the best,

Ann Gaudino

RSVP for the Teacher Evaluation Focus Group Meeting

School Name _____ Phone Number _____

Principal Name _____

Meeting Location: _____

Teacher Name _____

Meeting Location: _____

APPENDIX C

PARTICIPANT INFORMATIONAL LETTER

March 13, 2008

Dear Participant:

The purpose of this research study is to learn about the perceptions of teachers and administrators in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston regarding the evaluation and formative development of teachers in the current teacher evaluation process and how the process could be improved. For this reason, I will be holding focus group discussions for principals and focus groups for teachers in Charleston, WV on April 30, 2008; Wheeling, WV on May 1, 2008; and Morgantown, WV on May 2, 2008. Teachers and principals will be in separate focus groups. Principals will meet at 8:30 am and teachers will meet at 12:30 pm. If you are willing to participate in a group, the discussions will ask the groups about their perceptions about teacher evaluation and formative development. There are no foreseeable risks associated with this project, nor are there any direct benefits to you. There is no compensation for you. Focus group discussion will be recorded in order to analyze the responses for patterns. Neither you nor your responses will be identified in any way. All responses will be kept under lock and key. Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw from this project at any time. This study is being conducted by Ann Gaudino, who can be reached at 412-389-6725 (cell), if you have any questions.

I look forward to working with you!

Sincerely,

Ann Gaudino
Primary Investigator

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PROFILE

19 years leadership and teaching experience in K-12 private, public and parochial education.

EDUCATION

Doctorate of Education in School Leadership, GPA 3.9, 2008.

Superintendent Letter of Eligibility
University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA

Specialist Degree Education Administration, GPA 3.94, 2003.

K-12 Principal Certification, Michigan and Pennsylvania
Wayne State University, Detroit, MI.

K-8 All Certification & K-12 Reading Specialist Certification, GPA 4.0, 1997.

Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, MI.

Master of Music, GPA 7.83/8.0, 1990.

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI.

Bachelor of Music, Music Education and Organ Performance, GPA 3.86, 1989.

Music Education Certification K-12
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI.

Class in Torts, 1994.

Wayne State University Law School, Detroit, MI

Diploma

The Ellis School, Pittsburgh, PA. Attended Kindergarten through Twelfth Grade.

CERTIFICATION (States of MI, PA, and WV)

Superintendent PK-12, Asst. Superintendent PK-12, Principal PK-12,
Reading PK-12, Elementary K-6, Music PK-12.

EXPERIENCE

Assistant Professor, West Liberty State College, 2008-Present Coordinator of Clinical Practice

Teach undergraduate and graduate education courses and coordinate faculty supervisors and students for student teaching.

Instructor, West Virginia University, 2008-Present

Extended Learning

Coordinate and teach classes for teachers.

Director of Programs, Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, West Virginia, 2007-Present

Supervise federal funding, teacher evaluation/mentoring/induction, principal mentoring, student health, athletics and programs for the 32 Catholic schools in State of West Virginia.

Principal, The Ellis School, Pittsburgh, PA, 2003-2007

Led progressive elementary curriculum and assessment development PreK-4.

Implemented Teacher Evaluation, Differentiated Instruction, Curriculum Mapping, Multiple Intelligence Education, Executive Functions, Guided Reading

Faculty hiring, professional development, and evaluation.

Admissions.

South Redford Public Schools (Detroit) Michigan, 1990-2003

St. John Bosco Roman Catholic School

Teacher

Music and choir director grades K-12.

High School and Middle School choir Division 1/Superior Ratings at District, State, and National Competitions.

High School Choir performances in The Kennedy Center, St. Patrick's Cathedral, The United Nations, and with The Detroit Symphony.

Fundraising \$30K annually.

Coordinator, Non-Tenure Teacher Professional Development.

Substitute Principal

Representative, Teacher Evaluation Committee

Chairperson, North Central Accreditation Committee, Addams Elementary

Mentor Teacher

Chairperson, Thurston H.S. Music Department

Visiting Instructor, Conservatory of Music, Florence, Italy, Fall 2000.

First American music teacher invited to teach at the Florence Conservatory. Taught classes in Italian to students age 5-21 years.

Administrative Intern

Aspiring Principal Academy, Wayne County R.E.S.A. 2002-2003.

Instructor, Community and Teacher Education Division.

Detroit Opera House, 2001-2003.

Supervisor, District 12, Michigan School Vocal Music Association 1993-1995.

Adjudicator, Michigan Humanities Council, 2000-2003.

Instructor, Eastern Michigan University Reading Clinic, 1997.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Music Director, St. Timothy Roman Catholic Church, Trenton, MI 1987-1990.

Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Southfield, MI, 1986-1987.

Planned music liturgy, directed adult and children's' choirs, planned budgets.

GRANTS RECEIVED

National Foundation for Improvement of Education Grant (NEA), 2000.

Funding to study new music literacy method at Conservator of Music, Florence, Italy and bring method and materials back to the music teachers of the U.S.A.

Wayne County RESA grants, 2000-2001.

Wayne Country Teacher Externship Grant, 2001.

Funding for technology integration in the classroom.

Wayne County Career Preparation Grant, 1999-2001.

Funding to enable students to study career areas of music industry, law, marketing, and design as they sing, record, and market their own music CD.

Michigan Consolidated Gas Teaching Grant, 2000.

Michigan Arts and Humanities Council Grant, 1999.

Funding to integrate music and social studies curriculum.

Rotary International, Redford Chapter, 2000.

Funding to study and teach at Florence Conservatory.

South Redford Foundation for Educational Excellence, 2000, 2001, 2003.

Funding to integrate technology in education.

AUTHOR

Over 20 articles and reviews for the American Choral Director's Association National Journal, 1999-2001.

A Most Incredible Journey: Teaching in Italy.

Article for Michigan School Vocal Music Association Journal, 2001.

Co-author, South Redford Elementary Music Curriculum 2000.

PRESENTER

Grant Writing/Fundraising Workshops, Detroit, Ann Arbor, Chicago.
New Teacher Induction: A District Model.

HONORS

International Biography Center Nomination
Who's Who Among America's Teachers
Who's Who Among America's Women

CONFERENCES/COMMITTEES

NAIS National Convention
ISM Lower School Directors' Conference
Differentiated Instruction National Conference
Prevention of Failure in Early Learning Conference
Love & Logic Conference.

VOLUNTEER WORK & INTERESTS

Individuals Learning Disabilities, Physical and Mental Challenges.
Swimming, Downhill Skiing, Travel, Italian Language & Culture.