Global Trends in the Use of Teacher Evaluation for School Improvement: Implications for South East Asia’s Education Systems

Dr. Philip Hallinger
Professor
Chulalongkorn University
hallinger@gmail.com
“I believe that a teacher lives on and on through the lives of her students. Good teaching lasts forever and the teacher is immortal.”

Jesse Stuart (1937)

*To Teach, To Love*

www.jsfbooks.com/
My Background

- Studied instructional leadership and Teacher Evaluation for 35+ years
- Worked as a teacher, administrator and researcher for 25 years in Asia
- Trained more than 15,000 principals from: Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, China, Malaysia, Philippines etc.
- Designed and used a system of Teacher Evaluation as an improvement strategy while Dean at a university in Thailand
Context of Global Accountability in Education

- Aimed at **education quality**
- Quality increasingly measured by **student learning** results
- Trend of **policy borrowing** by Asian education systems from Western societies
- **Teacher evaluation** is the latest in a series of Western education policy fashions to arrive in East Asia
Teacher Evaluation and Supervision: Definitions

- **Teacher evaluation**: ‘formal assessment of a teacher by an administrator conducted with the intention of drawing conclusions about his/her instructional performance for the purpose of making employment decisions’.

- **Instructional supervision**: ‘growth-oriented coaching conducted by administrators, supervisors or peers in which observation data gathered are not used in making employment decision’.
Teacher Evaluation: Rationale and Assumptions

- Variations in the quality of teachers are associated with differences in the learning gains of students.
- Teaching quality is subject to reliable & valid measurement capable of distinguishing the performance of individual teachers with respect to the achievement of their students.
- School administrators are able and willing to use TE to enhance teacher quality and remove poor performers.
Teacher Evaluation:
Strategic Drivers

- Teacher evaluations will ‘weed out’ teachers who fail to produce positive effects on student learning.
- Evaluations will provide teachers with meaningful feedback, resulting in enhanced quality of instruction and student learning.
- Teacher evaluation will contribute to a results-oriented school culture.
Teacher Evaluation: Historical Overview

- Traditionally focused on procedures rather than on student learning
- Used ‘high inference data’ from checklists based on a limited sample of class observation (if any)
- Little differentiation in teacher performance evaluations in a school
- Administrative decisions constrained by union contracts and laws
- Difficult and expensive to terminate poor teachers
- TE as formalistic and ritualistic
Educators’ Views of Teacher Evaluation

- Policymakers see TE as a useful tool for enhancing performance.
- System level leaders see TE as a necessary tool that creates headaches.
- Principals strongly dislike the time needed to perform Te’s and do what they can to limit the relational damage it causes.
- Teachers view TE’s as unfair, biased, non-transparent, and of little benefit or consequence.
Teacher Evaluation:
New Generation Models

- Designed around ‘observable standards’ designed to enhance the quality of administrator judgments of teacher effectiveness
- Administrators collect ‘low inference’ data on teacher behavior through observations and compare the results against the standards
- Evaluations often include data on the teacher’s students’ test gains over the preceding year using ‘value-added measures' (VAMs)
- VAMs measure the individual teacher’s impact on his/her students’ learning during the prior year
Value-Added Measures (VAMs)  
Is this how we should rate teachers?
Indirect Evidence on the Use of Teacher Evaluation for School Improvement

- Historically studies of teacher evaluation have not linked TE with change in teacher behavior (see Bridges, Wise, Darling-Hammond, McLaughlin)

- In the past 50 years no reviews of research on factors that impact student learning have ever identified teacher evaluation as a high or even moderate impact improvement strategy (see Hawley, Hattie, Walberg etc.)
Direct Evidence on the Impact of New Generation Models of Teacher Evaluation

- **There is no empirical evidence that new generation TE increases teacher quality/capacity or future growth in student learning.**

- Literature on new generation teacher evaluation is characterized by overly optimistic interpretations of studies and 'faith' in the underlying policy logic of holding teachers accountable for results.

- Efforts to translate 'academic research' on teacher effectiveness into practical tools for monitoring performance of individual teachers fail to meet technical and administrative requirements for this task.

- There are numerous reasons why the administrators responsible for teacher evaluation find it difficult at best, and counter-productive at worst, to intensify their efforts at teacher evaluation.
Conditions Required for Teacher Evaluation to Meet its Strategic Goals

- Endorsed ‘teaching standards’ against which teaching performance can be assessed.
- A strong system of teacher preparation and professional development.
- A reasonable surplus supply of capable teachers.
- A substantial cadre of strong instructional leaders who can be trained to produce reliable and valid evaluations of teachers.
- A performance-based system of teacher compensation that differentiates teacher salaries as a means of offering incentives for teachers.
- A legal framework that enables the removal of poor teachers without undue costs.
- Financial resources to support training of school leaders and support personnel in the use of new data/standards-based methods of teacher evaluation.
- System tests are aligned to the curriculum and a technical support system exists capable of managing the information systems needed to produce VAMs.

ALL of these conditions must be present for TE to possibly achieve a positive effect.
Teacher Evaluation: Cost-effectiveness

Financial Costs

- Training of observers
- Design and management of information systems
- Salary differentiation
- Opportunity costs of investing in other strategies

Other Costs

- Admin time making observations, conferencing and writing reports
- Time spent in removal process
- Costs of increased staff conflict

\[ CE = \left( \frac{Cost_{New} - Cost_{Old}}{Effect_{New} - Effect_{Old}} \right) \]
Conclusions

- Adoption of new generation TE models in USA/UK results from accountability pressure
- A strong ‘policy logic’ supports TE based on teacher effectiveness research
- But no evidence on past or New Gen TE models find change in teacher quality or student learning
- Advocates ignore the conditions and costs needed for success
Implications for Education Systems in South East Asia

- In many ASEAN nations teachers are gov’t officers making it difficult to remove staff.
- Job security is a key ‘attractor’ for teachers in ASEAN societies.
- Preservice teacher preparation varies widely in quality and we lack a surplus of high quality teachers.
- Lack a strong base of instructional leaders to implement this approach.
- Cultural norms of harmony and compromise do not support ‘harsh’ personal accountability measures.
Recommendations: Clearly Define the Problem

- First consider if this strategy is suitable for your education system.
- SE Asian societies lack the conditions to make this strategy either effective or cost-effective.
- Begin by defining the nature of your ‘system’s problem’.
- Then assess your system’s ‘readiness’ to implement this or other approaches.
- Do not adopt it because it is the latest imported Western fashion.
Recommendations:
Select Appropriate Solution Strategies

- Develop **clear system standards** for quality instruction for teachers
- Reinforce the professional image of teaching to attract a larger pool of highly qualified teachers
- Strengthen **pre-service and in-service teacher training**
- Strengthen the training of school principals in **instructional leadership**
- Focus on enhancing the **instructional supervision and coaching skills** of principals and middle level school leaders
Thank you

Professor Philip Hallinger
hallinger@gmail.com