Principals' Perceived Supervisory Behaviors Regarding Marginal Teachers in Two States

Bret Range, Ed.D.
University of Wyoming

Paul Hewitt, Ed.D.
University of Arkansas

Suzie Young, Ph.D.
University of Wyoming

This descriptive study used an online survey to determine how principals in two states viewed the supervision of marginal teachers. Principals ranked their own evaluation of the teacher as the most important factor when identifying marginal teachers and relied on informal methods to diagnose marginal teaching. Female principals rated a majority of supervisory methods and data sources as being more useful and the importance of formative assessments and teachers' self-reflection as significantly more important than did male principals. Female principals adopted a procedural style, while males identified with the situational style when working with marginal teachers..

Keywords: *marginal teachers, formative supervision, summative evaluation, principals' perceptions*

INTRODUCTION

The effectiveness of the classroom teacher is viewed as the single greatest factor in improving student achievement (Hanuschek, 2008; Leithwood, Seashore-Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Stronge & Tucker, 2000). In fact, Stronge, Ward, and Grant (2011) concluded that "the common denominator in school improvement and student success is the teacher" (p. 351). Variables like district funding and class size are important to student learning; yet, it is the competency of the classroom teacher that appears to be critical for student success (Cawelti, 1999; Darling-Hammond, 1996; Stronge & Hindman, 2003). Researchers have isolated the behaviors of competent teachers and found they exhibit characteristics such as having high student expectations, managing student behavior in a proactive manner, emphasizing critical thinking skills, routinely assessing student performance, and maximizing instructional time (Glatthorn, Boschee, Whitehead, & Boschee, 2012; Sternberg, 2003; Stronge, 2007; Stronge, Ward, Tucker, & Hindman, 2008). As a result of this link between student success and teacher effectiveness, reforming teacher evaluation has been the focus of both state and federal policymakers following the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (Jacob & Lefgren, 2008; Mead, 2012; NCLB, 2002).

School principals are at the center of teacher evaluation reform because they are charged with supervising, evaluating, and removing ineffective teachers from the profession (Range, Duncan, Scherz, & Haines, 2012; Yariv, 2004). Principals fulfill this charge through formative supervision and summative evaluation (Nolan & Hoover, 2008; Zepeda, 2012b) which requires they routinely visit classrooms, collect data concerning teacher performance, and assign merit to teachers' instructional delivery. Blacklock (2002) and Chait (2010) reported that when principals improve the practice of incompetent teachers or remove them from the profession there should be an immediate and observable positive impact on students' academic performance. In addition to improving student performance on tests, Steshly, Gray, and Frase (2012) argued that principals who do not carry out the effective evaluation of teachers are violating an ethical responsibility and committing "administrative malpractice" (p. 186) that denies students a fundamental right to a quality education.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Related to the challenge of removing incompetent teachers is another difficult task: the identification, supervision, and evaluation of marginal teachers. Identification and intervention with marginal teachers is critically important for principals. Hanushek (2008) stated that "students with ineffective teachers are harmed. Students can probably recover from a single year of having a bottom 5 percent teacher, but a few years might lead to lasting problems" (p. 172). Principals view the supervision of a marginal teacher to be one of the most difficult tasks they must perform and indicate that it requires a disproportionate amount of time with little guarantee of improvement (Ehrgott, Henderson-Sparks, & Sparks, 1993; Fuhr, 1993). According to Tucker (1997), principals have scarce available time to deal with marginal teachers. Many principals evaluate over 20 teachers, meet with parents, discipline students, implement new programs, and meet the demands from their district office. These responsibilities leave little time to adequately address the needs of marginal teachers.

A review of the literature did not readily reveal studies that determined whether male or female principals differ in their views in supervising and evaluating marginal teachers. This lack of research is surprising given past literature reporting the dichotomous leadership styles of male and female supervisors (Eagly, Makhijani, & Klonsky, 1992; Guramatunhu-Mudiwa, & Bolt, 2012; Lee, Smith, & Cioci, 1993; Powell, 1993; Shakeshaft, 2006). To expand the understanding of how male and female supervisors view the challenge of identifying and working with marginal teachers, this study examined the perceptions of male and female principals' about the identification of marginal teachers and the strategies they use to supervise and evaluate them.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical underpinning for this study is supported within the literature concerning formative teacher supervision and gender's nexus with leadership styles (Guramatunhu-Mudiwa & Bolt, 2012; Nolan & Hoover, 2008; Northouse, 2012; Ponticell & Zepeda, 2004; Range et al., 2012; Zepeda, 2012a). Formative supervision is carried out by principals to coach teachers in their professional growth and build their capacity to deliver effective instruction (Range, Scherz, Holt, & Young, 2011; Sullivan & Glanz, 2000). This study focused on Glickman, Gordan, and Ross-Gordon's (2005) description of the directive control approach to formative supervision, a style within their developmental supervision theory. In sum, the authors argue the directive control approach should be used with marginal teachers because many exhibit low developmental levels and may not have the knowledge and awareness to improve their practice without direction. With this style, principals direct all aspects of the supervisory process. Zepeda (2012b) expanded on this notion of the directive control approach by suggesting principals might instead adopt a directive informational approach in which principals share information with marginal teachers and emphasize what must be achieved. Regardless of how the directive approach is carried out by principals when working with marginal teachers, this supervisory stance creates a unique working relationship between principals and teachers in which principals rely less on teacher autonomy and more on coaching and compliance (Daresh, 2001; DiPaola & Hoy, 2008).

The conceptual framework supporting this study's analysis of gender and supervision is supported by Northouse's (2012) model of a leadership labyrinth, a framework to better understand females in leadership positions. Northouse addresses gender and leadership differences concerning style, effectiveness, commitment, motivation, self-promotion, negotiation, and traits. For this study, the researchers utilized the model's focus on style as the lens to view how males and females approach the supervision of marginal teachers. Specifically, style might help explain the data male and female principals collect to detect marginal teachers, the methods by which male and female principals collect data once marginal teachers have been identified, and the approach male and female principals adopt when working with marginal teachers to help them improve.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A marginal teacher is defined by Platt, Tripp, Ogden, and Fraser (2000) as a teacher who is "not quite good enough or of middling quality or second rate" (p. 4). Zepeda (2013) defined marginal teachers as those who "manage to perform just well enough to keep their jobs, to the detriment of student learning" (p. 71). Streshly et al. (2012) believed marginal teachers are consistently low performers who have limited teaching potential. Sweeny and Manatt (1984)

examined data from 750 principals to identify the characteristics of a marginal teacher. They concluded that a marginal teacher is

> one who appears to have sufficient command of subject matter but whose lack of classroom management skills get in the way of student learning. Put more bluntly, the marginal teacher often butchers a lesson, failing to effectively check for understanding, use modeling appropriately, or attend to student motivation. (p. 25)

Henderson-Sparks, Ehrgott, and Sparks (1995) profiled the marginal teacher and concluded that a marginal teacher was characterized as one who has a negative attitude about teaching and exhibits on-going classroom management problems. Often the inability to relate well with others including teachers, parents, and students is viewed as a greater problem than the technical-pedagogical skills of teaching. In a study of teachers who were assigned to assist marginal teachers, Kaye (2004) found that the assigned teachers felt the marginal teacher had a negative effect on the academic, personal, and emotional well-being of students. These teachers also believed that marginal teachers place a disproportionate burden on the resources of the school and have a negative impact on the overall climate at the school.

Supervision and Gender

About 44% of elementary and secondary principals are female, while approximately 75% of the teacher workforce is female (Nogay & Beebe, 2008; Shakeshaft, Brown, Irby, Grogan, & Ballenger, 2007). As a result, both Lee et al. (1993) and Ion and Folch (2009) postulated that, when studying leadership issues, gender interaction and leadership characteristics are critical to understanding group and individual dynamics. Past research has attempted to link gender to overall leadership styles such as participative and democratic leadership (Gilbertson, 1981; Gross & Trask, 1976; Pitner, 1981), transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & Van Engen, 2003), contingent reward (Northouse, 2012), and servant leadership (Fridell, Belcher, & Messner, 2009). The findings of several studies suggest females are more democratic and team oriented than males, who tend to manage more autocratically and are results oriented (Eagly & Johnston, 1990; Helgesen, 1990; Ion & Folch, 2009; Northouse, 2012).

Researchers have found female principals tend to display a more personalized leadership style by communicating with teachers more openly, visiting classrooms more routinely, and being more involved in the workings of schools (Charters & Jovick, 1981; Eckman, 2004; Shakeshaft, 1987). Female principals interact directly with teachers more often than their male counterparts and seem to take a vested interest in the teachers' personal lives (Lee et al., 1993). As a result, some studies argue that female principals focus more on instructional leadership issues by supporting instructional risk taking in classrooms and provide more instructional support to teachers (Guramatunhu-Mudiwa & Bolt, 2012; Shakeshaft, 2006).

When studying gender and teacher supervision, many studies approach the issue through the lens of teachers (Brimblecombe, Ormston, & Shaw, 1996; Guramatunhu-Mudiwa & Bolt, 2012). For example, Lee et al. (1993) found that female teachers feel more empowered when working with female principals while male teachers feel less powerful when working with female principals. Male teachers viewed female principals' oversight as "intrusions into their domain" (p. 170). However, Nogay and Beebe (2008) found what seems to be a contradiction, reporting that male teachers perceived female principals as more effective in supervising and evaluating instruction than male principals. Ballou and Podgursky (1995) reported teachers tend to rate principals of their own sex as more effective. However, none of the studies reviewed focused on the supervision of marginal teachers by male and female principals. As a result, this study attempts to determine if differences exist in how male and female principals view the supervision of marginal teachers.

METHODS

The study followed a descriptive format and used an online survey to measure respondents' attitudes. Three questions guided the study:

1. What data sources do principals use to identify marginal teachers, and how do their views differ by gender?

2. What supervisory methods do principals use when attempting to improve marginal teachers, and how do their views on the methods differ by gender?

3. How do principals working with marginal teachers describe their supervisory styles, and do they differ by gender?

An online survey was distributed to principals in two states: a Rocky Mountain state and a Midwest state. The Rocky Mountain state was mostly rural and sparsely populated. Because of the limited number of principals, the survey was sent to all 281 principals in the state. The Midwest state was significantly larger in population, with two large urban areas and several other medium to large cities. Because of this larger population, a random sample of 1000 principals was identified to receive the survey. After the survey had been distributed, two follow-up emails were sent to non-respondents to serve as a reminder to complete the survey. Of the 281 surveys sent to principals in the Rocky Mountain state, 94 principals responded, with a response rate of 33%. Of the 1000 surveys sent to principals in the Midwestern state, 246 responded, with a response rate of 25%. The total response rate for the study was 27%.

Instrument

The instrument used in this study was adapted, with permission, from a previous inquiry about ineffective teaching (Jankord, 2000). To validate the survey, Jankord piloted the survey with two groups of National Distinguished Principals (NDP) and one panel of experts, including legal counsel to one education association in one state. Because Jankord's study looked at only incompetent teachers with tenure, elements of the survey were modified to meet the needs of this study. In all, the survey included three sections designed to measure principals' perceptions about the importance of data sources when identifying marginal teachers, principals' perceptions about supervisory methods they use to improve marginal teachers, and principals' perceptions about their supervisory relationship with past or current marginal teachers. To establish internal reliability, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated on the three sections of the survey: the supervisory methods section (0.75), the supervisory data sources section (0.78), and the supervisory relationship section (0.60).

The first section of the survey included 10 items where respondents rated each item using a five-point scale (1= rarely important, 2=seldom important, 3= sometimes important, 4= frequently important, 5= almost always important) designed to measure principals' perceptions about the importance of selected data sources when identifying marginal teachers. Items in this section included (a) parent complaints, (b) state achievement tests, (c) standardized achievement tests, (d) formative assessments, (e) teacher made tests, (f) teacher self-evaluation, (g) your evaluation of the teacher, (h) feedback about the teacher from colleagues, (i) students' perceptions about the teacher, and (j) another qualified administrator's observation.

The second section consisted of 10 items where respondents rated each item using a five-point scale (1= rarely useful, 2=seldom useful, 3= sometimes, 4= frequently useful, 5= useful most of the time) designed to measure supervisory methods principals used to improve the capacity of marginal teachers. Supervisory methods included (a) classroom walkthroughs, (b) informal classroom observation, (c) improvement plan for remediation, (d) observation by an instructional coach, (e) formal classroom observation, (f) summative evaluation forms, (g) another administrator's observation, (h) observation by a teacher colleague, (i) student survey results, and (j) parent survey results.

The third section of the survey consisted of six items where respondents rated each item using a five-point Likert scale (1= not typical at all, 2 = slightly typical, 3 = somewhat typical, 4 = generally typical, and 5 = very typical) designed to measure principals perceptions of their working relationships with current or past marginal teachers. The six working relationships were (a) avoidance (the principal avoids confrontation with the teacher), (b) confrontational (the principal directly confronts the teacher), (c) intimidating (the principal attempts to force improvement), (d) procedural (the principal builds a systematic case for improvement), (e) rescuing (the principal convinces the teacher to improve to avoid a worst case scenario), and (f) situational (depends on the teacher's specific needs).

RESULTS

Overall, 158 respondents were male principals, while 145 were female. In the Midwest state, 101 were male principals, 120 were female principals, and 25 did not report their gender. In the Rocky Mountain state, 57 were male principals, 25 were female principals, and 12 did not report their gender. The respondents who did not include their gender were excluded from the study. Overall, 56% of respondents were elementary principals; 26% were high school principals, 12.2% were junior high/middle school principals, and 5.7% supervised a K-12 campus. Respondents' average years in

their current position was 6.36 years, and their average years as a principal was 10. Respondents reported they currently supervised an average of 33 teachers, and of those teachers 10% (3) were marginal.

Data Sources and Gender

Principals were asked to rate the importance of the following data sources when making their decision to address marginal teachers: (a) parent complaints, (b) state achievement tests, (c) standardized achievement tests, (d) formative assessments, (e) teacher made tests, (f) teacher self-evaluation, (g) principals' personal evaluation of the teacher, (h) feedback about the teacher from colleagues, (i) students' perceptions about the teacher, and (j) another qualified administrator's observation. In order to control for an inflated Type I error rate, a Bonferroni adjustment (.05/10) was applied to independent samples t-tests. Table 1 displays the means for these items.

Table 1

Principals' Perceptions about Importance of Data Sources in Identifying Marginal Teachers

Data Source	Overall Gender		Midwest State		Rocky Mountain State	
	Male (n=158)	Female (n=145)	Male (n=101)	Female (n=120)	Male (n=57)	Female (n=25)
Principal's own evaluation of the teacher	4.57	4.58	4.53	4.58	4.63	4.60
Another qualified administrator's observations	3.81	4.05	3.84	4.09	3.75	3.83
Parent complaints	3.45	3.71	3.52	3.70	3.32	3.76
State achievement tests	3.49	3.54	3.46	3.48	3.55	3.80
Standardized achievement tests	3.49	3.50	3.42	3.46	3.63	3.67
Students' perceptions about the teacher	3.46	3.57	3.40	3.51	3.58	3.88
Feedback about the teacher from colleagues	3.29	3.49	3.26	3.47	3.35	3.60
Teacher self-evaluation*^	3.05	3.40	3.02	3.39	3.11	3.46
Formative assessments*^	3.01	3.42	2.99	3.45	3.05	3.29
Teacher-made tests	2.88	3.10	2.88	3.13	2.89	2.92

Note: * denotes a statistically significant difference between Overall males and Overall females at the 0.005 (.05/10) level; ^ denotes a statistically significant difference between Midwest males and Midwest females at the 0.005 (.05/10) level; Scale ranges from 1=rarely important to 5=almost always important

Among all three groups, male and female principals rated their *evaluation of the teacher* as the most important data source when making their decision to provide additional support to a marginal teacher. Similarly, male and female principals in all three categories rated another qualified *administrator's observations* as the second most important data source when identifying marginal teachers, with the exception being the female principals in the Rocky Mountain state who scored *students' perceptions about the teacher* (M=3.88) as the second most important data source. Male and female principals in all three categories rated *teacher-made tests* as the least important data source when

identifying marginal teachers.

Results of the independent samples *t*-tests indicated that overall, female principals believed that *formative assessments* (*t* = 3.94, *p* < 0.000) and *teachers' self evaluation* (*t* = 3.14, *p* < 0.002) were significantly more important than did male principals when making a decision to address marginal teachers. This same pattern was present for the Midwest state, where female principals believed that *formative assessments* (*t* = 3.82, *p* < 0.000) and *teachers' self-evaluations* (*t* = 2.87, *p* < 0.004) were significantly more important than male principals when assessing whether teachers were marginal. In the Rocky Mountain state, while the pattern was similar, there were no significant differences between male and female principals on the importance of various data sources.

Supervisory Methods and Gender

Principals were asked to rate the usefulness of the following 10 methods by which to collect data on marginal teachers: (a) classroom walkthroughs, (b) informal classroom observation, (c) improvement plan for remediation, (d) observation by an instructional coach, (e) formal classroom observation, (f) summative evaluation forms, (g) another administrator's observation, (h) observation by a teacher colleague, (i) student survey results, and (j) parent survey results. Table 2 displays the means for these items. In order to control for an inflated Type I error rate, a Bonferroni adjustment (.05/10) was applied to independent samples *t*-tests.

Table 2

Principals' Perceptions about the Usefulness of Supervisory Methods with Marginal Teachers

Method	Overall Gender		Midwest State		Rocky Mountain State	
	Male (*n*=158)	Female (*n*=145)	Male (*n*=101)	Female (*n*=120)	Male (*n*=57)	Female (*n*=25)
Classroom walkthrough	4.03	4.19	4.04	4.19	4.02	4.20
Informal classroom observation	3.96	4.18	3.95	4.18	3.96	4.21
Improvement plan for remediation	3.89	3.93	3.87	3.96	3.93	3.29
Observation by instructional coach	3.47	3.72	3.40	3.72	3.61	3.72
Formal classroom observation	3.47	3.46	3.34	3.40	3.71	3.76
Summative evaluation forms	3.23	3.26	3.14	3.31	3.38	3.04
Another administrator's observation	3.18	3.30	3.11	3.31	3.30	3.28
Observation by a teacher colleague	2.98	3.26	2.98	3.22	3.61	3.72
Student survey results	2.56	2.64	2.57	2.66	2.54	2.58
Parent survey results	2.41	2.53	2.39	2.53	2.43	2.54

Note: Scale ranges from 1=rarely to 5=most of the time

As shown in Table 2, when data are viewed from the overall perspective and broken down by states, similar patterns become apparent. Male and female principals in all three groups (overall, Midwest state, Rocky Mountain state) rated *classroom walkthroughs* and *informal classroom observations* as the most frequently used methods by which to diagnosis marginal teaching. Male and female principals in all three categories rated *parent survey results* and *student survey results* as the least frequently used methods by which to detect marginal teaching. There were no statistically significant differences between male and female principals in any of the three groups.

Supervisory Style and Gender

Principals were asked to rate how typical the following supervisory styles were when supervising marginal teachers: (a) avoidance, (b) confrontational, (c) intimidating, (d) procedural, (e) rescuing, and (f) situational. Again, to control for an inflated Type I error rate, a Bonferroni adjustment (.05/8) was applied to independent samples t-tests. Table 3 displays the means for these items.

Table 3

Principals' Perceived Supervisory Style with Marginal Teachers Based on Gender

Supervisory Style	Overall Gender		Midwest State		Rocky Mountain State	
	Male (*n*=158)	Female (*n*= 145)	Male (*n*=101)	Female (*n*=120)	Male (*n*=57)	Female (*n*=25)
Situational: Depends on the teacher	3.85	3.96	3.82	3.93	3.91	4.08
Procedural: Build a systematic case for improvement*^	3.80	4.12	3.72	4.06	3.95	4.40
Rescuing: Convince improvement to avoid dismissal	2.96	2.69	2.92	2.79	3.02	2.17
Intimidating: You place pressure to improve	2.55	2.53	2.64	2.48	2.39	2.80
Avoidance: Removed from the teacher	2.29	2.02	2.28	2.01	2.32	2.08
Confrontational: Communication difficult with teacher	2.03	1.72	1.97	1.73	2.14	1.67

Note: * denotes a statistically significant difference between Overall male and Overall females at the 0.006 (.05/8) level; ^ denotes a statistically significant difference between Midwest males and Midwest females at the 0.006 (.05/8) level; scale ranges from 1= not typical to 5 = very typical.

Male principals' overall mean score (M=3.85) and male principals' overall mean score in the Midwest state (M=3.82) rated the *situational* supervisory style as the most typical style used when working with marginal teachers. However, in the Rocky Mountain State, male principals rated the *procedural* supervisory style (M=3.95) as the most preferred when supervising marginal teachers. Female principals in all three categories rated the *procedural* supervisory style as the most typical for working with marginal teachers.

Results of the independent samples t-tests indicated that overall, between female and male principals, female principals preferred the *procedural* (t = 3.34, p < 0.001) supervisory style significantly more than male principals. Moreover, female principals in the Midwest state preferred the *procedural* (t = 2.92, p < 0.004) supervisory style significantly more than did their male counterparts. There were no significant differences in preferences between male and female principals in the Rocky Mountain state.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study sought to measure principals' perceptions about the supervision and evaluation of marginal teachers and to highlight how male and female principals differ concerning this task. Findings can be summarized into three general themes: (1) both male and female principals perceived *their evaluation of the teacher* as the primary data source when making decisions to address marginal teachers; (2) male and female principals primarily use *classroom walkthroughs* and *informal classroom observations* to diagnosis marginal teaching; and (3) the *procedural* supervisory style was selected the most by female principals when addressing marginal teachers, while male principals primarily perceived their style as *situational*.

Male and female principals reported they currently supervised an average of 10% marginal teachers, which is consistent with other literature (Hanushek, 2008; Tucker, 1997), thus acknowledging marginal teachers are present systemwide in schools. The identification of marginal teachers appears to be based on the subjective judgment of the people most closely associated with the teacher. As reported in Table 1, principals ranked, by a substantial margin, their own evaluation of the teacher as the most important data source when identifying a marginal teacher. The observation of another qualified administrator was identified as the second most important data source when identifying a marginal teacher. Following the professional judgment of administrators, the third and fourth ranked data sources were parental complaints and the perceptions of the students about the teacher. Clearly, when it comes to the identification of a marginal teacher, principals rely first on their own judgment, then that of another administrator, followed by those who could be considered the "customer" of the educational process: the parent and the student. Principals' confidence in their own ability to assess teacher effectiveness contradicts what some researchers have reported about this topic (Jacob & Lefgren, 2006). For example, Jacob and Lefgren (2008) found that principals could identify the poorest teachers who produced the smallest gains in student achievement but had difficulty identifying those that were truly marginal.

Additionally, the study sought to determine what supervisory methods were most useful in providing assistance to the marginal teacher. Similar to other studies by Ikemoto, Taliaferro, and Adams (2012) and Yariv (2004, 2009), male and female principals in this study relied on informal supervisory methods to diagnose marginal teaching. These informal techniques included *classroom walkthroughs* and *informal classroom observations*. As reported in Table 2, the classroom walkthrough was ranked by male and female principals in the two states as the most useful supervisory technique. The only minor deviation from this finding was that the female principals in the Rocky Mountain State scored *informal classroom observation* slightly higher than *classroom walkthroughs.* With the exception of the female principals in the Rocky Mountain State, all other principal groups ranked *informal classroom observation* in second place. The findings are important to note because both classroom walkthroughs and informal classroom observations allow principals to evaluate teachers' instruction on a more routine basis, thus painting a clearer picture of teacher effectiveness (Marshal, 2005, 2012b; Yariv, 2009). This also allows principals to observe teacher practice in a natural, unplanned fashion as opposed to formal classroom observations in which teachers have prior knowledge they will be observed (Marshal, 2009, 2012a; Range et al., 2011; Sather, 2009).

When studying the principalship, it is important to consider how gender influences the application of leadership skills (Lee et al., 1993; Shakeshaft et al., 2007). As a result, the primary focus of this study was how male and female principals differed in their supervision and evaluation of marginal teachers and our findings indicate there are differences. When looking at supervisory methods principals utilize in helping marginal teachers, female principals rated all methods expect one, *formal classroom observations*, as more frequently used than male principals. This pattern was similar when looking at data disaggregated by the Midwest and Rocky Mountain states. Furthermore, although it was not statistically significant, female principals rated all data sources used in making decisions to address marginal teachers as more important than did male principals. This pattern of female support concerning the importance of data sources was also present in the Midwest and Rocky Mountain states. Additionally, there were significant differences in how female principals, overall, rated the importance of f*ormative assessments* and *teachers' self-reflection*, with female principals rating these data sources as significantly more important than their male counterparts did. Finally, female principals rated their supervisory style when addressing marginal teachers as more procedural, while males believed their style was *situational*.

What do these findings suggest in regard to gender differences between principals when supervising marginal teachers? Past research on gender differences and the principalship concluded that female principals are more involved in the day-to-day operations of classrooms and have a much clearer focus on teaching and learning than male principals (Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, & Lee, 1982; Lee et al., 1993; Shakeshaft, 1987, 2006). This study would appear to concur because female principals rated both supervisory methods as more useful and data sources as more important than males rated them. Thus, female principals who take a more proactive, involved role in the supervision of marginal teachers might rate both methods and data sources as more important than male principals. It may be that females identify with the procedural style because it requires detailed documentation concerning marginal teachers' performance and adherence to strict timelines. As they become more involved in day-to-day classroom operations, female administrators, more than males, value the supervisory methods and data sources which are the tools they use to build a case for remediation.

Two conclusions can be drawn based on the findings from this study. First, both male and female principals reported they primarily use spontaneous methods to detect marginal teaching, namely classroom walkthroughs and informal observations. Both of these supervisory procedures allow principals to visit teachers' classrooms unannounced, with teachers having no advance notice they will be observed. As a result, school districts and policy makers interested in revamping teacher evaluation procedures should examine policies to ensure they include and emphasize the importance of unannounced, numerous, and short classroom walkthroughs and informal observations as the primary piece to comprehensive teacher evaluation. As Marshal (2012b) posited, teacher evaluation systems that continue to rely on data gleamed from lengthy, formal observations in which teachers know they will be observed are "bogus" and provide inaccurate summative evaluations (p. 23).

Second, as superintendents hire principals, it is important for them to consider how the gender of school leadership might best meet the needs of individual schools and provide a supervisory match. Although findings from this study do not allow for conclusions of causality, when synthesized with past research (Shakeshaft, 1987, 2006), results continue to suggest female principals value instruction and perceive their supervisory role as important. The gender variable might be important for superintendents who seek to hire principals for schools that require strong instructional leadership due to prior lack of instructional focus and low student achievement. Although superintendents cannot legally consider only female principals, superintendents should look at the qualities on an individual basis and be cognizant of research to consider gender as one important variable in evaluating a candidates total hiring potential.

REFERENCES

Ballou, D., & Podgursky, M. (1995). What makes a good principal? How teachers assess the performance of principals. *Economics of Education Review, 14*(3), 243-252.

Blacklock, K. (2002). Dealing with the incompetent teacher. *Principal, 81*(4), 26-28.

Bossert, S. T., Dwyer, D. C., Rowan, B., & Lee, G. V. (1982). The instructional management role of the principal. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 18*(3), 34-64.

Brimblecombe, N., Ormston, M., & Shaw, M. (1996). Gender differences in teacher response to school inspection. *Educational Studies, 22*(1), 27-40.

Cawelti, G. (1999). Improving achievement: Finding research-based practices and programs that boost student achievement. *The American School Board Journal, 186*(7), 34-37.

Chait, R. (2010). *Removing chronically ineffective teachers: Barriers and opportunities*. Washington, DC: Center for American Progress. http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/03/pdf/teacher_dismissal.pdf

Charters, W. W., & Jovick, T. D. (1981). The gender of principals and principal/teacher relations in elementary schools. In P.A. Schmuck, W. W. Charters, Jr., & R. O. Carlson (Eds.), *Educational policy and management: Sex differentials*. New York: Academic Press.

Daresh, J. C. (2001). *Supervision as proactive leadership* (3rd ed.). Prospect Heights, IL; Waveland Heights.

Darling-Hammond, L. (1996). What matters most: A competent teacher for every child. *Phi Delta Kappan, 78*(3), 193-

200.

DiPaola, M. F., & Hoy, W. K. (2008). *Principals improving instruction: Supervision, evaluation, and professional development*. Boston, MA: Pearson.

Eagly, A. H., Johannesen-Schmidt, M. C., & Van Engen, M. L. (2003). Transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles: A meta-analysis comparing women and men. *Journal of Social Issues, 57*(4), 781-797.

Eagly, A. H., & Johnson, B. T. (1990). Gender and leadership style: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin, 108*(2), 233-256.

Eagly, A. H., Makhijani, M. G., & Klonsky, B. G. (1992). Gender and the evaluation of leaders: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 111(1), 3-22.

Eckman, E. (2004). Does gender make a difference? Voices of male and female high school principals. *Planning and Changing, 35*(3/4), 192-208.

Ehrgott, R., Henderson-Sparks, J. C., & Sparks, R. K. (1993, January). *A study of the marginal teacher in California*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the California Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA.

Fridell, M., Belcher, R. N., & Messner, P. E. (2009). Discriminate analysis gender public school principal servant leadership differences. *Leadership and Organization Development Journal, 30*(8), 722-736.

Fuhr, D. L. (1993). Rescuing students from borderline teachers. *Education Digest, 59*(1), 42-45.

Glatthorn, A. A., Boschee, F., Whitehead, B. M., Boschee, B. F. (2012). *Curriculum leadership: Strategies for development and implementation* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Glickman, C. D., Gordan, S. P., & Ross-Gordan, J. M. (2005). *The basic guide to supervision and instructional leadership*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Gilbertson, M. (1981). The influence of gender on the verbal interactions among principals and staff members: An exploratory study. In P. A. Schmuck, W. W. Charters, Jr., & R. O. Carlson (Eds.), *Educational policy and management: Sex differentials*. New York: Academic Press.

Gross, N., & Trask, A. (1976). *The sex factor and the management of schools*. New York: Wiley.

Guramatunhu-Mudiwa, P., & Bolt, L. L. (2012). Does the gender of the school personnel influence perceptions about leadership? *School Leadership and Management, 32*(3), 261-277.

Hanushek, E. A. (2008). Teacher deselection. In D. Goldhaber and J. Hannaway (Eds.), *Creating a new teaching profession* (165-180). Washington, DC: Urban Institute Press.

Helgesen, S. (1990). *The female advantage: Women's ways of leadership*. New York: Doubleday Currency.

Henderson-Sparks, J. C., Ehrgott, R., & Sparks, R. K. (1995). Managing your marginal teachers: A California survey reveals successful strategies for identifying and improving subpar teachers. *Principal, 74*(4), 32-35.

Ikemoto, G., Taliaferro, L., & Adams, E. (2012). P*laymakers: How great principals build and lead great teams of teachers*. New York: NewLeaders. http://www.newleaders.org/newsreports/publications/playmakers/

Ion, G., & Folch, M. T. (2009). Leadership, gender, and organizational structure at Catalonian universities: Case studies. *The International Journal of Learning, 16*(9), 331-342.

Jacob, B. A., & Lefgren, L. (2006). When principals rate teachers. *Education Next, 6*(2), 58-64.

Jacob, B. A., & Lefgren, L. (2008). Can principals identify effective teachers? Evidence on subjective performance evaluation in education. *Journal of Labor Economics, 26*(1), 101-136.

Jankord, B. L. (2000). *A "best of class" study of principals when supervising tenured teachers with unsatisfactory performance*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. (9982727.)

Kaye, E. B. (2004). Turning the tide on marginal teaching. *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision, 19*(3), 234-258.

Lee, V. E., Smith, J. B., & Cioci, M. (1993). Teachers and principals: Gender related perceptions of leadership and power in secondary schools. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 15*(2), 153-180.

Leithwood, K., Seashore Louis, K., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). *How leadership influences student learning.* New York: Wallace Foundation.

Marshal, K. (2012). Fine-tuning teacher evaluation. *Educational Leadership, 70*(3), 50-53.

Marshal, K. (2012). Let's cancel the dog-and-pony show. *Phi Delta Kappan, 94*(3), 19-23.

Marshal, K. (2009). *Rethinking teacher supervision and evaluation: How to work smart, build collaboration, and close the achievement gap.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Marshal, K. (2005). It's time to rethink teacher supervision and evaluation. *Phi Delta Kappan, 86*(10), 727-735.

Mead, S. (2012). *Recent state action on teacher effectiveness: What's in state laws and regulations.* http://bellwethereducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/RSA-Teacher-Effectiveness.pdf

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Pub. L. No. 107-110, 115 Stat. 1425 (2002).

Nogay, K., & Beebe, R. J. (2008). Gender and perceptions: Females as principals. *Journal of School Leadership, 18*(6), 583-602.

Nolan, J. F., & Hoover, L. A. (2008). T*eacher supervision and evaluation: Theory into practice* (2nd ed.). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons.

Northouse, P. G. (2012). *Leadership: theory and practice* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Platt, A. D., Tripp, C. E., Ogden, W. R., & Fraser, R. G. (2000). *The skillful leader: Confronting mediocre teaching.* Acton, MA: Ready About Press.

Pitner, N. J. (1981). Hormones and harems: Are the activities of superintending different for a woman? In P. A. Schmuck, W. W. Charters, Jr., and R. O. Carlson (Eds.), *Educational policy and management: Sex differentials.* New York: Academic Press.

Ponticell, J. A., & Zepeda, S. J. (2004). Confronting well-learned lessons in supervision and evaluation. *NASSP Bulletin, 88*(639), 43-59.

Powell, G. N. (1993). *Women and men in management* (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Range, B. G., Duncan, H. E., Scherz, S. D., & Haines, C. A. (2012). School leaders' perceptions about incompetent teachers: Implications for supervision and evaluation. *NASSP Bulletin, 96*(4), 302-322.

Range, B. G., Scherz, S. D., Holt, C. R., & Young, S. (2011). Supervision and evaluation: The Wyoming perspective. *Educational Assessment, Evaluation, and Accountability, 23*(3), 243-265.

Sather, S. (2009). *Leading professional learning teams: A start-up guide for improving instruction.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Shakeshaft, C. (2006). Gender and educational management. In C. Skelton, B. Francis, and L. Smulyan (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of gender and education* (497-511). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Shakeshaft, C. (1987). *Women in educational administration.* Newbury, CA: Sage.

Shakeshaft, C., Brown, G., Irby, B. J., Grogan, M., & Ballenger, J. (2007). Increasing gender equity in educational leadership. In S. Klein, C. Dwyer, L. Fox, D. Grayson, C. Kramarea, D. Pollard, & B. Richardson (Eds.), H*andbook for achieving gender equity through education* (103-129). New York: Routledge.

Sternberg, R. J. (2003). What is an "expert student"? *Educational Researcher, 32*(8), 5-9.

Steshely, W. A., Gray, S. P., & Frase, L. E. (2012). *The new school management by wandering around.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Stronge, J. H. (2007). *Qualities of effective teachers* (2nd ed.). Alexandria, VA: Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Stronge, J. H., & Hindman, J. L. (2003). Hiring the best teachers. *Educational Leadership, 60*(8), 48-52.

Stronge, J. H., & Tucker, P. D. (2000). *Teacher evaluation and student achievement.* Washington, DC: National Education Association.

Stronge, J. H., Ward, T. J., & Grant, L. W. (2011). What makes good teachers good? A cross-case analysis of the connection between teacher effectiveness and student achievement. *Journal of Teacher Education, 62*(4), 339-355.

Stronge, J. H., Ward, T. J., Tucker, P. D., & Hindman, J. L. (2008). What is the relationship between teacher quality and student achievement? An exploratory study. *Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education, 20*(3-4), 165-184.

Sullivan, S., & Glanz, J. (2000). *Supervision that improves teaching: Strategies and techniques.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Sweeney, J., & Manatt, D. (1984). A team approach to supervising the marginal teacher. *Educational Leadership, 41*(7), 25-27.

Tucker, P. D. (1997). Lake Wobegon: Where all teachers are competent (Or, have we come to terms with the problem of incompetent teachers?). *Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education 11*(2), 103-126.

Yariv, E. (2004). "Challenging" teachers. *Educational Management Administration Quarterly, 32*(2), 149-169.

Yariv, E. (2009). Principals' informal methods for appraising poor-performing teachers. *Educational Assessment, Evaluation, and Accountability, 21*(4), 283-298.

Zepeda, S. J. (2012). *Informal classroom observations on the go: Feedback, discussion, and reflection* (3rd ed.). Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.

Zepeda, S. J. (2012). *Instructional supervision: Applying tools and concepts* (3rd ed.) Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.

Zepeda, S. J. (2013). *The principal as instructional leader: A practical handbook* (3rd ed.). Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.

About the Authors

Bret Range, Ed.D. (brange@uwyo.edu) is an assistant professor in Educational Leadership at the University of Wyoming. His research interests include teacher supervision and evaluation and grade retention. His prior experience **includes 13 years as a principal and teacher in Missouri.**

Paul Hewitt, Ed.D. (phewitt@uark.edu) is an Associate Professor in Educational Leadership at the University of Arkansas. Prior to joining the University of Arkansas, he spent 35 years in public education with 17 years experience as a superintendent in California.

Suzie Young, Ph.D. (eSYoung@uwyo.edu) is a professor of Educational Research and Statistics at the University of Wyoming. She taught in the Colorado public school system until 1992. She earned both of her graduate degrees from the University of Northern Colorado, a Master of Arts degree in Educational Technology and a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology, emphasizing Statistics, Research, and Measurement.