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ABSTRACT

The evaluation of a high school teacher by his principal in Alberta, Canada, was examined by analyzing the conversations that occurred between the researcher, the principal, and the teacher he was evaluating. The analysis reveals much about why the principal undertook teacher evaluations, and what counts as evidence for good or poor practice. Evaluations were done to meet legal requirements, as well as for professional reasons. The principal did not agree with the widely accepted notion that there should be a clear distinction between formative and summative evaluations. Despite his strongly expressed assertions that he perceived himself as a colleague of his teachers, and that his evaluations were those of a professional equal, an examination of his discourse suggests that in fact he adopted a distinctly managerial position in relation to the faculty of his school. To this principal, students' participation and involvement in the lesson was the most important element of good teaching. Other characteristics of good teaching in his view are listed, and it is evident that his own practice was a yardstick by which he gauged the appropriateness of others' teaching. (Author/SLD)

How Principals Formally Evaluate Teachers

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Paper to be presented to the

Annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Atlanta, 1993.

Abstract

The evaluation of a teacher by his principal was examined by analyzing the conversations that occured between the principal and me, and the principal and the teacher he was evaluating.

This analysis revealed much about why the principal undertook teacher evaluations, and what counted as evidence for good or poor practice.

Evaluations were done for legal as well as professional reasons. The principal did not agree with the widely accepted notion that there should be a clear distinction between formative and summative evaluations. Despite his strongly expressed assertions that he perceived himself as a colleague of his teachers, and that his evaluations were those of a professional equal, an examination of his discourse suggests that in fact he adopted a distinctly managerial position in relation to the faculty of his school.

The paper might have been more appropriately entitled "How a principal formally evaluated one teacher", as it is limited to the examination of the evaluation conducted by one high school principal, Darwin, of the work of a member of one member of his faculty, Wolenko.[1]

Why might such an account, limited to a single case of teacher evaluation, be of value? Sacks addresses the issue of the importance of such studies. He considers that it is through looking at a particular event or phenomenon very carefully and possibly for a long time that one learns its meaning. He gives as an example that biblical scholars could spend a life-time studying one line. He refers to Freud who regarded patients as "sacred phenomena", that is, each patient is important in and of himself, and not merely as "representative" of some or other phenomenon. Sacks argues for in-depth examination of single pieces of information or phenomena rather than the rapid categorization of large numbers of cases - a procedure he characterizes as a "trick" which reveals little understanding of the phenomena being categorized.[2] Understanding, he insists, can only develop through careful, time-consuming analysis of single events or situations or "objects".

This does not preclude a search for comparability or commonality. Sacks writes: "You take those little pieces and you try to collect those that look alike, and it can take an awfully long time to understand any given one."[3] But the interest in "pieces that look alike" does not detract from the importance of what can be learnt from the careful study of some single piece in and of itself. Sacks reminds the reader that "the whole of biology has been revolutionized by the study of one bacteria, though when that bacteria was first being examined, no one had any idea that it would do that work."[4]

The focus of this paper is on uncovering one principal's point of view: how he understood and made sense of the evaluation process in which he was engaged. Information was gathered by my holding an audio-taped meeting with the principal prior to the evaluation taking place, audio-taping pre- and post-observation conferences between

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[1] These names are fictitious, as are all the person, place, and jurisdiction names in the paper. The exception is the reference to the province of Alberta, Canada, which is where, indeed, the study took place.

[2] Sacks (1964) pg. 6.

[3] Sacks (1964) pg. 4.

[4] Sacks (1964) pg. 4.

teacher Wolenko and principal Darwin, and video-taping the lessons Darwin observed. These tapes were then analyzed.

The study is in the tradition of ethnomnethodology. Ethnomethodology

> arose in reaction to the quantitative techniques, and the arbitrary imposition on the data of supposedly objective categories . . . that were typical of mainstream American sociology. In contrast, it was argued cogently, the proper object of sociological study is the set of techniques that the members of a society themselves utilize to interpret and act within their social worlds . . . . Hence the use of the term *ethnomethodology*, the study of 'ethnic' (i.e. participants' own) methods of production and interpretation of social interaction"[5]

The ethnomethodologist perceives of the social world as the practical accomplishment of members, and ethnomethodological research is concerned with the discovery of the ways in which ordinary members go about the necessary business of constructing their world. Silverman highlights the interest of an ethnomethodological study thus: "Instead of using 'adequate' or 'appropriate' operational definitions of aspects of social life," (in this case criteria of good teaching), the ethnomethodologist

> seeks to understand *members'* (emphasis added) sense of adequacy and appropriateness in interaction. Further, instead of regarding the features of interaction as a reflection of culture (a natural fact of life), one examines how the properties of interaction are produced, displayed and observed by the practical activities (the "work") of members.[6]

Teaching, and the evaluation of teaching, are social activities. "Teaching behavior, by its very nature, exists in a context of social interaction. The acts of teaching lead to reciprocal contact between the teacher and the pupils, and the interchange itself is called teaching."[7] Teaching consists primarily of interaction between teachers and students; evaluation, of interaction between teachers and evaluators. Ethnomethodologists see

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[5] Levinson (1983) pg. 295.

[6] Silverman (1973) pp. 177-8.

[7] Flanders (1970). (It is not being suggested that Flanders would argue in favour of an interpretative rather than a positivist approach to teacher evaluation!)

teachers and students as actors in a social situation. Like other actors in other situations, they make sense of their world, indeed construct their world, utilizing, what is to them, commonsense knowledge: in Schutz' terms, the stock of knowledge at hand. This stock of knowledge consists of "recipes, rules of thumb, social types, maxims, and definitions . . . also . . . social types or idealizations of people, objects, and events that serve as points of inference and action . . . for example. . . . Teachers have types of students: behavior problems, immature students."[8] Evaluators, too, typify teachers and practices in certain ways: effective/ineffective; able/unable to get along with students, colleagues, administrators, parents; interesting/boring; able/unable to motivate, etc. What is of interest in an ethnomethodological study, is how these typifications come to be applied in particular cases. How does the evaluator come to decide that the teacher is effective/ineffective, etc.? What *counts as* evidence for the effectiveness or ineffectiveness? [9]

A question that needs to be considered is how the ethnomethodologist goes about the task of uncovering the members' methods of constructing their social reality. Ethnomethodology is interested in the methods actors use to accomplish their activities. The analysis of conversation provides a powerful means of learning how social reality is constructed by members.[10] Conversation is of interest to the ethnomethodologist not for its own sake, but for what it may reveal about the methods used to construct social reality. Sacks writes: "My research is about conversation only in this incidental way: that conversation is something that we can get the actual happenings of on tape and that we can get more or less transcribed".[11] Indeed, Sacks sees ethnomethodology and conversation analysis to be so closely intertwined that he uses the term "ethnomethodology/conversation analysis" which "seeks to describe methods persons use in doing social life."[12] In the analysis of tape-recordings as a research methodology, Sacks greatly values its amenability to repeated examination by the researcher, and to analysis by other researchers, who could verify, or dispute, the interpretations made. Sacks is very explicit on this point:

> Such materials had a single virtue, that I could replay them. I could transcribe them somewhat and study them extendedly. . . . The tape recorded materials constituted a "good enough" record of what happened.

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[8] Leiter (1980) following Schutz (1964).
[9] Mehan and Wood (1975) pg. 81.
[10] Heritage (1984) p.g. 241.
[11] Sacks (n.d.) pg. 26.
[12] Sacks (n.d.) pg. 21.

> Other things, to be sure, happened, but at least what was on tape had happened. . . . I could study it again and again, and also . . . others could look at what I had studied and make of it what they could, if, for example, they wanted to disagree with me.[13]

Mehan[14] writes about the methodological features of what he terms "constitutive studies".[15] He contrasts the way "raw materials" are handled in conventional and "constitutive" studies thus:

> In conventional research reports the materials upon which the analysis was conducted are not usually included. As researchers move from raw materials to coded data to summarized findings, the materials become increasingly abstracted from their original form. Thus, the opportunity to consider alternative interpretations of the same material is lost.
>
> In contrast, constitutive studies stress the importance of retrievable data, employing videotape or film for both data gathering and data display. Events depicted on videotape or film are not equivalent to school events per se, but audiovisual materials do preserve events in close to their original form. They thus serve as an external memory that allows researchers to examine interactions intensively and repeatedly, often frame by frame.[16]

The second perspective from which conversational analysis is valuable to this research is its ability to deal with the actor's point of view. Mehan writes that "Constitutive analysis . . . attempt(s) to obtain convergence between researchers' and participants' perspectives."[17] Raw recorded data presents the actors point of view directly. Both Mehan and Heritage write of the use of direct, uncoded data as providing a protection against the researcher's prior notions contaminating the interpretation. Heritage writes:

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13 Sacks (n.d.) pg 26.

14 Mehan (1978).

15 "Constitutive studies operate on the interactional premise that social structures are social accomplishments...that 'objective social facts'...are accomplished in the interaction between (actors)." (Mehan (1978) pg. 36.)

16 Mehan (1978) pg. 36.

17 Mehan (1978) pg. 37.

"there is a strong bias against a priori speculation about the orientations and motives of speakers and in favour of detailed examination of conversationalists' actual actions."[18] And Mehan comments: "by confining analysis to the behavior displayed by participants, unfounded inferences are not made about the mental states of participants, and the researchers avoid both psychological reduction and sociological reification."[19]

Conversation analysis can provide provide insights into how and why those who evaluate teachers make the judgements that they do. Using such analysis, this paper will explore the ways in which Darwin accounted for the decisions he made, his interests, motivations and constraints.

Why Darwin evaluated teachers

The transcript of the initial, pre-evaluation meeting I had with Darwin is revealing of much of his thinking.

O. Well, I guess as far as the evaluation goes, what I'm interested in is your thoughts about the, the manner of your role in evaluating teachers, and what you see as the object of the exercise, and, uh, so on. I'd like to just stop here, and just turn it over to you, and I guess I'll pick up on what you're saying and go from there.

D. O.K. Well I don't think there's, there's any doubt, um, the [Alberta] School Act, the new [1988] school act has made it abundantly clear that, um, principals have a, a role, a definite role to play in terms of teacher evaluation, and in terms of this system's policies and, um, the last system that I worked with, policies were certainly very clear in that, um, you know, there was a role to play. And even before those policies came about, I guess I, I saw that you can't possibly be involved in, um, in hiring and firing people unless you're

[18] Heritage (1984) pg. 243.
[19] Mehan (1978) pg. 37.

involved in viewing their services and, uh, observing them at work and that sort of thing. And I guess that most principals have traditionally been a lot more comfortable with the more, the more casual types of, of observations of teachers. You know, walking by their classrooms and seeing if it's quiet. Maybe talking to them in the hallway, but ( ) I feel that that's very important, um, you know, administration, supervision by walking about. But I think that it's also important that there be a very formalized observation in the evaluation of teachers. Why? Because it's a "have to" in terms in terms of the School Act, it's a "have to" in terms of policy. And I think it's, um, it's really important if we as principals are committed to the idea of offering the best in educational services to students, and since the teachers are the people that are directly offering those services, then it's important that we work with those teachers so that the services can continually improve.

It is clear that Darwin expressed strong support for the expectation that principals evaluate the teachers on their staff. Although he did not deny the importance of the legal mandate (lines 7-14), he did not accept this responsibility as merely an imposition deriving from district policy, or provincial law, but saw it as an essential part of filling the role of principal (lines 13-17). Darwin perceived the principal as having a role in "hiring and firing", and that evaluation of teaching had to play a part in those processes (line 15). Darwin's opening statement emphasized, as well, that Darwin saw the principal's evaluation of teachers as an important part of the process of improving instruction (lines 27-32)[20].

Not only did Darwin see the purpose of evaluation as necessary for the personnel administration function of the principal, and for the improvement of instruction, but he also

[20] Darwin's conviction that evaluation is essential to assuring quality instruction is consistent with much literature, e.g. Stufflembeam and Webster (1988).

saw it as a process that was needed and desired by the teachers themselves [21]

33 O. So. I guess you've really mentioned both the kind of role
34 in the hiring and firing part of things and also the, the
35 improvement of instruction.

36 A. Ya, and that, and second is by far the most important. I
37 mean, I think, I think you'd agree, Claude, that, um, like
38 over your years in the educational game, um, how many
39 times have you been involved in the firing of a teacher. Like
40 I can, I can count the times, um, on one hand, and I won't
41 even have to use up all the fingers. Really, that's, uh, that's
42 a very minor point. But I guess, for, for, my way of
43 thinking, anyway, the big one is the that teachers want the
44 help; they need the help; they deserve the help; and students
45 are going to be the benefactors. Maybe another point that,
46 that very quickly comes to mind is that, um, uh, that the
47 teaching profession is, is one that, um, operates pretty much
48 behind closed doors. It's myself as teacher, and my kids in
49 a classroom with the door closed. And it's lonely. And I
50 find that that the teachers want feedback. And they'll
51 demand it. If you're not walking around, or if you're not
52 formally in their classrooms, they will be in here, or they
53 will stop you in the hallway and say, you know, "this is
54 what is happening, and, uh, wanted you to know what's
55 happening. I might need some help in this area. A student
56 may be coming down to see you." I guess what I'm saying
57 is that you either do it formally or informally, or else
58 teachers will make you do it because they desire feedback.
59 Um, that's my experience.

Darwin attempted to minimize the importance of the "hiring and firing" dimension of his role (lines 36-42), relative to the importance of meeting the expressed needs of

[21] The view that teachers, even highly regarded ones, have a need to have their practice observed and recognized by their principal is supported in the literature, e.g. Natriello (1990), pg. 39.

teachers (lines 50-59). He explained teachers' need for administrative feedback on their teaching in terms of the relative isolation (from other adults) that is inherent in the teaching role (lines 46-50). Nevertheless, Darwin had made it clear that he was interested in evaluating teachers for managerial, decision making reasons as well as for reasons of improving instruction, and I wanted to know whether he accepted the frequently expressed view that there was an irreconcilable conflict between these two dimensions of evaluation[22]:

246 O. Getting right back to one of the early things that you said and
247 talked about. You know, the dual roles, and you said that
248 the hiring and firing thing was minimal, but it is there, and
249 the other, the helping improving instruction, the formative
250 and summative evaluation roles, I guess. Do you see a
251 conflict between the two, when you have been ( )? Again,
252 it's one of these old debates, if you have the same evaluator
253 involved in formative and in summative evaluation. Some
254 say that there is, some say that there's not a problem. I
255 wonder what your view is?

256 D. Well, as I understand it, the, um, the Alberta Teachers'
257 Association still, still believes, its policy still reflects, I
258 think, that principals are in formative evaluation, and other
259 people, from central office, are summative evaluators. Um,
260 I tell you, Superintendent Martins would certainly disagree
261 with that, um, he sees himself as a formative evaluator. Um,
262 he's a colleague, working with teachers to improve their
263 services, and he would take grave exception to being called a
264 summative. And similarly, I think, I would take exception
265 to being just formative and not summative. Because,
266 ultimately, um, if Mr. Martins came in here, and said

[22] e.g.Darling-Hammond, Wise and Pease (1983) point out that "teacher evaluation processes most suitable to accountability purposes must be capable of yielding fairly objective, standardized, and externally defensible information about teacher performance. Evaluation processes useful for improvement objectives must yield rich, descriptive information that illuminates sources of difficulty as well as viable courses for change" (pg. 303).

"I'm axing this teacher", and I have been working with that teacher and finding that that's not the solution that I want at all, I would be really, really upset. I, I've always, I guess believed, that if one of my teachers isn't cutting the mustard, I would be the first person to know that, and that I would be consulting with my superintendent as to what I, what he, maybe other consultants, might be doing to help improve this situation. So, um, no, I'm not comfortable with the A.T.A.[23] policy. I don't think that the division which they artificially place between summative and formative is anything except an artificial line. The two cross over for both central office personnel and school based administrators, in my view.[24]

O. And to play, if I could play devil's advocate, I guess, I think some people's reasoning, I'm not sure if it's A.T.A. reasoning, but some reasoning for the complete separation of those functions is that somehow the trust that is necessary for formative evaluation to work cannot develop if there is always the fear of a summative action being taken. And I just wondered if that argument made any sense to you or ( ).

D. No, I don't ( ). I, I really, I really believe that this formative summative thing is, um, it's a throwback to the age or days of the old, um, inspector, you know, who dropped into a school and, boy!, I mean, you were either there, first of all, and performing, or you were axed and ( ). And, um, there are so many things that have

[23] "A.T.A." is the way to which the the Alberta Teachers' Association is generally referred.

[24] In fact, while A.T.A. policy specifically states that it "it is a function of the principal to participate in the formative evaluation of teachers" (15.A.30), no policy states that principals are not to participate in summative evaluation. On the contrary, various policies imply that principals will be involved in summative evaluation. And there is a policy (15.A.14) that specifically states that classroom teachers have a role in the formative and summative evaluation of administrators. But certainly, numerous policy statements make a very clear distinction between formative and summative evaluation (15.A.2., 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 15, 16., 17, 18, 19, 20.,22.,23, 28, 29, 30, 31), and mandate that teachers must be left in no doubt as to whether an evaluation is formative or summative (15.A. 22). (The Alberta Teachers' Association *Members' Handbook* [1992], pp. 37-3.)

changed since then, the least of which is the extensive amount of professional training which teachers undergo. Like, Claude, when I started my career, and you would probably say the same thing, sixty percent of teachers, uh, didn't have a degree. I mean, if you had a degree, you, you know, you were special. And, uh, I taught for two years myself with one year of teacher training. But now, all teachers have four years of training. And to think that, um, that an inspector, or a superintendent today, could come in and, uh, summarily, (summative?), summarily dismiss a teacher is absolutely preposterous. It cannot happen, I don't believe. So, um, nc I, I really feel that, um, and in our own system Joe [Martins] and, and [Deputy Superintendent] Ed. [Smith] and now [Assistant Superintendent] Susan [Jones] would be, would be the first to say that, uh, they too are colleagues. They have a license to teach. Um, and they are there to help a teacher, a fellow colleague, offer better professional services. In very few cases, fewer than one percent of the cases, like Mr. Martins usually tells us he and Mr. Smith have written something like a hundred reports, fewer than one percent of those reports, in my estimation, would result in the dismissal or transfer of a teacher. So why are we looking upon central office people as being summative evaluators? They are just as formative as I am. And if a teacher is going to be dismissed, then, again we are both of necessity going to be summative evaluators. Because who in the hell is going to be on the hot seat at the board of reference?[25] Both of us. With the lime-light being on your's truly.[26]

[25] Boards of Reference appointed by the Alberta government hear appeals against teacher dismissals. (The Alberta Teachers' Association *Legislation Handbook* [1992], pp. 36-7)

[26] Whereas Darwin argues that formative evaluation is more important than summative, because of the relative infrequency of transfer or dismissal decisions (lines 313-316), Scriven (1981) takes the opposite point of view: "Summative evaluation is primary because (1) human careers are at stake, not 'mere' improvement; (2) if it is not possible to tell whether teaching is bad (or good) overall, it is not possible to tell whether it has improved." (Pg 244).

Darwin thus strongly rejected the notion that there could be a clear dichotomy between "formative" and "summative" evaluations, with the principal's responsibility being limited to the former, and the superintendency staff bearing sole responsibility for the latter. Indeed, Darwin heatedly objected to the unrealistic nature of such separation.

There was much about Darwin's talk that made one sceptical about his earlier (lines 36-42) disavowal of the importance of the teacher dismissal issue. It had been, after all, the very first matter that he had raised to explain why it was important that principals evaluate their teachers (lines 14-17). But then, as if alarmed at the decidedly managerial tone of these remarks, he quickly retreated into the more correctly collegial stance of being mainly interested in the "improvement of instruction", and insisted that he "wouldn't even have to use up all the fingers (of one hand)" (lines 40-1) in counting the teacher dismissal cases he had been involved in in his many years as a principal. However, the emotional "who in the hell is going to be on the hot seat at the board of reference" outburst (lines 322-324), made it very clear that managerial considerations were of great importance to Darwin's insistence that he had to evaluate the teachers on his staff.

But if Darwin saw his evaluation role at least in part as managerial, did he believe that principals properly belonged in the A.T.A.? Here, paradoxically, Darwin was unambivalent in his support for the status quo, i.e. for the principal and teachers to be organized as colleagues in a common organization. When asked whether he found that membership in a common organization posed difficulties for him in his role as evaluator, he vigourously denied this:

151 O. Do you
152 have any difficulty with the situation of the principal and the
153 teachers being members together of the A.T.A., um, the
154 A.T.A. code of ethics, and those kinds of things? Do you
155 find that this causes you a problem in you role as an
156 evaluator?

154 D. Definitely and absolutely not. I think that, that the present
155 set-up is the only way that we can go. I present myself to
156 the teachers, not just when I'm evaluating them but, but
157 always as a peer among equals. Um, I, I know, and they
158 know, I have certain responsibilities that are different from

159 their's. But I'm a peer among equals, and it's just that, um,
160 that I have some responsibilities in terms of the overall
161 management of the plant, just as I involve them in, in
162 carrying out those responsibilities, and I involve them in
163 advising me in how I should carry out those responsibilities.
164 That's exactly how I feel that the, the supervision of
165 instruction has to be carried out. I'm a peer among equals.

However, despite this insistence that the relationship was one of peers, when asked to describe how he would deal with a teacher whose performance he found to be unsatisfactory, there was a distinctly managerial and unpeer-like quality to the manner in which described his handling of such situations:

399 O. Talked about the kind of situation, the sort of horrendous
400 situation where hopefully you could get the A.T.A. on side,
401 and, and get rid of a teacher that you got rid of. But what
402 about the kind of situation where you have a tenured teacher
403 who is nowhere near that point where they are so bad that
404 they are going to get fired. But nevertheless, they are not
405 doing a wonderful job, and there are really some things that
406 you would like them to change. How do you - and let's
407 assume that it is not the kind of situation where you've got a
408 very co-operative, professionally inclined teacher who's
409 interested in really taking advice. Somebody who's a little
410 resistant, or rigid, um, how does one go about getting such a
411 person to move in the direction that you want them to?

412 D. You do that by communicating very clearly what is wrong,
413 and what you expect to have happen. You communicate that
414 very clearly to the teacher. You make available to them the
415 resources that they might need in terms of, uh, going to a
416 seminar on classroom management, if that is the case, or
417 whatever, and you alert central office to the fact that this is
418 the situation that is, that is developing, and we need to bring
419 all the help to bear that we can, um ( ). But of those, I have
420 found that communication is the absolute key. I, um, I don't

421 have very much patience for those administrators, and they
422 exist in both schools and central offices, I don't have very
423 much patience for those administrators that say "we can't do
424 anything. The bloody tenure of teachers. Claude, you can't
425 get rid of them." Quite frankly, I have found, several times
426 in my teaching career, when you say to a teacher: "I am not
427 happy. As the manager of this plant, I have to tell you that I
428 am not happy. And the reason that I am not happy is this
429 and this and this. And I must tell you what the community is
430 unhappy about. I must tell you that there are students that
431 are unhappy. This is what they're unhappy about, this is
432 what I'm unhappy about. What are you going to do about
433 it? And how can I help? I have found that when I have
434 communicated honestly and frankly, with a clear expectation
435 as the bottom line that things are going to improve, that they
436 have improved, or that the teacher has said, um, I can't do it.
437 I won't do it, and they have decided to leave. Because,
438 would you want to work for a board or boss or community
439 that didn't feel you didn't do an adequate job?

Consider: "As manager of this plant, I am not happy"; "clear expectation as to the bottom line"; "would you want to work for a boss...": these are not the utterances of a colleague, of a peer. Despite Darwin's talk about principal and teachers being peers, equals, and so on, the tone and content of many of his utterances belie this. One is left with the distinct impression of one who "really" sees himself as a manager, but who finds it necessary to attempt to talk the talk of collegiality. The evaluations that he does must therefore plainly be understood as an evaluation by superordinate of subordinate, and not of a peer by a professional equal.[27]

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[27] Lewis (1982) (Pg. 33), citing Robert Lerch (Clearing House, Jan 1980), considers this to be a common problem: "Supervisors often approach the process from a superior-subordinate reference, not as an equal, collegial relationship. Supervisors are, for the most part, prepared as administrators, with supervision being viewed as an administrative function. This is contrary to the collegial view necessary to the use of cycles of clinical supervision. Natriello (1990), however, rather than considering it a problem that there exists a hierarchical rather than a collegial relationship between evaluator and evaluatee, sees evaluation systems as "key organizational processes for mediating the conflict between the hierarchical authority system of the organization and the democratic tradition of U.S. society. In order to be acceptable to subordinates, evaluation systems must exhibit certain features consistent with democracy, even though they function as systems for one group of individuals to control the behavior of another group. For example, in U.S. society, there is an

What counted as "good teaching" for Darwin

Despite Darwin's insistence on the summative element in his evaluation practice, it became evident when Darwin's actual process of evaluation was closely examined, that he did not merely play lip service to the notion of evaluation for the improvement of instruction, but that he did critically examine the instructional process in the classrooms he observed, and that there was indeed a real commitment to its improvement. In lines 27-32 of the transcript , Darwin was convincingly sincere in his account as to why he saw evaluation for the improvement of instruction as so important.

27 And I think it's, um, it's
28 really important if we as principals are committed to the idea
29 of offering the best in educational services to students, and
30 since the teachers are the people that are directly offering
31 those services, then it's important that we work with those
32 teachers so that the services can continually improve.

In my meeting with Darwin prior to the evaluation process, I asked him what he looked for when he evaluated teachers.

60 O. You go into a classroom, and you have to make some
61 judgements about whether what you're seeing is good, or
62 not good, and so on. And I kind of am interested in how
63 one goes about doing that. Um, I guess what are the kind of
64 criteria that are used in deciding, well ( ). How do you
65 come to the decision "This is good practice", or "Needs
66 improvement"?

What I was hoping to begin to discover, was what it was that "counted as" good teaching for Darwin. How did Darwin go about deciding that what he observed was good or poor practice? Darwin began attempting to address that question by by reading the headings in the school division "Teacher Evaluation Framework", an appendix to the

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expectation that all individuals will be treated equally. Evaluation systems must offer equal or fair treatment if they are to be perceived as legitimate" (pg. 37).The issue, then for Natriello, is that evaluation be fair, not that it be collegial.

system's teacher evaluation policy which outlined the division's "Expectations for effective classroom instruction":

D. Well, again in the, in the Oakcroft School Division, we have a goodly number of resources. And, um, Appendix B of our Policy Handbook I guess is one of the resources. And it focuses on ten, if I'm not mistaken, ten different areas that we are, you know, obliged to look at. Would you like me to just give you the broad topics? OK? It talks about teaching strategies, such as daily planning, unit or lesson plans. Um, it talks about the physical classroom environment, lesson presentation, classroom routines, discipline. It talks about evaluation of students. The personal and professional qualities of teachers is another major section that we are to be concerned with. We cover here appearance and communication skills. Um non-conditional acceptance of students. Helpfulness, ability to relate well with students. Teacher personality and enthusiasm for teaching. Knowledge of subject matter, ability to motivate, professional development, relationship with other teachers. And, finally, the third major section, being the educational growth of pupils.

O. Ya.

D. So, large waterfront.

To be read the headings from an administrative guide to evaluation was only a point of departure for what was of real interest: what was it to *Darwin* that counted as good teaching? I tried to get him to become more specific:

O. A huge waterfront, and I guess the interesting thing is, if one takes any one of those areas, I mean if one just takes the last one, which is enormous: the educational growth of pupils. As ( ) how does one come to that judgement, how does one decide about that?

Darwin did not immediately answer the question about how he judged something to further the "educational growth of pupils." Rather, he diverted the discussion to one of procedure: how he narrowed down from the "large waterfront" outlined in the school division document to something more manageable:

93 D. Maybe I should, before I answer that question, Claude, as
94 I'm, as I'm obviously thinking about your question, as I'm
95 talking, because it is, it a difficult question to answer, but
96 one of the purposes of my preconference is to narrow in on
97 an area or areas that a teacher feels a need for some growth
98 or or some feedback, or whatever. I think it's ridiculous to
99 think that in an hour or two you're going to cover all of that,
100 so I try to find out from teachers, you know, "What is it that
101 you feel particularly satisfied with right now? Do you have
102 anything that's gnawing away at you? Might I be of some
103 assistance in, in this matter? I'm not an expert in many
104 things, but I, I can bring, you know, my knowledge and
105 experience to bear, and if that isn't sufficient, we can
106 always look outside." So I try to get the teacher to, to focus
107 in.

However, Darwin said that he does not limit himself to those matters which the teacher expresses concerns about:

107 Then in addition, regardless of what, of what they tell
108 me, I am going to be looking for what I call evidence of
109 effective teaching. I'm going to be looking for evidence of
110 classroom management skills, I'm going to be looking, um,
111 for the rapport that is established between the teacher and the
112 class. Um, that's irrespective of, of what they tell me they
113 would like some help with. Because those are basic, in my
114 estimation, to effectiveness.[28] You have to understand and

[28] Evertson and Holly (1981) argue that such "basic" skills can only be evaluated through classroom observation: classroom observation gives us a view of the climate, rapport, interaction and functioning of the classroom available from no other source." (Pg. 90).

115 practice a reasonable level of science. Um, you have to like
116 children. You have to establish rapport with them. You
117 have to be able to handle the routines that teachers are faced
118 every day, all the way from reading announcements and
119 attendance and getting back things that you marked,and, uh
120 getting the discipline situation solved. Does that answer the
121 question? Those are the kind of things that I'm looking for.

Here Darwin moved away from the bureaucratic stance "this is what policy obliges me to do", or the teacher centred, "Clinical Supervision" correct "what the teacher wants me to do" to "what I as a professional educator believe is good practice."[29] It is here that we came closer to a "real" answer to what counted, for Darwin, as "good teaching". However, for our purpose which is to discover what "really" happens in the teacher evaluation situation, this is still inadequate on two counts: first, we need to examine the actual teacher evaluations that were done to discover if what Darwin said he considered to be important was, in practice what he did concentrate upon. And second, we still do not know what counted as "liking children", or "establishing rapport" or "getting the discipline situation solved". These matters are only observable from an examination of the evaluation materials and transcripts, an example of which will follow below.

Despite his listing a number of factors that he considered to be essential to good teaching, Darwin immediately, in the same sentence in which he speaks of the things that "most good teachers do", expressed ambivalence about whether it is indeed possible to determine such factors with certainty. On the one hand, he quotes a "black box" theory which says that one cannot account for what causes a person to learn, while on the other, repeatedly uses the term "science" to refer to necessary elements of good practice:

123 One of my professors used to call it the "black box" theory,
124 and, uh, what he meant by that is that is that if the black box
125 is the learner, we know that there is teaching that goes into
126 that black box, and then something happens, and then

[29] The "Clinical Supervision" model, upon which Darwin's evaluation practice is based, places much emphasis on evaluation based on teacher's rather than evaluator's priorities. (Goldhammer, R., R. Anderson and R. Krajewski, 1980) Other writers, e.g. Haefele (1981, pg. 51), argue that the focus of the evaluation needs to be negotiated between teacher and evaluator.

something comes out. And, and sometimes you can put the same level of quality into the black box, and, and the product that comes out isn't as good. So, so it's difficult, and I try to ( ). I was going to say, it's difficult, it's impossible to say that this is what you have to do to be an effective teacher. And yet on the other hand, uh, we know enough about teaching and learning to know that there are some things that most good practitioners do in order to be successful. But I certainly try to stay away from going in with a mind-set that good teachers do this and therefore you have to do this if you're going to be a good teacher. Because every classroom that I visit, I find that teachers have their own unique and special ways of, um, performing the science of teaching, and I think that that's part of a teacher's individuality, it's part of their, um, how would the A.T.A., I think the A.T.A. would describe this as the, um, the professional autonomy of teachers. Uh, each teacher has the autonomy to practice the profession in their individual way. And as long as I see that that personal way of delivering services is benefiting students, generally speaking, I, I try to give the teacher the leeway.

In one sentence, then, Darwin speaks of "unique and special ways of . . . performing the science of teaching"[30] (lines 138-140). However, is not the essence of science that procedures are replicable by others, that they are not unique to the "performer"? The whole notion of "performing the science of teaching" is fascinating in its capturing of the paradox: while "some things that most good practitioners do" have been

[30] Darwin's position combines conceptionalizations of teacher as artist and of teacher as professional. The emphasis on the uniqueness of each teacher's practice is reminiscent of the conceptualizations of Eisner (1977) of the teacher as artist, in contrast to various other theorists' conceptionalizations of the teacher, such as craftsperson, professional, bureaucrat, manager or labourer (Darling-Hammond, Wise and Pease 1983, pp. 290-291). Yet he also speaks of teachers' "professional autonomy", as, for example does Armiger (1981), who writes "the evaluator must respect the teacher's right and responsibility to develop professionally on an individual basis" (pg. 298). Of course effectiveness in teaching goes beyond a mere consideration of individual style: the importance of situational factors has been well documented. Lewis (1982) concludes: "In essence, good teaching is a contextual phenomenon." (Pg. 8). Analyses of such contextual factors appear in the literature, e.g. McKenna (1981, pp. 27 -37).

identified, these do not provide necessary and sufficient conditions for good teaching.[31] Darwin shows his sophistication by attempting to account for both sides of the paradox in that while looking for the things that "most good teachers do", he recognizes that the presence of such factors is insufficient to explain success or otherwise in teaching. So what he is looking for is evidence that whatever is done, the "personal way of delivering services", is benefitting students. Of course, this begs the question: how does the observer know that students are benefitting? What is it that counts as evidence of student benefit? Again, it is the examination of the actual evaluation process, and what is commented upon in the observation conferences, that may suggest some answers to that question.

Darwin had observed both an English 13 and an English 10 class.[32] Both these observations were discussed during a single post-observation conference. In the conduct of the conference, Darwin alternated between himself identifying issues he wished to talk about, and asking Wolenko what he wished to focus upon. There was a mix of Wolenko's self evaluation serving as a starting point for elements of the evaluation, and Darwin's focusing on his own observations, and using those as initiators for discussion. At some times, Darwin specifically asked Wolenko for his own appraisal, at others Wolenko volunteered it. In either case, Wolenko's self evaluation was an important aspect of the appraisal process.[33]

Wolenko had created a crossword puzzle that he thought had been a worthwhile activity for the students:

108	W.	Well I think that if I would have made less mistakes, the
109		crossword puzzle was good, because it got them flipping
110		back through their book, and discussing together, and
111		talking in terms of the play, and the characters. And it was a
112		good review and it was a good refresher to remember places

[31] Gage (1978) attempts to resolve the paradox that teaching is both art and science in, and by entitling, his book *The Scientific Basis of the Art of Teaching*.

[32] English 10 is the first level of High School English taken in the university entrance track in Alberta, and is followed by English 20 and 30. English 13 is the first level taken by students in non university entrance programs, and is followed by English 23 and 33.

[33] Prior to the pre-observation conference, Darwin had given Wolenko a self-appraisal form to complete in preparation for the evaluation process. Lewis (1982) pp. 32-4 found that self-evaluation is being increasingly used as part of the formal evaluation process.

and names, and learn a language. Like they're starting to learn some of the Elizabethan terms, and some of the characters' names, and getting the places straight. It so it was more like a little fun/review type of assignment. And I think if I would have had better luck at making a couple of less mistakes, it would have been better. But on the other hand, the kids were able to pick out the mistakes, so that's not so terrible either.

What counted for Wolenko as good teaching here was that the activity had provided an opportunity for the students to review their work, revisit some difficult aspects, such as the names of characters and places and gain greater familiarity with "Elizabethan terms." Darwin took as evidence of good teaching activities which encouraged students to read. The crossword puzzle activity was commended by Darwin as encouraging the students to "skim for information":

D. But they were really involved. And it was a good review. And it did have them digging through their texts. And you can't take anything for granted, especially 13, 23 and 33. If you can get them to read! And when they're going through this, they're definitely reading. Skimming through for information. Look at the skills that they used as they were completing the exercise!

As Wolenko had said (line 108), there had been errors in the crossword puzzle that he had created. Darwin saw the presence of errors as providing an opportunity for good teaching:

D. I was even thinking at one time, that maybe, of course, you could have said to them "Great. Now, can you fix it? There are two bonus marks for any one that can find a mistake and fix it." No, I wouldn't, firstly I wouldn't even worry about the fact that there were mistakes on it, because, you know, if you would have tried to cover up and say "Oh well, that's what I intended", or - that's when a mistake is bad. But when you make a mistake, especially when you've spent that

129 much time preparing it, and it the first time you've done it,
130 and all the kids recognize that. And as you say -

Darwin complimented him on the fact that he had admitted to these. The willingness to admit to having erred thus counted for Darwin as an element of good teaching. The fact that Wolenko had gone to a great deal of effort in preparing the crossword was deemed in itself worthy of commendation, regardless of the quality of the effort, and it was expected that that would in itself be appreciated by the students. Darwin reinforced the notion that hard work was commendable by praising Wolenko for the careful planning of his lesson:

517 D. Yes, I really was impressed again with the planning, the
518 preparation which you put into your lesson. The evidence of
519 evaluation, and your organization. You had the consent
520 forms all ready to go. You had recorded the names of those
521 people that had handed them in.[34] You know, things that, I
522 guess maybe you take for granted, but as an outsider coming
523 in, you really look at it.

Darwin gave Wolenko advice on ways to increase his control of students. Involving the students in the "housekeeping" aspects of classroom management was suggested:

364 I notice that some teachers like [names of
365 teachers] use a lot of student monitors. And I've just started
366 to do this in my class. It seems to me that if we put them, in
367 charge of maybe doing the attendance. Put them in charge of
368 getting the television set. Put them in charge of handing
369 things out, and all that kind of stuff, they're not doing
370 whatever it is that they would normally be doing. So that
371 was another thought that I thought you might have a look at.

[34] The consent forms that were required from parents giving permission for their children to participate in lessons that were being video-taped for purposes of this research.

Keeping them busy with such housekeeping chores would leave students less time to do "whatever it is that they would normally be doing": good teaching is in part seen as keeping students busy, even if with non-academic tasks.

Although the idea of keeping students busy with housekeeping chores was attributed to other members of staff, to a very great extent, what counted as good teaching for Darwin was what Darwin himself practiced in the classroom. Darwin's practice was what counted as good teaching. He presented himself as the master teacher, as the one who could provide the example of good practice. For example, Darwin raised the topic of the importance of the teacher being punctual, even though he acknowledged that Wolenko was in class on time:

356 Another thought is in terms of the beginning of the class,
357 because the beginning of the class is just so difficult. It's,
358 um, you have to arrive on time. You were.

Why, if Wolenko was on time for the observed lesson (line 358), did Darwin raise the issue? The reason is unclear. Perhaps he had noted that Wolenko had not been punctual on other occasions, or that he had had been only barely on time on the observed lesson. One does not know. However, Darwin emphasizes that punctuality is not good enough, the teacher should be early. Again, the rationale for making the claim that to be early is important is that Darwin finds it important to be early with his own (non-academic) classes:

358 But if you
359 arrive late, I think with these kids, if anything, we have to be
360 there three minutes - and I don't know if you've noticed,
361 with myself, that I just have to get out of the classroom
362 down the hallway, because I need three four minutes to just
363 handle stupid things that they ask me to do. So we've got to
364 be there on time.

Referring to the noise in the classroom, Darwin said

382 I guess I'm being a little bit critical of the fact
383 that there's more exuberance there than I, as a teacher, could
384 be comfortable with.

The justification for the criticism is that Darwin "as a teacher" could not be comfortable with the level of noise. Darwin's comfort level is the standard by which the situation is assessed.[35]

"Thinking skills" were briefly mentioned, with Darwin praising Wolenko for encouraging good his students to think by his use of questions:

440 I keep trying
441 to put in an extra plug for teaching thinking skills, because in
442 the last couple of years we've heard so much about that. But
443 you did that very well with the questions.

The justification Darwin gave for focussing on teaching "thinking skills" was that "in the last couple of years we've heard so much about that." Darwin seems to be uncritical in his acceptance of the latest fad. Because "thinking skills" have been so much spoken about, he emphasizes it in his work with his staff. What counts as good teaching, at least in part for Darwin, is what is currently being talked about.

Darwin identified "modelling" as an aspect of Wolenko's teaching that he wished to commend him on:

435 D. Modelling. I wanted to hit on your
436 modelling. You do the best job of that I have even seen.
437 You keep modelling. You read to them something that you

[35] Scriven (1981) criticizes the common use of the evaluator's own practice as the basis for evaluation. "Regardless of the fact that no observations of teaching style can legitimately be used as a basis for inference about the merit of the teaching, the visitor normally believes the contrary. This is often because visitors have their own preferences as to a certain style or have many years of experience in teaching this same type of course or student. Consequently, they believe that not doing it their way, or perhaps in one or two other ways that they approve, is doing it badly" (pg. 251).

438 had written. You write on the blackboard. "This is the way
439 I want you to do it." You review. "How do we handle
440 quotations ( ) ?" The modelling was excellent.

What impressed Darwin about the "modelling" was that Darwin attributed at least in part to the modelling that students were so involved in the lesson:

458 You do much
459 spontaneous modelling. That it's just a natural for you, with
460 those kids you've got. And again, they're taking notes.

461 W. Yeh.

462 D. Like you'd focus and say "I want you to make a point of
463 this", but they're doing it.

What is being commended is the involvement of the the students in the lesson, that they were taking notes before they were specifically asked to do it, that the modelling would seem to be having the effect of engaging the students in the lesson. So it is the student involvement that is the ultimate good. The modelling is a means to achieve that end. Indeed, both Darwin and Wolenko placed great importance on student involvement in lessons as indicators of good teaching. Wolenko described a lesson with English 13 that he had considered to be particularly successful:

12 W. Well, yesterday, what I was happy with, was there more
13 enthusiasm. They seemed alive. They seemed fairly
14 interested. You know, as interested as I guess they could
15 be, considering the respect, probably 20-25 minutes talking,
16 reviewing essay writing and things to look for. They
17 actually took part in the discussion more than I thought they
18 would.

It was "enthusiasm", an impression of being "alive", being "fairly interested" and "taking part in the discussion" more than expected that had given Wolenko reason to be happy with the lesson. Darwin shared Wolenko's view that student involvement was a crucial aspect of a good lesson. To return to a consideration of the crossword puzzle that

Wolenko had created, it was the level of student involvement that that activity had engendered that had especially impressed Darwin:

180 I thought the crossword puzzle
181 was really excellent. If you were to spend ten minutes
182 watching this tape, I think you would be impressed with the
183 level of student participation and involvement. And if there
184 was one thing that I would consider to be more important
185 than anything else, in my observation of teachers, it is the
186 level of student participation. And when you see kids taking
187 this thing, moving their desks together and getting right into
188 it, and flipping through their notes and searching for
189 information, that's top rate.

It is here that Darwin made his clearest statement about what it is that counted, for him, as good teaching - student participation:

183 And if there
184 was one thing that I would consider to be more important
185 than anything else, in my observation of teachers, it is the
186 level of student participation.

This comment is significant in its implications: student participation is "more important than anything else"; more important than the accuracy, utility, inherent worth, of the curriculum; more important than the quality or quantity of student work; and more important than student retention of what has been taught. So long as the students are actively involved, everything else is secondary. Yet the transcript of Darwin's post-observation meeting with Wolenko does reveal that Darwin is concerned with the content of instruction, and is not guilt of what Scriven[36] describes as "methods-madness", the tendency to evaluate instruction only in terms of process factors, ignoring what it is that is actually being presented:

70 D. So you were really focusing - I guess I was wondering
71 about your using statements like "thesis statement" and

[36] Scriven, M. (1981), pg. 252.

"supporting evidence". That's actually what I saw as being your focus. You wanted a clear thesis statement ( ).

W. Although I didn't use the terminology -

D. No. But that's not important. I'm just wondering if in English 13, they come to that terminology like "thesis statements" or details, or is that something that I introduce to them in 23?

W. It's probably something I should do more of, because I sometimes think that, um it bogs them down, that they're - like I sometimes think that certain terminologies and certain things are not so much above them, but it's just a little beyond them. And so -

D. That's why I'm asking. Because I've never really thought about it. I know that when we had that meeting a couple of years ago, the English department, from that meeting I walked away thinking, O.K., if English 30 and 33 students are supposed to understand "thesis statement", "introduction", "conclusion", "supporting evidence", that sort of thing, I'm going to start using them in 23, and so I have. Now how well those students actually understand - I think they do, because they talk about "thesis statement" and "main idea", I guess the terms are somewhat interchangeable.

This discussion about the appropriateness of teaching various technical terms ("thesis statement", "introduction", "conclusion", "supporting evidence"), raises another issue: Darwin was able to engage in this discussion about course content because he was also an English teacher, and had specific knowledge about teaching that type of course. Had he been evaluating in an area where he did not have content expertise, such discussion would have been impossible. The limitations of such necessarily process-limited

evaluations are beyond the scope of this paper. Suffice it to say that I agree with Scriven that such an approach is inadequate.[37]

Conclusions

Three classes of conclusion may be reached from this analysis of the conversations between Darwin and Wolenko, and Darwin and me: conclusions about the beliefs that Darwin held that informed his practice of evaluation; conclusions about why Darwin evaluated teachers, and conclusions about what counted for Darwin as evidence of good teaching.

Beliefs held by Darwin that informed his practice of evaluation.

1. The position of principal: Although he spoke in terms of the teacher and principal being peers, and he expressed support for teachers and principals belonging to a common organization, the tone and much of the content of his talk indicated that he really perceived himself as more manager than colleague.

2. Dichotomy between formative and summative evaluation: Darwin saw the two kinds of evaluation as over-lapping rather than as separate functions that needed to be performed in different ways by different evaluators.

3. The role of self-evaluation: Darwin saw the encouragement of reflectiveness to be an important aspect of the evaluation process. Teachers' self evaluation was important as part of the process of focussing the evaluation, and as a basis for discussion. However, Darwin did not accept the view that the evaluation was to be limited to the teacher's desires as to what was to be evaluated.

Why Darwin evaluated teachers:

1. Legal requirements: Darwin recognized that to evaluate teachers was a requirement of the position of principal mandated by provincial legislation and school district policy.

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[37] Goldhammer, R., R. Anderson and R. Krajewski (1980) pg. 47, provides an example of what I consider to be exaggerated claims of the adequacy of evaluations without the evaluator having the benefit of specific subject expertise.

2. Quality of instruction: Darwin believed that the process of evaluating teachers was necessary to assure and improve the quality of instruction offered in his school.

3. Accountability: Darwin believed that it was essential to evaluate teachers as the principal was liable to be held accountable for dismissal decisions.

4. Staff needs: Darwin believed that teachers felt a need to be evaluated by their principal.

What counted for Darwin as evidence of good teaching.

1. Students' participation and involvement in the lesson: Darwin stated that this was the most important element of good teaching.

2. His own practice: Despite Darwin's saying that there is no one way of teaching that guarantees success or failure, and that teachers have a right to professional autonomy, he nevertheless used his own practice as a yardstick by which to measure the appropriateness of others' teaching.

3. Evidence of planning, preparation and good organization.

4. Activities which encouraged students to review their work.

5. Activities which encouraged students to read.

6. Effective control of student behavior.

7. Keeping students "busy", even if with non-academic tasks.

8. Punctuality.

9. Appropriate content of instruction.

10. Attention to fashionable issues, e.g. the current concern with teaching "thinking skills".

11. The demonstration or modelling of that which was being taught.

12. Modelling hard work, regardless of the actual quality of the work.

13. Statements which demonstrated a willingness to admit to error.

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