

Classroom Performance Evaluation: Stages and Perspectives For Professional Development of Secondary Teachers in Vietnam

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Abstract

This study examined classroom performance evaluation of secondary teachers in Vietnam. Specially, it sought to determine the possibility of applying supervision into the evaluation for teaching development. Data were collected from interviews with 34 (n=34) participants: ten evaluators and 24 teachers in different school contexts: rural areas, towns, and cities. Data showed considerable impacts: (a) more favorableness on 'evaluation conference' and 'post-conference analysis' among stages, (b) the high appreciation on open discussions—being willing to share ideas co-existing differences in favorableness of feedback of strengths; and (c) being ready to give or receive appropriate feedback while keeping own ideas for a win-win strategy due to the barrier of the perceived power differential. Suggestions were on more emphasis on classroom performance—discussions before and after class classroom observation rather than inspecting teaching dossiers and on feasible strategies for teacher development—supervision should be referred—rather than executing the 'bureaucratic' procedure.

Keywords: classroom performance, evaluation, secondary teachers, professional development.

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Introduction

Recently the highly concerns from the public toward education in Vietnam has become dramatically. Education was considered as the top priority policy since the introduction of economic reform in 1986 (Le, 2009, p. 217). On the other hand, Vietnamese education started connecting with the world. In 1990 Education for All (EFA) was introduced to Vietnamese education. “EFA is considered as a central framework in expanding educational quantities and quality of education in Vietnam” (Kamibeppu, 2009, p. 169). In terms of income levels on student enrollments, when studying enrollment trends in poor and rich provinces by looking at enrollments trends, Holsinger (2009) concludes “there is almost no difference between the rich and poor provinces – a noteworthy accomplishment” (p. 197). In addition, the membership to World Trade Organization of Vietnam in 2007 shows that “Vietnam is now increasingly integrating itself in globalization” (Kamibeppu, 2009, p. 169). As a result, policies in education have been promulgated to improve educational quality. When discussing education reform in Vietnam, Le (2009) states, “various reform measures have been attempted to meet the demand of the labor market in the rapidly changing economy of Vietnam” (Le, 2009, p. 217). However, it is worth noting that only some fields in education have been chosen for a reformation. It as called a stream model in which “policy elites will focus on only a limited number of issues at any given time” and “the focus of decentralization of education in Vietnam was on fiscal decentralization” (Le, 2009, p. 226). Nevertheless, it has been more than a decade since the Law on Education 1998 of Vietnam became effective entire its educational system. There have been tremendous changes in terms of policies on schools, including secondary education.

In K-12 education, standards-based education has introduced and quickly become popular. Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training first promulgated the Standards-based National School in 2001, then amendments were introduced in 2005 and 2010. Its five criteria, including (1) school and its units, (2) administrators, teachers and supporting staff, (3) educational quality, (4) school facilities and educational equipment, and (5) educational socialization, were stated in Amendments Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training (2010a), (2005), and (2001). Remarkably, standards for teachers and school principals have been nationwide implemented. Professional standards for teachers and their standards-based evaluation were introduced in Vietnam in order to evaluate teachers of kindergarten, elementary, and secondary school in 2008, 2007, and 2009, respectively. Professional standards for school principals and their standards-based evaluation were promulgated accordingly. The standards were adapted from standards of other countries, including some states of the United States of America and Australia, United Kingdom, Germany, and China (Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training, 2010b).

In order to improve evaluation and supervision on performance of teachers, during the period of 2003-2005, the FICEV Project (FICEV - Formation des inspecteurs et cards educatifs du Vietnam), supported by the French government, was formulated in Vietnam. The goal of the Project is to train educational administrators and inspectors in teaching methods and evaluation. Evaluating the performance of teachers was guided for supervisors (Nhan dan newspaper, 2005), (FICEV, 2003). Moreover, one of the commonalities between education in Vietnam and France is that schools share the same calendar. All schools follow a common calendar. This

promised perspectives for supervision in Vietnam in order to serve the fact that “education quality and outcomes remain a serious concern” (Le, 2009, p. 217). The aforementioned urged authors to investigate stages on evaluating or supervising the performance of teachers at secondary schools and perspectives on clinical supervision. Specially, it sought to determine the implications for teaching development.

Theoretical framework

Recent studies have suggested methods to measure teachers’ competencies and promote their subsequent effectiveness. There have been two systems of teacher performance evaluation, namely internal and external evaluation is. Internal evaluation is considered formative, while evaluation is considered summative (Christie, Ross, & Klein, 2004). According to Chrysos (2000), the internal includes evaluators who are principals, directors, employers, inspectors, and consultants. In other words, they are members of the institution. On the other hand, the external evaluators are specialists who come outside of the institution. When studying the system of teacher assessment before suggesting a combination of two supervision systems, Collins (2004) states that the system should aim to offer teachers post-evaluative support rather than stopping at the evaluation process. The author also suggests the results from teacher performance evaluation be used to establish a program that can serve both the teachers’ needs as well as school development. The author points out those teaching methods can be implemented based on evaluative reports.

In addition to Blase and Blase’s (1999) suggestion that evaluation can provide teacher with opportunities for professional development, Fenwick (2001) argues that policies for promoting teacher growth are as important as teachers’ own professional development plans. He suggests “teacher self-direction while increasing surveillance” because he assumes that teacher supervision can be “influenced by the public pressure for greater accountability” (p. 402). Performance evaluation can offer activities for teacher development. Some studies indicate that peer assistance and review, mentoring, and coaching can debunk the fear of expressing teaching experiences (Golstein, 2005). Kyriakides, Demetriou, and Charalambous (2006) advance “working process” model, or effectiveness research in evaluation that is appropriate for conducting both summative and formative. Enhancing portfolios in the evaluation of teacher performance can be the capacity to produce a desired result of fostering professional development (Tucker, Stronge, Gareis, & Beers, 2003).

Some researchers suggest evaluators should split formative and summative to enhance collaboration in giving feedback because of the assumption that summative evaluation may cause teachers to feel uncomfortable. Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon (2007) recommends that formative and summative should be separated in teacher evaluation even though they are very necessary. However, Minlanowski (2005) chose two groups to study: (1) a split group being evaluated by a mentor and an evaluator and (2) a combined group being evaluated by one person with two functions as a mentor and a summative evaluator. The author concluded that “[more] developmental assistance is provided to evaluatees than to split the evaluation roles”. Minlanowski (2005) argues that there are no major differences in generating open

discussion after classroom observation in terms of summative or formative, even it is only one person who is in charge of fulfilling two duties.

The purpose of evaluating classroom performance of teachers, in which the foremost aim is to support students to perform successfully on various measures, such as, standardized tests, is to improve instructional skills of teachers. When discussing supervision for student achievement, Zepeda (2007) states, “supervisors are teachers of teachers – of adult professionals with learning needs as varied as those of the students in their classrooms ... there is little debate on the need for supervisor and others to foster the professional growth of teachers”. Supervising teaching performance effectively is one of the administrative strategies that can enhance teacher competence as well as elicit schools to grow due to student achievement. Snow-Geron (2005) argues that supervision as support to both administration (surveillance, regulation, and administration) and teacher professional development (guidance, instruction, and leadership). Eventually, supervision must exist to assist teachers and the foremost goal is to for student with high academic achievement. Therefore, supervising teaching performance is a vital issue for both student achievement and teacher development in schools.

Evaluation in Vietnam and Clinical Supervision

Teacher evaluation in secondary education in Vietnam

Recent studies on teacher evaluation in Vietnam have focused on the goal for professional development. Evaluating a teacher’s instruction is to assist, to foster, and foremost to improve quality of teaching performance (T. T. M. Tran, 2005); to improve teaching performance (B. G. Tran, 2005); to provide solutions to the professional enhancement after emphasizing a support rather than a mere supervision; and to make positive improvements amongst teachers (Ha, 2005). In other words, the purpose of classroom performance evaluation of teachers is to provide formative evaluation to the positive improvement of performance. However, it is worth noting that evaluation is one of powerful ways for teachers to improve their instructions together with seeking for learning opportunities required by law. For example, teachers must have responsibility to constantly study and train in order to raise their quality, ethics, professional and specialty standard and set good examples to the learners (§4, Article 72) and to get training to raise their standard and to be fostered in their specialty (§2, Article 73) (Vietnam National Assembly, 2009).

Although most evaluators are aware of the importance of these stages in the evaluating processes, they may not develop them properly. In an article on enhancing effective teaching in secondary schools, B. G. Tran (2005) shows three weaknesses of evaluators when examining teacher performance: (1) examining tangentially rather than overlooking teaching performance history and observing lesson, (2) focusing on teacher activities much more than evaluating student activities, and (3) leading a “one-way” discussion rather than mutual exchange between the observed teacher and evaluator.

In school, a principal and his assistants are in charge of appraising teachers. The principal delegates authority of supervision his assistants to share his administrative duties. These assistants include his vice principals and department

chairs. A department head, who is also a teacher, is appointed by his school principal to manage his team. In secondary schools, teachers are grouped into teams or subject department according to their specialties or the subject areas. Such groups may include teachers of literature, mathematics, foreign languages, physics, chemistry, biology and physical education, geography, history and politics. In addition, evaluators are from the district and provincial levels. These evaluators are experienced teachers, and principals or vice principals) at secondary schools. They are appointed as inspectors of Bureau of Education and Training (BOET) at district level or inspectors of Department of Education and Training (DOET) at provincial level. They are responsible for evaluating teachers' educational activities by visiting school, observing classrooms, collecting data, and giving evaluation on teacher performances. It is required that the performance of a teachers is appraised twice every five years (Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training, 2004).

Clinical Supervision

Sergiovanni and Starratt (2007) define clinical supervision as “a form of coaching” in which the coach can be either the principal or those who play the role of supervisor. These authors also imply the function of “face-to-face contact with teachers” for the purpose of “improving instruction and increasing professional growth” (pp. 232-233). However, when discussing teachers' “ongoing growth and development,” they promote the use of formative evaluation technique instead of summative ones. They assume that “supervisors rarely change teachers but help them change, a process more suited to formative evaluation” (p. 235).

Goldhammer in his Clinical Model (1969), stated the term “clinical supervision” means, “to convey an image of face-to-face relationships between supervisors and teachers.” Goldhammer (1969) emphasizes that “certain forms of teaching and ego counseling are somewhat similar to clinical supervision, though clinical supervision may involve teachers and supervisors working together in groups” aiming to improve classroom activities by developing “categories of analysis *after* teaching has been observed, rather than beforehand” (pp. 27-28) (Pajak, 1998). In addition, clinical supervision is defined as “the rationale and practice designed to improve the teacher's classroom. The analysis of these data and the relationship between a teacher and a supervisor from the basis of the program, procedures, and strategies designed to promote the students' learning by improving the teacher's classroom behavior” (Oliva & Pawlas, 2001, p. 389).

Sergiovanni and Starratt (2007), and Pajak (1998) introduce five stages of clinical supervision to give more strategies via discussion to improve classroom performance. The stages are (1) “pre-observation conference,” (2) “observation,” (3) “analysis and strategy,” (4) “supervision conference,” and (5) “post-conference analysis.”

Pre-observation conference: According to Goldhammer's Model, a pre-observation conference “provides an opportunity for a teacher to mentally rehearse his or her teaching before acting it” (cited by Pajak, 1993, p. 28). At this stage, a teacher can visualize his or her performance as well as share problems with a supervisor. Setting and discussing teaching standards will make it easier for both the supervisor and the teacher to talk about the goal of the lesson. Caruso and Fawcett (1999)

continue this stage offers “opportunities to discuss serious concerns” (p. 104). For example, the teacher can raise a potential difficulty in his or her coming lesson, that he/she and the supervisor might discuss. Moreover, objectives as well as targets of the lesson that will drive the teacher and student activities offer the supervisor and the teacher a chance better to understand future classroom situations and curriculum as well as instructional issues. These can be considered as “conditions necessary to establish and maintain trust and honest open communication” (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007, p. 68).

Observation: Observing classroom activities offers the supervisor opportunities to get to know their teachers’ areas of competence. It is classroom activities that reflect the teacher’s competences, such as instructing, managing students, and grading during the teaching process. The supervisor needs to utilize a number of approaches to gather teacher performance data sufficiently. Caruso and Fawcett (1999) consider the observation stage as “the link between the plans made during the pre-observation and actual practice” (p. 104). Therefore, while recording teacher performance, the supervisor should base it upon their agreement on the previous stage. There might be unanticipated events that arrive, however. For example, while most teaching strategies will match the requirements of the instructional guidelines, not all the teaching methods will apply and hold students’ attention.

Analysis and strategy: After the observation, the supervisor must make time to analyze data from classroom observations and to generate strategies for giving feedback. This stage allows the supervisor to take time in the process of “sorting and collating” collected data. In other words, this is a stage for converting “the raw data or information collected from the observation into a manageable, meaningful, and sensible form” (Sergiovanni and Starratt, 2007, p. 240). Goldhammer (1969) maintains three reasons to prove the importance of analysis and strategy, namely “the planned pursuit of pre-selected goals,” “the emotional importance of supervision,” and “continuity maintenance;” and suggests that “three principles [should] be applied when selecting specific patterns of teacher behavior for study treatment: 1) saliency, 2) accessibility, and 3) fewness” for the briefest but most sufficient summary (cited by Pajak, 1993, pp. 34-36).

The supervision conference: An honest discussion between the supervisor and the teacher is the main goal of the supervisory conference teacher. Trust is a high component of this phase if truly honest discussion is to occur. At this stage, the supervisor and his or her teacher spend discussion time collaboratively. The teacher will “reflect on the lesson and to share their analyses for the observer to give feedback” (Caruso and Fawcett, 1999, p.104). Sergiovanni and Starratt (2007) propose that the information about the performance in the discussion should emphasize both evaluative and descriptive aspects (p. 240). Furthermore, the conference may be influenced by other factors. Teachers may not necessarily feel comfortable discussing their teaching performance due to the supervisor’s style or a perceived power differential. Sergiovanni and Starratt (2007) indicate that the ways that the supervisors and teachers think and behave towards one another can weaken the benefits from supervising activities, especially during the post-observation conference.

Post-conference analysis: According to Goldhammer's model (1969), this stage provides opportunities for both the supervisor and the teacher to critically review their effectiveness (cited by Pajak, 1993, p. 50). Such consultations must aim to encourage teachers to evaluate their teaching activities, to compare student outcomes with lesson objectives, to analyze their own responsibilities in teaching for improving, and to draw a plan for professional enhancement. Moreover, both the teacher and his or her supervisor have the responsibility to exchange ideas and opinions sincerely and honestly to help both toward professional growth. Additionally, Cunningham and Cordeiro (2006) indicate, "Teacher conferencing can be a powerful vehicle for teacher learning if conducted appropriately. Ideally, teacher conferences would take place both before and after the classroom visit" (p. 211).

There are controversial stances on the importance of these stages. Sergiovanni and Starratt (2007) suppose that a pre-observation conference is considered the most important step among the five. They suggest that before observing classrooms, the supervisor and the teacher should set a conference to discuss the procedures of the lesson, the lesson goals, as well as teaching techniques during the classroom (p. 168). Nevertheless, Pajak cites Goldhammer's ideas that supervision conference is the most vital stage and must not be neglected (p. 38). Though their viewpoints on the importance of the stages are different, these authors ultimately promote guidelines for teachers and supervisors to enhance open discussions.

Four stages of evaluation versus clinical supervision

On fulfillment of the FICEV Project, evaluators utilize standards to appraise teacher performances. Teacher performances must be evaluated objectively and comprehensively to offer consultative advice for promoting their teaching profession. MOET also prescribes steps for evaluating process, such as (1) a preparation for obtaining data about the supervisee's teaching history, current teaching context and observed lessons, (2) an supervision exercise by observing classrooms, examining teaching dossiers, and testing student achievements, (3) a discussion for consulting and promoting teacher competences, (4) a completion by giving a summative appraisal report and suggestions (Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training, 2004). The discussing step is considered as the most important of all due to its consultative and enhancing function.

However, since 2006 there have not been any documents or protocol to require evaluators to separate steps to steps to evaluate teacher performance. There are guidelines for evaluators to follow while fulfill their inspecting teacher performance. Evaluators are required to review personnel documents and teaching dossiers. Class observation and consultation for teacher development are highlighted (Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training, 2006).

On one hand, the purpose of five stages of clinical supervision—"pre-observation conference," "observation," "analysis and strategy," "supervision conference," and "post-conference analysis." is to "increase self awareness and professional autonomy among teachers." (Pajak, 2006, p. 49). Exploring steps to evaluate teachers to determine the possibility of applying supervision into the evaluation for teaching development is worth studying.

Method

The purpose of this study was to explore how classroom evaluation helped teachers to promote their instruction. The authors used a case study research design to examine how teachers, including new and tenured teachers think about the procedures of evaluation. This research study was conducted in Dong Thap province in the Southern Vietnam where recently high speed internet (ADSL) has been equipped to all computer room of high schools. According to Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training (2009)“nearly 24% of Vietnamese (20 million) have computer access, and education and government leaders are exploring how this tool might be used to make secondary education universal in the country” (p. 272).

Table 1. Participants’ background information

Participant: (n=34)	
Role	
Evaluators	10
Teachers	24
Gender	
Male	21
Female	13
Ages	
21-29	5
30-39	21
40-49	6
50+	2

There were thirty four participants (n=34), including ten evaluators and 24 teachers. Twenty one of them were male in comparing with 13 female. In terms of ages, the majority were at the age of 30 to 39 (n=21). Participants who were at the age of 21 to 29 and over 40 years old were five and eight, respectively. Teachers were of all subjects, including, literature, mathematics, English language, physics, chemistry, biology and physical education, geography, history, and politics; and were at least once involved in the teacher supervision procedure. They were representatives for different contexts among schools, such as new founded schools and high quality ones. Evaluators were school principals, vice principals, and educational inspectors at schools and the Department of Education and Training where interviews were conducted.

Face-to-face interviews were conducted in order to explore how teachers and evaluators think about the stages of classroom evaluation. Fraenkel and Wallen (2006) remark, “the purpose of interviewing people is to find out what is on their mind – what they think or how they feel about something” (p. 445). Seidman (2006) indicates, “At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience” (p. 9). Creswell (2003) shows the benefits of interviews that “participants can provide historical information” and researchers can “control over the line of questioning” (p.186). Data were analyzed by describing and grouping into three categories, steps of assessing performance of teachers, clinical supervision, and professional development.

Results

Stages of teacher classroom evaluation

Participants showed their more concern on observation among the steps to evaluate their classroom performance. The ‘observation’ step helped evaluate teacher performance effectively. Mr. Ta. was a school principal in a rural area. He was an evaluator of DOET. He was in charge of evaluating teachers at his school and evaluating teachers at schools which were managed by DOET. Mr. Ta. said that he never separated these two steps when evaluating. The evaluation conference provided teachers opportunities to analyze their teaching activities. Post-conference analysis promoted teacher strength as well as prevents drawback.

Mr. N. was a department head and a provincial evaluator. He stated the ‘supervision conference’ and ‘post-conference analysis’ offered him chances to oversee strong as well as weak points; then he and his teacher were able to plan for better classrooms”.

Most evaluators agree that, in theory, all of the four stages were applied or enhanced properly. However, they believed that it was essential for evaluators to decide on which stages to focus. Ms. D. was a vice principal at a school in a town. She was also an evaluator of DOET. She claimed that depending on teachers’ competencies and the purpose of the evaluation, summative results of evaluation could be used. At official evaluation, an evaluator was required to generate a judge on teacher performance. At school sometimes a school principal would like to check some teaching skills: managing his classroom, applying computers into his or her lessons, and preparing his lesson. A principal might choose to walk in a classroom to collect information. Either official evaluation or a walk-in, observation was for the purpose of supervision conference and post-conference analyses.

Clinical supervision

Participants agreed that only analyzing the data of teaching performance critically were of great help in improving teacher performance. Both teachers and evaluators were willing to ‘inspect’ and analyze their teaching performances. Mr. Nh. was a teacher in a city. He said evaluator’s advice was very valuable because they had a chance to observe many performances so that they were able to give appropriate

advice for future development. Mr. V. was a teacher of social science. He said it was necessary for an evaluator, either a principal or department head, to have discussion with teachers before class, especially with teachers whose subject area was social science. It happened to both experienced teacher and new teachers in finding teaching materials to relate classroom knowledge to real life.

As a teacher, Mr. H. believed the pre-observation stage promotes effective ideas for following up activities. Teachers should have an opportunity to share with evaluators. However, evaluators should not focus on weak points which were discussed before class at pre-observation. Mr. Ta., who was a school leader, claimed that honest or direct discussion was one of ways to promote teachers' democratic rights at schools. Ms. D., a vice principal and an evaluator, proposed her own way that let teachers to talk about their strengths as well as weaknesses instead of deciding feedback and giving a result of evaluation. Ms. Th., a vice principal and provincial evaluator, preferred to take notes with both outstanding features and weakest points, then compared with lesson objectives while discussing follow-up activities for future lesson.

On the other hand, some participants could not agree with discussions before observing class due to such questions. For example, Ms. D. mentioned that provincial inspectors was not allowed to talk to the teacher before supervisions. There was no time for both an evaluator to set up discussions before evaluators.

Professional development

All of the participants expressed a desire to share data on teaching performance honestly. In addition to assuming the importance of teaching dossiers, such as lesson plans and grade books, and other duties in schools, participants express their high expectation on professional development, especially focused on classroom performance. For example, they expressed the opinion that evaluators must have experiences in teaching and be older than teachers so that they can show their qualifications and disseminate them to other teachers.

Furthermore, being trained in supervision skills is one of the first priorities in becoming an evaluator. Ms. Th. excitedly told her challenging story about her first time evaluating a teacher who was older and had more years of teaching. However, evaluators were willing to express their constructive feedback to teachers. Mr. H. was a school principal and evaluator of DOET. He expressed his willingness to help his teachers via evaluation. He stated toward my teachers [colleagues], he provided hearted-left comments in a wish to help teachers grow. To do this, he had to learn supervision skills, sought new teaching techniques from my colleagues. He also learned from teachers and administrators in his school and other schools in order improving his supervisors.

Ms. Ng., a teacher at a rural school, shared her most current performance for evaluation. Her most current class was at the Monthly Teaching Conference of her subject. At her school, the school principal chose on subject to spotlight every month. For example, during the month of Literature subject, there were more activities to improve teaching and learning of Literature. One of most popular activities for teachers was Teaching Conference where a teacher was assigned to teach for other teachers, a department head, and a school principal to observe and evaluate the

performance. At her performance, the observers were his vice principal who was in charge of teacher performance, her department head, and colleagues of other subjects. She had a good opportunity to review her teaching competence. She was more confident due to strengths confirmed by her colleagues on teaching methods, pedagogical styles, and classroom atmosphere. She also found her weaknesses which were from honest and open comments from observers. Especially, the vice principal showed a mistake which she once believed that it was not in the case. Although she was very breathtaking, she learned a lot for improving her teaching performance.

Mr. Hu., a teacher in a city, shared that he was always open and honest to get feedback from colleagues because he thought none was perfect. Once a provincial supervisor came to observe his classroom, he was very confident to teach; however, when evaluated, he found that his performance revealed many weaknesses. For example, he could not get a good grade on relating the lesson to real life while students were very passive. Since then, he realized that he should prepare some daily knowledge to attract students. Also, he should embed social knowledge in order to help students understand and love life, country, and human being more.

Both supervisors and teachers wish to know the professional development via supervision to cooperate for better performances. Otherwise, teachers agree that facilitating discussion skills might decide the 'atmosphere' of sharing ideas.

Mr. Sa excitedly expressed to share his first observed classroom. He said that he was very impressed by one of because it was his very first one to be evaluated. He was a novice teacher. The observers of the classroom were experienced teachers, including a vice female principal who was in charge of teacher performance. After observing his classroom, the vice principal praised that he had gifted ability in teaching, communicating and attracting students; and the class performance was graded with the highest result. He was very satisfied with the result. Having getting to his teacher dormitory, he still felt joyful in his heart. Then, he was more interested in teaching. To be frank, right after his graduation, when he was assigned to teach in a rural area that was very far from his family, he felt so sad, wanted to quit the job. A teacher dormitory was built for teachers who came to rural areas to teach from other areas. Since then, he devoted more time to teaching methods as well as to my subject area. One year later, he became one of excellent teachers of his department. Therefore, he believed that praising and grading teacher performance was very important.

Teachers preferred to have a comfortable discussion with their evaluators. Ms. Tr., a teacher in a rural area, said that she would like my evaluator provide comfortable discussions so that she did not feel she was being tested. Supervision should be a process of giving and receiving teaching information, then discussing the information rather than examining student achievement within one or two observations. Obviously, bias might be inevitable. Mr. Qu., a teacher in a rural area, sadly shared his story. He had mixed feelings when listening to comments from colleagues when his first classroom performance was graded with a below average. The classroom was observed by his principal and his department head. His principal was so powerful to comments while his department head silenced. He believed his department head should explain to the principal rather than keeping silence. When he got home, he burst to cry while telling his mom. Actually, he admitted he had some

limitations. His classroom ran out of time while some terms were not explained adequately. However, his principal assumed that the classroom was evaluated below average because he gave wrong knowledge. He knew his weakness was that he did not know how to respond nicely. He lost his temper, he kept silence, he got upset; then, he accepted to fail to explain. Absolutely different, a year later, a provincial evaluator came to observe and evaluate his two classroom performances. Although one of his performances was run out of time, the provincial evaluator was satisfied. Importantly, the provincial evaluator showed Mr Qu. his strengths to promote. For example, his voice was clear and persuasive. His analysis on poems and terms was deeply profound. The provincial evaluator also demonstrated his weaknesses and solutions to these.

In summary, both teachers and supervisors highly appreciated open discussions. They were willing to share ideas honestly. However, participants—including teachers, department heads, school principals, and evaluators—had different viewpoints on receiving strengths as well as weaknesses regardless their school areas, gender, and ages. Interviews showed strong evidence of their being ready to give or receive appropriate feedback. Foremost in their thoughts, they would like to keep their own ideas.

Discussion

It is mandatory that all evaluators attend courses on evaluation, including supervision, before performing their duties. Together with the evaluators, the teachers who have been trained in the supervision process could play an important role in spreading understanding the stages of the supervision to others. However, most of the teachers have learned the procedure by observing what their evaluators have done. Therefore, they might not have a deep enough understanding of the stages as well as evaluator activity, including the purpose of the supervision.

In general, the aim of teacher evaluation is to (1) “analyze sound strategies for more effective teaching, (2) suggest fulfilling the teaching regulations, (3) promote professional development as well as achieve training” (Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training, 2004). In regards to teachers’ understanding of the procedure or the purpose of the supervision, it is mandatory for all teachers and supervisors to follow the promulgation. Nevertheless, teachers may be willing to get involved in the stages of the supervision when they could be aware of their benefits as well as take advantage of promotions, which they could attain after being evaluated.

Stages of classroom evaluation

Supervising the performance of teachers is utilized for promoting teaching. Both teachers and evaluators pay special attention to the procedures and most of them disagreed with focusing on results or summative evaluation. In other words, participants would like to ‘describe’ the procedures of classrooms aiming for “professional development and instructional improvement,” (formative supervision) rather than judge “all teachers on similar criteria to determine their worthiness, merit, and competence as employees” (summative) (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2007). Participants might be concerned about how the teachers perform in their classes rather than to which category the teachers belong.

On contrary with the positive attitudes toward the applying all stages of supervision, two pieces of data are worth noticing. First, it is challenging to utilize all the stages while evaluating. Ms. D. remarked many provincial evaluators could not 'afford' all stages due to many reasons. They just called to check school schedule, then came to observe and discuss the classroom superficially, and leave teachers. Therefore, they might not work on all the stages. Nevertheless, Mr. B., a teacher in a rural area, confirmed that the provincial evaluators play a very important role in disseminating valuable teaching experiences to the others due to their visiting many schools and mastering supervision skills.

Further, the participants agreed that they like to focus on results of evaluation. Mr. L., a teacher, claimed that he was very concerned about the result of evaluation. The result may support his competition in school and prestige. Actually, according to MOET (2004), the result of evaluation is evidence for appointing a promotion and offering training. As a matter of fact, it is inevitable that teachers experience great pressure from summative supervision. Consequently, summative supervision may be one of reasons. Although teachers show they are willing to get feedback as well as comments, teachers in reality would like to know their 'good' result rather than any advice. Teachers not only feel pleased with high results on their performance, but also can get benefits, such as a promotion. Meanwhile, evaluators are not worried about teacher complaints as well as spend time and energy in generating advice to teachers.

In addition, there are different perspectives on selecting stages to pay more concern; most of the participants agree that all of the four stages of evaluation help teachers improve their teaching. Most of them focus on 'the supervision conference,' and 'post-conference analysis' while the others support the observation activity. In other words, the stages of the procedure have served its purpose properly. However, due to the limitation of time and summative supervision and the target of completing the 'bureaucratic procedure' of the results, some of stages have been ignored.

The 'observation' activity provides evidence for the follow-up activities of 'the supervision conference' and 'post-conference.' Participants, who are concerned about 'the supervision conference and post-conference analysis,' think that these activities offer more benefits to teacher development. In this case, it is not necessary to judge which activities are more important, the point is how teachers can perform better after the procedure, however. For instance, the participants chose the 'observation' from the group of two activities: 'observation and supervision.' Otherwise, they tended to combine the two stages of 'the supervision conference,' and 'post-conference analysis' into one.

Clinical supervision and professional development

There are different perspectives on selecting stages to pay more concern; most participants are interested in 'the supervision conference,' and 'post-conference analysis' and some support the observation activity. However, both teachers and evaluators highly appreciate open discussions. They are willing to share ideas honestly. In terms of procedures for assessing performance of teachers, the MOET (2004) promulgates four duty steps. It is notable that it is challenging to a supervisor to complete so many tasks within a very short time. Evaluators could not have enough time and efforts to read every page in the lesson plan to check date of teaching,

columns of the lesson plan, and time of activities. However, examining teaching dossiers is one of the important duties that an evaluator must follow.

On one hand, it is necessary for both teachers and supervisors to look at teacher performance ‘clinically’ rather than ‘inspectorially.’ Setting up pre-observation is added to provide teachers with chances to solve such difficulties before performing. The issues discussed before class are not used for supervision. Although evaluators must follow the four ‘big’ duties, they are able to focus more on teacher performance. In other words, depending on the position of the supervisor, namely provincial or school supervisor, one of the ‘big’ duties should be emphasized more than others.

Interestingly, the high disagreement on accepting ideas of supervisors demonstrate that both supervisors and teachers are willing to discuss the performances. The viewpoints on the clinical supervision is to “improving instruction and increasing professional growth” with “a form of coaching” (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007, pp. 232-233). Conversely, participants tend to accept the result rather than to discuss feedback. In casual conversations, some teachers show their interest in discussing feedback; however, they might refer to accept while being supervising. It is considerable that teachers should have more opportunity to raise their voice.

Conclusion and Implication

To reach the target of professional development, both evaluators and supervisors need to examine the teacher’s competencies clinically. They should offer more time on classroom performance, emphasizing discussions before and after class, rather than inspecting teaching dossiers. It is mandatory that teachers complete dossiers as a part of their teaching duties. In other words, all teachers have the ability to do. Teachers, however, may not see how they perform as well as their supervisors can. In fact, observing classroom activities offers the supervisor opportunities to know their teachers’ competence. After all, it is classroom activities that reflect teachers’ competences in teaching, managing students, and grading students. Supervisors needs to observe carefully and sufficiently while taking notes on the activities performed, which will be of great help when discussing teachers’ strengths and weaknesses.

Furthermore, while overseeing teacher performances, supervisors are responsible for the ways that teachers help students achieve the curriculum’s desired learning outcomes. While most teaching strategies match the requirements of the instructional guidelines, not all the teaching methods will hold students’ attention. For example, two different teaching approaches of teachers from Sergiovanni and Starratt (2007) imply that “memorization or performing lab experiments” method may not interest the student as much as the “inviting students to enter the world of the subject matter” method (pp. 77-78). Eventually, Sergiovanni and Starratt suggest that teachers need to know “knowledge is a dialogue between the intelligences found in the natural and social worlds and the intelligences of individual knowers” (p. 74). Students can achieve academic knowledge from teacher performance via teaching methods rather than teacher dossiers.

On contrast, it is necessary to emphasize that the supervisor may not generate an effective 'teacher development plan' successfully if he misses teacher background information that the pre-observation offers. Before supervising teachers, the supervisor needs to know about his teacher's teaching history as well as his or her current students' data. This pre' stage helps the supervisor visualize the classrooms and the teachers' performances. Viewing regulations as well as documents related to curriculum and instructional issues is also essential for the supervisor to evaluate teachers. Setting and discussing teaching standards will make it easier for both the supervisor and the teacher to talk about the lesson goal.

Moreover, these standards can provide a concrete for the supervisor to review his or her viewpoints and rank teachers into categories (summative supervision) while objectives as well as targets of the lesson which lead the teacher and student activities offer the supervisor and the teacher a chance to know future classrooms and the curriculum as well as instructional issues. These can be considered as "conditions necessary to establish and maintain trust and honest open communication," or "the supervisors need to discuss the ground rules ahead of time" (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007, p. 68). It is worth noting that following the procedure means to find, to analyze, to discuss, and to generate proactive feasible strategies for teacher development rather than to execute the 'bureaucratic' procedure.

Further, both the supervisor and his teacher should be willing to offer 'real' honest discussions. An honest discussion is the main goal of the supervision. In theory, both the evaluator and his teacher should be willing to share constructive ideas, but their being able to give and receive honest comments is challenging due to the barrier of the perceived power differential. To work it out, both the supervisor and his teacher must understand the goal of honest discussion, or they must be on the same wavelength towards the formative supervision. By understanding the supervision procedure, teachers will know their roles as well as how they may cooperate with their supervisor. Although all teachers were trained with pedagogical skills as well as understanding of evaluating teacher classroom performance when they were students at colleges of education, it is essential for teachers to get to know about the procedure. They can read documents related to the procedure of the supervision; the school principal must introduce the procedure to them.

In addition, supervisors must play key roles in providing open discussion, especially when there are more colleagues observing the class and the conference, because they mastered supervision skills as well as subject areas. Skills to facilitating the conference with many teachers are more important. For example, teachers are more comfortable when their ideas are listened. However, others may prefer teachers evaluate themselves first; then, supervisors gives feed back and the result.

Importantly, some supervisors may choose the procedure: (1) the teacher presents the objectives of the lesson, and his self-supervision; (2) the young teachers with less teaching experiences should be the first to raise ideas, followed by more experienced teachers; and (3) the supervisor should be the last person giving comments. This order encourages the younger teachers to speak up because if the more experienced teachers generate viewpoints first, the younger teachers may not feel they have better ideas to offer. On the other hand, some younger teachers can see more strengths than weaknesses, so they may not start giving ideas easily and point

out limitations to solve. In other words, starting a ‘positive climate’ and facilitating conference sincerely decides the ‘real’ honest discussions. Supervisors need to consider teacher age, gender, or years of teaching to invite to speak.

Teachers should have more ‘channels’ of receiving feedback from their teaching performance. Together with examining teacher supervision from the school principal, reviewing student grade before the supervision, and testing student academic achievement after class observation, asking student attitudes towards teacher performance by doing survey should be embedded into the supervision process. First, the result of the test would report what students would have achieved at the point or the duration of the supervision time rather than the process of teaching and learning. The test may check whether what students had learned before class, or what students have learned when being observed. The survey for collecting student ideas should be an effective channel of analyzing teacher performance. This provides supervisors with more information about teachers.

Although students are considered as ‘knowledge receivers,’ who, according to traditional Vietnamese culture, can ‘learn’ rather than ‘give’ comments; the survey helps students express their learning feedback. Teachers are considered as scholars, whose job is “not to tell the public what it wants to hear, but to ‘let the facts speak for them’” (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007, p. 75). What students expressed in the survey is considered as input from the public. Furthermore, educators agree that the student-centered goals must be promoted in schools so that students have more chances to obtain academic achievement. In other words, all school activities must be for student benefits. Getting feedback from students is one of the pedagogical techniques to enhance that role. In addition, students feel they are respected in their learning process. Teachers may feel ashamed and less respected because students have right to evaluate their teachers. However, the survey supplies extra, valuable data for both supervisors and teachers themselves to see how their teaching performance actually is seen by students. In other words, teachers may wish to use a camera to record their work for own supervision, or school leaders may utilize student surveys to evaluate teachers; however these should not replace the supervisor’s roles in the supervision process for professional growth at school.

In conclusion, although “Supervision of teachers’ performance is a very complex and imperfect art that, in practice, few have mastered” (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007, p. 67), with flexible overseeing strategies from the above recommendations, the researcher believes that supervisors can reduce complications, aim to prevent conflicts, and offer teachers skills to enable effective classrooms that will serve better student achievement. Improving student learning and teaching strategies is the aim of supervision. A supervisor can be considered as successful when he/she can enhance his/her professionalism to pursue the goal satisfying the public’s high expectation. More important is that both teachers and supervisors must be willing to fulfill their goal: students can learn best when their teachers and supervisors dare to be honest and wholehearted in giving and receiving constructive feedback for better classroom performance.

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