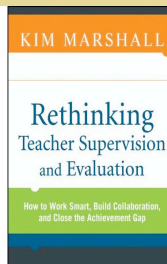




# THE MAIN IDEA

*current education book summaries*



File: Teacher  
Supervision

## Rethinking Teacher Supervision and Evaluation: How to Work Smart, Build Collaboration, and Close the Achievement Gap

By Kim Marshall (Jossey-Bass, 2009)

### S.O.S. (A Summary Of the Summary)

*The main ideas of the book are:*

- Our current approach to supervising and evaluating teachers does not improve student achievement.
- We need to drastically rethink our current supervision and evaluation model and replace it with a new four-pronged approach that actually improves teaching and learning.

*Why I chose this book:*

This is absolutely the best book that has been written about supervision in a while. Why? Because it broadens and redefines the definition of supervision and evaluation and links them to student achievement. Kim Marshall, whose work is well-grounded in both research and extensive experience, proposes a new model for supervision and evaluation that involves four parts:

- mini-observations
- “backwards” curriculum planning
- interim assessment analysis
- teacher evaluation rubrics

Instead of the principal playing “gotcha,” in Marshall’s new model of supervision, the principal and teacher are partners in bringing first-rate instruction to every student.

### The Scoop (In this summary you will learn...)

✓ *The reasons traditional supervision and evaluation fail to improve teaching and learning*

Principals observe a teacher’s dog-and-pony show, write a time-consuming evaluation, and the teacher shrugs it off.

✓ *How to conduct effective mini-observations and follow-up conversations*

Instead of observing one full lesson a year, imagine the impact of ongoing observations, feedback, and real dialogue.

✓ *How the principal can be involved in and monitor curriculum planning*

Only by being involved in curricular design can principals truly monitor the instruction taking place in classrooms.

✓ *How principals can actually include student learning in their supervision and evaluation conversations*

Interim assessments finally provide an entry-point for principals to get involved in discussions about student results.

✓ *How to save time while having a more profound effect on teaching through end-of-year teacher evaluation rubrics*

Principals can save time and actually impact student achievement more with teacher rubrics.

✓ *How to make immediate use of the book’s ideas with The Main Idea’s professional development suggestions*

## Introduction – Why Traditional Supervision and Evaluation Just Don't Work

In schools we have always assumed that one of the best ways to improve teaching is to supervise and evaluate teachers. But the reality is that despite the long hours of classroom visits and write-ups, this approach has *very little* impact on teaching and less on student achievement. Kim Marshall frequently asks groups of administrators to remember when they were teachers and to raise their hands if an evaluation ever significantly impacted their teaching. Only about 5 percent of his audience usually raises a hand. It is deeply troubling that the way principals supervise and evaluate teachers – which eats up a great deal of their time – simply does not improve classroom teaching. This is more disturbing given that research says the most important factor in student achievement is the quality of teacher instruction.

If our old model of supervision and evaluation isn't effective, what is? Through a combination of his personal experience, extensive research, and close observation of many effective and ineffective schools, Marshall has come up with a new approach to supervision and evaluation that is much more effective at improving teaching and learning. This model has four interconnected components:

1. **Mini-observations** – conducting short, unannounced visits followed by feedback
2. **Curriculum planning** – being much more involved with teacher teams in curriculum planning
3. **Interim assessments** – working with teacher teams to analyze interim assessment results
4. **End-of-year rubric evaluations** – using rubrics for end-of-year teacher evaluations

Implementing this new approach involves a fundamental shift in the way that administrators interact with teachers. Below are some examples of the types of changes that would occur:

- From periodically evaluating teaching to continuously analyzing *learning*
- From very few announced visits to frequent *unannounced* visits
- From guarded, inauthentic one-way communication with teachers to authentic *two-way discussions* about the observation
- From the administrators doing most of the work to *teachers taking responsibility* for improving their own teaching
- From evaluating individual lessons to supervising the effectiveness of *curriculum units*
- From time-consuming evaluations to streamlined *rubrics*

### Reasons Why the Traditional Model of Supervision and Evaluation Does Not Improve Student Learning

Conventional *supervision* is defined as observing and coaching teachers during the year while *evaluation* consists of a summative assessment toward the end of the school year, usually for teachers' personnel files. Consider the following examples from real-life:

- A principal boasts he spends two hours visiting all 17 of his teachers' classrooms daily – and he does. However, when teachers are asked about the feedback they get, they say the principal doesn't talk to them about what he sees.
- A principal receives a complaint about a history teacher's discipline problems. She is overwhelmed and rarely observes. When she conducts her formal observation, the teacher's students are well-behaved and the principal must give the teacher a satisfactory rating.
- A principal spends four entire weekends in the spring writing up evaluations. He puts them in teachers' mailboxes asking if anyone wants to talk before the deadline. The teachers sign the evaluations but no one responds and there is no discussion.
- A teacher has good classroom management and is well-liked, but her students perform poorly on standardized tests. When the principal brings up the scores, the teacher complains about getting the "bad class" and the union representative reminds the principal that a teacher's evaluation may not mention test results.

These troubling examples are representative of some of the key ways that supervision and evaluation fall short. Below are reasons that supervision and evaluation have *not* been a powerful force in improving instruction:

#### **1. The principal sees a minuscule fraction of actual teaching time.**

Given that a teacher has about five classes a day for 180 days, and a principal thoroughly evaluates only one of those 900 classes, this means the principal evaluates only about 0.1 percent of a teacher's instruction for the year!

#### **2. Teachers often put on a dog-and-pony show.**

Teachers put on their best clothes and showcase their best lessons. This is not a snapshot of a teacher's typical teaching. Preannounced visits are useless. Imagine a restaurant being given a warning that the Board of Health was coming for a visit.

#### **3. The principal's presence changes classroom dynamics.**

If principals don't visit often, students will sit up straighter and behave better, again, making it impossible to observe a typical class.

#### **4. A principal can miss the bigger picture in a write-up.**

Some districts require that principals provide detailed narratives when they observe. Writing frantically makes it easy to miss the big picture because it is difficult to walk around, observe students working, and examine the learning. Furthermore, these detailed write-ups of a single lesson do not address big picture questions such as: *What unit is this a part of? How does this align with state standards? How will students be assessed?* Unit plans reveal a lot more than individual lessons.

**5. Many evaluation forms are cumbersome and legalistic, making it difficult to give effective feedback.**

Detailed checklists are often simplistic and miss important components of teaching and learning. The district’s goal is to provide a document that is arbitration-proof. These documents do not lead to authentic discussions between principals and teachers.

**6. Teacher ratings are limited and don’t guide improvement.**

Many districts have only a few ratings (e.g., Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory). These ratings do not help teachers aspire to do better. Furthermore, they are inflated because practically all teachers are rated Satisfactory. Below are a few examples:

<i>Denver (2005/06 – 2007/08)</i>	<i>Chicago (2003/04 – 2007/08)</i>
• Satisfactory: 2,374 • Unsatisfactory: 32	• Superior: 25,332 • Excellent: 9,176 • Satisfactory: 2,232 • Unsatisfactory: 149

**7. Critical evaluations can shut down adult learning or be shrugged off.**

Teachers often react defensively to criticism. They have fears and feel demeaned. Further, the process goes against what we know about how adults learn. The feedback is one-way and the principal owns it, not the teachers. This leads teachers to reject the feedback.

**8. Some principals don’t confront bad or mediocre teaching.**

Leaders often feel the need to be liked or at least keep the peace. This prevents them from confronting inadequate teaching. Furthermore, it takes great skill to give feedback in a way that the teacher will hear it.

**9. Many principals are too harried to do effective evaluations.**

Day-to-day operational responsibilities are often so great that principals do not have the energy or time to write effective evaluations.

**10. The focus of evaluation is on pleasing the principal, not student learning.**

For teachers, the goal of an evaluation is to get a “good grade.” Authentic conversations about whether students are learning rarely occur and it is even rarer to discuss student results. If anything, the focus is on the *process* of teaching, not the results.

These troubling examples support the idea that we need to drastically rethink the way we conduct supervision and evaluation. Instead we need a new approach in which principals and teachers work together to improve teacher practice so it results in improved student achievement. In order to do this, Marshall suggests a new model of supervision and evaluation with four components: 1) mini-observations, 2) curriculum planning, 3) interim assessments, and 4) teacher evaluation rubrics. Each section of the summary describes one of the components in more depth.

## **The 1st Component – Mini-Observations**

Marshall stumbled upon the idea of “mini-observations” by fits and starts. In his first few weeks as principal, he observed classes and wrote several-page write-ups. However, he was banned from doing this when the union representative filed a grievance and won. Then he tried to visit all thirty-nine of his teachers every day *without* writing anything up. Marshall couldn’t possibly remember what he saw, let alone catch up with thirty-nine teachers every day! Even when this number settled down to a more realistic six a day, he still rarely gave meaningful feedback, had no systematic approach to visiting classes, and had few authentic conversations with teachers. He was still caught in the frenetic pace of a principal, something he calls *Hyperactive Superficial Principal Syndrome*. He was constantly in demand – a fight in the cafeteria, a pigeon caught in the corridor, a paraprofessional having a seizure – and while these activities made him feel important, he knew he wasn’t dealing with the most important issue of all: *teaching and learning*. Given all the distractions and demands of the job, is it even possible for a principal to be an instructional leader?

In 1993, when teachers at Marshall’s school, Mather Elementary, complained that they weren’t feeling appreciated, an idea was born. Marshall thought that, given that teachers need positive feedback, and it must be authentic so they don’t see it as false praise, and given that teachers also need constructive criticism to improve their teaching, he would attempt to conduct what he called, “mini-observations.” These are brief, frequent, unannounced visits followed by prompt, low-key feedback with the goal of being open and having a two-way dialogue about teaching and learning. Then, in his seventh year as principal, he briefed everyone in the school newsletter (the *Mather Memo*) and began visiting four teachers a day with the goal of finishing one cycle of the staff every two weeks. With this pace he would see each teacher nineteen times over the course of the year. However, this did not happen without a glitch. Marshall had a great deal of trouble getting into classes. He was nervous (*What if I don’t have anything intelligent to say?*), he was stuck in his old rut of rushing around solving problems, and he knew teachers were ambivalent about having him in their classrooms. He started slowly and for his first two cycles of observations he gave teachers *only* compliments. Teachers felt good about getting a specific compliment from the boss. It wasn’t always easy to find the time to give face-to-face feedback. At times this happened in the classroom, during a break, or even in front of a colleague (this worked because these initial comments were all positive). He felt it was a lot less threatening to give this feedback standing up rather than in his office.

It was only after two full cycles of visiting all teachers twice that he began to give specific constructive criticism. He suggested that one teacher use a firmer tone to get students to pay attention and he told another that a student was lost and not getting help. After several cycles of visits and feedback, Marshall realized that his initial feedback usually fell into one of the following categories: praise (for an effective practice), reinforcement (for an area previously discussed), suggestions (for a strategy to try), or criticism coupled with a suggestion (often with the confession that he had also made the same mistake as a teacher). After sharing his initial observation, the teacher and Marshall would often get into a longer discussion that involved an increasing amount of give-and-take. Slowly, his comments were seen less as those from boss to employee and rather as part of an ongoing discussion of teaching and learning.

While he sometimes was able to block out a whole period for visitations, there were usually many interruptions. What he found most useful was to squeeze in a visit when he had another errand to run – if he was already on the third floor he’d try to visit a teacher or two there. What helped him fulfill his goal of four visits a day was reading Stephen Covey’s *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. Covey writes that people set aside activities that are *important* but *not urgent* for activities that are *urgent* but *not necessarily important*. If he fell behind on his mini-observations, this wasn’t an urgent problem, but it was certainly important – he was the only person giving teachers any feedback. After a day with four or five solid visits, Marshall began to feel like a real principal. Furthermore, the knowledge he gained from these observations was incredibly useful when he met with groups of teachers, parents, and administrators: he was the only one in the school who had such deep knowledge about what was occurring in the classrooms.

**Effective Implementation of Mini-Observations**

From his own extensive experience, Marshall admits that it is possible to go through the motions of mini-observations without actually improving teaching and learning. This can happen if the principal makes too few visits to have productive conversations with teachers, if the principal doesn’t stay long enough in classrooms or know what to look for, fails to give feedback in an effective way, or for other reasons. To avoid these pitfalls, below is a list of guidelines to help ensure the successful implementation of mini-observations.

1. **Stay five to ten minutes** – While critics may not believe you can see anything in five minutes, usually this is plenty of time to take note of an important teaching issue to discuss with a teacher. Furthermore, after walking into a classroom and absorbing the initial flood of new information, after about five minutes, there is less and less new information. Given the busy life of a principal, it becomes an inefficient use of time to stay longer than ten minutes if you want to get into numerous classrooms each week.
2. **Set a goal for a specific number of mini-observations a day** – Marshall admits that he has to aim for five visits a day to get in three to four. He had forty teachers and figured that at this rate he would observe each teacher 12 times a year. If you do too many visits, you can’t possibly find the time to give the type of quality feedback necessary for teacher improvement. Whatever your number is, Marshall insists that having a numerical goal is key in making the visits happen. Marshall’s average was three visits a day.
3. **Be clear about what to look for in mini-observations** – Principals need time during a visit to walk around, slow down, observe kids, and perhaps chat with a few (*What are you working on? Why is it important to learn this?*) While having a long checklist of what to look for can actually *impede* a thoughtful observation, it is helpful to have a short mental list of the essential components of good teaching to look for. Below are two mental checklists you can use – the left is excerpted from Achievement First and the right one is Marshall’s. Note that Marshall believes the one on the left is too long; it should be short to commit it to memory.

<b>Elements of Good Teaching to Look for When Observing Classes</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Great aims – that drive instruction and are on the board</li> <li>• Assessment of student mastery</li> <li>• Teacher knows content knowledge and effective strategies</li> <li>• Teacher models the skill and students have guided practice</li> <li>• Cumulative review to practice skills already mastered</li> <li>• Sustained, successful independent practice</li> <li>• Positive classroom culture                      • Academic rigor</li> <li>• Student engagement                              • Differentiation</li> </ul>	<p>(Using the acronym SOTEL to remember this list mentally)</p> <p><b>S</b> – <i>Safety</i> -- Class runs smoothly so students can focus on learning.  <b>O</b> – <i>Objectives</i> – It’s clear where the lesson is going.  <b>T</b> – <i>Teaching</i> – Learning experiences are being skillfully orchestrated.  <b>E</b> – <i>Engagement</i> – Students are paying attention and involved.  <b>L</b> – <i>Learning</i> – What’s being taught is being learned.</p>

4. **Use a system to capture key insights from visits** – While it is important for principals to record what they see, taking notes *during* a visit can raise anxiety for teachers because the visit seems more official. Because adult learning prospers more when visits are informal, principals should consider writing notes after the visit. Marshall uses a one-page format for each cycle he visits teachers:

*Excerpt of 2009-2010 Mini-Observation Notes for November 10 – 14*

\_\_\_\_ Elizabeth Abidi \_\_\_\_\_

✓ Sylvia Alcock *Tues. Nov 11 - Going over worksheet, low participation, doing too much for them*

\_\_\_\_ Kelly Jones \_\_\_\_\_

✓ Kathy Zimmer *Mon. Nov 10 - Round-robin reading, very hum-drum. Gotta deepen alternatives!*

Etc. (Note: the checkmarks to the left of the teacher names mean he completed the follow-up conversation.)

This is not the only format. You could use a note-card for each teacher for each visit or even one piece of paper for each teacher with notes for each visit on that page. Some administrators write one change they would like to see after each visit. What is important is to keep it informal and use a systematic approach to make sure all teachers are equally observed.

**5. Deliver feedback face-to-face to foster two-way conversations**

While some principals leave a Post-it note or send an e-mail, Marshall claims that these are less likely to lead to adult learning because of the one-way nature of the feedback. Instead, he aims for face-to-face feedback – often standing up in the hallway. This gives the principal a better sense of whether the teacher is ready for critical feedback, allows for sharing a lot of information in a short time, provides the teacher a chance to explain the background for the lesson, and opens the possibility for a two-way discussion about how things are going. These conversations are best held within 24 hours of the visit and it is easier to keep them short if the principal plans a thirty-second opening, “I was really struck by how well those math manipulatives were working to teach the part-whole principle.”

When principals begin with an open-ended question (*How did you think the lesson went?*) teachers become anxious trying to figure out the “right” answer to this question. It is certainly hard to catch up with every teacher after every observation, but if principals keep a copy of teachers’ free periods on hand and commit to feedback as a means of improving instruction, they can make this a priority. Note that to make this task manageable other school leaders can also conduct visits and give feedback such as assistant principals, department heads, and others. Instructional coaches can also visit *with* principals to contribute their content knowledge.

### 6. *Link mini-observations to professional development and school improvement*

If mini-observations were only used for private conversations with teachers, some of their power would be lost. Mini-observations can help improve overall student achievement by making principals *cross-pollinators* – able to share best practices and getting teachers to observe each other. Furthermore, the visits help principals identify instructional weaknesses in the school. For example, one Boston principal noticed that teachers weren’t launching their classes effectively. She decided to focus all of her visits on the first ten minutes, and then used insights to assist in grade-level discussions and plan an all-staff professional development session. Furthermore, mini-observations can be used to focus on student *results*. Principals can focus discussions on how well students are learning with the goal of making teachers more conscious of focusing on whether students are *learning* what is being taught.

After Marshall spent eight years doing three or four mini-observations a day on average (that’s about five hundred a year!) he was able to distill the most important elements necessary to make mini-observations successful:

- Be *systematic* about getting into all classrooms regularly
- Make sure visits are *unannounced*
- Keep visits to *five to ten minutes* to have enough time to observe everyone frequently
- Give *prompt face-to-face feedback* after each visit
- Make follow-up conversations *informal* to maximize adult learning

While the benefits of mini-observations were clear – he developed a good sense of the teaching and learning in his building – he came to realize that these observations were *necessary but not sufficient* to truly improve student achievement. To reach a much higher level of learning, he needed to implement three other concurrent initiatives – team curriculum unit design, interim assessments, and teacher evaluation rubrics – each of which will be described in the following sections.

## **The 2nd Component – Curriculum Planning**

One of the most important questions when conducting a mini-observation is where the lesson fits into the overall curriculum plan. If the principal does not know the larger purpose of the lesson, then the only thing he or she can assess is the *process* of teaching itself, not the more important issues of content, alignment, and rigor – the keys to student achievement. If it is not clear to the principal what the larger objectives of a unit are, it is harder to see if there are problems with student learning. The activities themselves might be hands-on and engaging, but they may not be contributing to the intended goals for student learning.

Unfortunately, effective curriculum planning is rare. Many teachers do not have a clear idea of where their students are supposed to be by the end of the year and end up writing individual lesson plans the night before a class without any connection to larger goals. Furthermore, principals reinforce the focus on individual lesson plans by asking to inspect lesson plans rather than unit plans. Instead, the second component of effective teacher supervision is that the principal should be involved with the key elements of curriculum planning: 1) year-end learning expectations, 2) a curriculum calendar, 3) “backwards-designed” units, and 4) lesson plans.

### 1. *Year-End Learning Expectations*

State standards have helped tremendously with curriculum planning. Standards lay out *what* students should learn – the skills, knowledge, and understandings – not the *how*. However, there are huge variations among the fifty states. Some state standards are too numerous to follow while others are vague and unclear. In most cases, it is useful to identify the most important standards (the “power standards”) and to translate them into teacher-friendly language which clearly shows what students in each grade and in each subject need to learn by the end of the year. In reality, few teachers have this kind of guidance. This means that teachers and administrators must do the work to create slim, user-friendly booklets with these expectations. The best thing a principal can do is to put this type of “slim booklet” into every teacher’s hands at the beginning of the year. Appendix A has a sample of this and it is excerpted below.

**Excerpt of READING section from a “Slim” Curriculum Booklet (see pp.209-221 for the entire booklet with all subject areas)**

*By the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> grade all students should be able to do the following:*

- Independently read and understand passages at level S or above on the Fountas-Pinnell scale
- Silently read print and electronic literary texts every day
- Etc.

*Units of Study:*

- |            |                       |                          |                    |                            |
|------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Fiction | 2. Nonfiction         | 3. Author study          | 4. Short texts     | 5. Biography/autobiography |
| 6. Poetry  | 7. Historical fiction | 8. Multicultural studies | 9. Why do we read? | 10. Memoir                 |

*Reading report card grades will be broken down as follows:*

- Reads with fluency and accuracy
- Understands what is read
- Reads a variety of materials

*Sources for grades:* Reading log, class participation, independent and group work, Fountas-Pinnell Benchmark Assessment system, etc.

*Curriculum approach used:* • Reader’s Workshop • Balanced literacy • Leveled libraries • Good Habits, Great Readers program etc.

*Sample reading passage and questions students should be able to read and answer by the end of fourth grade (not included here for brevity)*

## 2. A Curriculum Calendar

While many school districts have “scope and sequence” documents, often these are not used. It is vitally important to think through a curriculum calendar, and principals can help in the following ways:

- Before school starts, provide teacher teams with a half day to plan their calendar of curriculum units for the year.
- Provide each team with the “slim booklet” of curricular expectations (see above), required assessments, and anything else that shapes what students need to know by the end of the year.
- Provide copies of an Excel grid (converted to PDF and printed on a very long strip of paper) with all necessary dates (report cards, vacations, etc.) for the year, like the excerpt of the one below, and ask teachers to fill in their units:

CURRICULUM CALENDAR 2009-2010			
	Week 1: 9/8-9/11	Week 2: 9/14-9/18	Etc.
Math			
English			
Etc.			

After teachers have filled it in, the principal can look over the calendar for problems, then enter all the data into Excel and distribute and discuss this calendar with everyone at a staff meeting early in the year. Copies should be posted in the teacher’s room and administrators’ offices so they can be used as a basis for cross-pollination and for ongoing discussions about learning.

## 3. “Backwards-Designed” Units

Once the curriculum calendar is in place, teacher teams need to plan their first few units. Ideally these are planned “backwards” – starting with the learning goals and then planning what the students need to do to get there. This type of thoughtful planning focuses on results and improves student achievement. The components of a unit that is planned “backwards” might include:

- the topic, how long it will last, and the state standards the unit covers
- three or four Big Ideas (e.g. Students will understand that a year is the amount of time it takes a planet to orbit the sun.)
- three or four essential questions to guide students to discover Big Ideas (e.g. Would a year on Mars be the same as a year on Earth?)
- a list of factual knowledge and a list of skills to be taught
- assessments, written in advance, to assess student mastery formatively and summatively
- day-by-day lesson game plan

The principal can play a crucial role in thoughtful unit-planning. To positively impact this process the principal can:

- organize teacher teams of the same grade or subject to pool knowledge, plan *common* units, and make this task manageable
- visit teacher teams and contribute to and monitor these meetings
- provide the mandate that within a few years all units should be planned backwards (this is too much to do in one year)
- provide time for teachers to plan units during the summer (a half day to plan the first unit) and school year
- give feedback on new units to teacher teams and arrange for peer review of units as well
- monitor the implementation of units through mini-observations
- help teachers to collaboratively analyze the learning outcomes of each unit and identify what to improve

This type of team unit planning is one of the best forms of professional development because it gets teachers to think about every aspect of their craft. It also encourages teachers to be focused on student results. Furthermore, it helps the principal, when conducting mini-lessons, to focus on what is most important – how well the material is being taught and how well the students are learning.

## 4. Lesson Plans

Marshall has serious doubts about the usefulness of inspecting lesson plans. Reviewing individual lesson plans can involve ridiculous volume (a school with 35 teachers has 700 lessons a week!), lesson plans rarely reflect what actually ends up happening in the class, and it’s a waste of time examining lessons based on poorly thought-out unit plans. Instead, principals can more efficiently impact teaching by working with teacher teams on *unit* planning. Of course principals should inspect lessons if a teacher has a history of not planning individual lessons well. Also, it’s a useful exercise to help teachers *plan* good lessons, but this is more of a task for instructional coaches and mentors. Principals will get the greatest bang for their buck if they collaborate with teacher teams to polish unit plans and then look for evidence of the effective implementation of those unit plans through mini-observations.

Once principals have knowledge of and involvement in curricular design, their follow-up conversations after mini-observations will be much more efficient and effective. This will increase the power of their supervisory role and give it more bite.

## The 3rd Component – Interim Assessments

This section deals with one of the most challenging aspects of supervision – that student learning is rarely a part of the supervision and evaluation conversation. This, in fact, is one of the biggest drawbacks of traditional supervision – that it is entirely focused on teacher inputs *not* student results. No matter how skilled a principal is at looking at the objective on the board and observing teachers in action it is impossible to know how much students have actually learned. To deal with this, the principal’s supervisory role must involve

more than classroom visits. The principal should also orchestrate and monitor effective *interim assessments* and “professional learning community” meetings about those results.

Unfortunately, many teachers do not stop to look at interim assessment results and instead, simply teach, test, and move on. They feel they have a lot to cover to get their students ready for high-stakes tests. However, if we take a close look at student achievement, we see just how many students are being left behind. In a class assessment in which 4 students score at the Advanced level, 9 at Proficient, 8 at Needs Improvement, and 4 at the Failure level, this appears to be a normal distribution. However, this means that 48 percent of the class scored below Proficient and will enter the next unit further behind, thus widening the achievement gap more! This occurs because most teachers do not have the *mandate, training, or the tools* to pause and fix learning problems for those below the mastery level. Marshall contends that it is the principal’s moral and professional duty to challenge the “teach-test-move-on” practice so common in schools. Principals can break this pattern by having teachers use during-the-year assessments and encouraging them to relentlessly follow up with students who do not meet mastery levels (while providing enrichment activities for the other students).

While schools currently use a number of assessment methods from end-of-year tests to student projects, these are often too late in the year or only focus on a subset of skills, to be useful to teachers. Given that teachers’ professional time is limited and precious, they should have the highest quality data on the table to help them catch learning problems early. Research suggests two types of assessments are most effective at improving teaching and learning: *on-the-spot* assessments and *interim* assessments (also called *benchmark* or *periodic* tests). The latter is the focus of this chapter.

### Side Note on On-The-Spot Assessments

*On-the-spot* assessments are quick ways for teachers to check for understanding as they teach. Rather than the ineffective practice of calling on one of two students raising their hands to answer a question, a teacher might have *all* students write an answer on individual whiteboards and then hold them up. Or, a teacher might collect Exit cards at the end of class to see if students understood a key lesson point. On-the-spot assessments show teachers how many students understand and whether the teacher needs to adjust instruction or provide additional help to certain students. Principals should look for on-the-spot assessments when conducting mini-observations.

This chapter focuses on interim assessments which are usually given every four to nine weeks and mirror state tests in their mix of multiple-choice and open-response questions. Some schools and districts write their own, others purchase them. While there are debates about which approach is best, it is clear that interim assessments can be a powerful way to improve achievement because they:

- measure student progress (or lack thereof) as the year unfolds
- provide data in a visible format (spreadsheets, charts, etc.) that can be analyzed more thoughtfully
- allow teacher teams to discuss what students misunderstood, *why*, and *how* to teach the material more effectively
- provide a concrete entry point for administrators and coaches to get involved in discussions about student results
- help administrators, who are involved in assessment discussions, become more perceptive in doing mini-observations
- reveal names of struggling students and their areas of difficulty, making it easier to provide interventions

There are certainly a number of problems that arise in implementing interim assessments if it isn’t done well. Some interim tests are poorly aligned to state standards. When interim tests are scored externally, teachers often don’t have ownership over them. Some schools fail to eliminate other teacher tests that cover the same material and end up giving too many assessments. Some schools fall prey to a “culture of nice” and do not use assessment results to confront ineffective teaching. To avoid these types of problems and others, below are suggestions Marshall has for leaders to ensure the most effective implementation of interim assessments.

1. Build Understanding and Trust – the principal needs to explain just how vital interim assessments can be in closing the achievement gap. It is important to show teachers what a disservice it is to students when you “teach, test, and move on.” Furthermore, teachers need to be reassured, *repeatedly*, that interim assessments will *not* be used for evaluation purposes.
2. Get High-Quality Tests – Make sure the type of assessment you choose covers reading, writing, and math (and other subjects at the secondary level), covers what is tested in high-stakes assessments, has open-response and higher-order as well as multiple choice questions and writing prompts, is aligned with the school’s curricula, is the right length, and does not duplicate classroom tests.
3. Schedule Time for the Assessments and Immediate Follow-Up – Principals need to block out time for scoring, analysis, and data meetings within forty-eight hours of the assessments. Plus teachers need several days for re-teaching. One school uses Wednesdays and Thursdays for giving the assessments, then Fridays students are released at 11:30am so teachers can score, analyze, and discuss results and action plans until 4:00pm. Then re-teaching and enrichment begin on Monday and last several days.
4. Display Data Effectively – Having succinct spreadsheets and wall charts makes the data graphically clear to teachers, administrators, students, and parents. These visual displays can be very effective in boosting student achievement when they address questions like: *How did students do on each test item? How does overall achievement look (what percentage scored Proficient or above)? How are individual students performing?* See the following excerpt of a graph of individual students’ reading levels (A-Z):

Reading Levels:	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Student 1				Achieved in 9/06			Achieved 1/07
Student 2		Achieved in 9/06			Achieved 1/07		Achieved 4/07
Student 3 Etc.			Achieved 9/06		Achieved 1/07		

## 5. Hold Candid Data Meetings and Relentlessly Follow Up

To be effective, meetings need to be honest, critical, test-in-hand, low stakes meetings that both celebrate successes *and* examine what students did not understand. Also, meetings should include plans for next steps – will the teacher re-teach concepts students largely failed to learn or will there be small-group explanations, one-on-one tutorials, special before-class work, mini-lessons, or homework in areas that need strengthening? Assessments are a waste of time if teachers do not use them to refine their teaching and follow up with students who need help. Principals need not be content-specialists to contribute to these conversations. While principals do not have to attend all meetings, they can ask the group for a brief informal report, along with their action plans and an answer to the question: *How can I help?* A brief report can be a simple graph of the percentage of students who attained proficiency in the writing assessment.

## The 4th Component – Teacher Evaluation Rubrics

Marshall, like many principals, saw little value in the end-of-year teacher evaluations and found himself cursing the process (“This is nonsense!”) because of the time drain it involved. He found his evaluations to be superficial, provide very little guidance on improvement, and the Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory rating scale didn’t allow him to make distinctions in different levels of performance. After all of his work, teachers would shrug off the evaluation and it ended up having no impact on student learning. As a much more effective alternative, he has come up with the idea of using *rubrics* to evaluate teaching. Inspired by the work of Charlotte Danielson, Marshall found rubrics to be much less time consuming and yet provide teachers with a clearer sense of the areas to improve.

### *Creating Effective Teacher Evaluation Rubrics*

To create effective teacher evaluation rubrics, first you need to decide what are the important domains or aspects of teaching you wish to evaluate. After looking at a number of different sources, Marshall narrowed his teaching domains down to six areas:

- |  |  |                                  |
|--|--|----------------------------------|
| A. Planning and preparation for learning | C. Delivery of instruction               | E. Family and community outreach |
| B. Classroom management                  | D. Monitoring, assessment, and follow-up | F. Professional responsibilities |

Then he decided on four levels of proficiency: Expert, Proficient, Needs Improvement, and Does Not Meet Standards. To flesh out the rubrics he started by describing the Proficient level for each of the six domains above. Below is an excerpt of his criteria for Proficient in these domains. Note that the rubrics do not assess student learning. Marshall firmly believes that evaluation is *not* the best way to hold teachers accountable for student learning. Instead, principals will be more effective in boosting student learning if it is done through *low-stakes* activities such as through their work with teachers in teacher teams, planning curriculum, and interim assessments.

### Excerpt of what the Proficient level looks like in the six domains of teaching (see pp.148-149 for the full descriptions of Proficient)

<b>A. Planning and preparation for learning</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knows the subject matter well and has a good grasp of child development and how students learn.</li> <li>• Plans the year so students will meet state standards and be ready for external assessments.</li> <li>• Plans most curriculum units backwards with standards, state tests, and some of Bloom’s levels in mind. Etc.</li> </ul>
<b>B. Classroom management</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clearly communicates and consistently enforces high standards for student behavior.</li> <li>• Is fair and respectful toward students and builds positive relationships. Etc.</li> </ul>
<b>C. Delivery of instruction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conveys to students, This is important, you can do it, and I’m not going to give up on you.</li> <li>• Gives the students a clear sense of purpose by posting the unit’s essential questions and the lesson’s goal. Etc.</li> </ul>
<b>D. Monitoring, assessment, and follow-up</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Posts clear criteria for proficiency, including rubrics and exemplars of student work.</li> <li>• Diagnoses students’ knowledge and skills up front and makes small adjustments based on the data.</li> <li>• Uses data from interim assessments, draws conclusions, and shares them appropriately. Etc.</li> </ul>
<b>E. Family and community outreach</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicates respectfully with parents and is sensitive to different families’ culture and values.</li> <li>• Shows parents a genuine interest and belief in each child’s ability to reach standards. Etc.</li> </ul>
<b>F. Professional responsibilities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has good attendance.</li> <li>• Is a positive team player and contributes ideas, expertise, and time to the overall mission of the school. Etc.</li> </ul>

For his last step, Marshall created the Expert, Needs Improvement, and Does Not Meet Standards levels for each of these domains based on the above criteria for Proficient level. For example, here are all four levels for the first criteria under “Planning and preparation for learning” above. For the complete set of teacher evaluation rubrics see pp.151-164.

<b>A. Planning and preparation for learning</b>			
<i>Expert</i>	<i>Proficient</i>	<i>Needs Improvement</i>	<i>Does Not Meet Standards</i>
Is expert in the subject area and has a cutting-edge grasp of child development and how students learn.	Knows the subject matter well and has a good grasp of child development and how students learn.	Is somewhat familiar with the subject and has a few ideas of ways students develop and learn.	Has little familiarity with the subject matter and few ideas of how to teach it and how students learn.

It is important to keep in mind that these rubrics are for summative, end-of-year evaluations. They are far too detailed to be useful in giving feedback from mini-observations. However, these cannot be completed thoughtfully unless the administrator has been doing

regular mini-observations. So that teachers will make the best use of these evaluations, principals should explain their rationale and perhaps involve teachers in tweaking the rubrics. Furthermore, they should be presented at the *beginning* of the school year because the rubrics will serve as the school’s definition of “good teaching” and all teachers should know the criteria that will be used to evaluate them at the end of the year. Below are additional ways to maximize the impact of these evaluations on teaching and learning.

**1. Encourage teachers to invest in a cycle of continuous improvement**

One of the best things a principal can do to boost achievement is to get teachers more involved in “professional learning community” activities in which teachers collaboratively improve their practice. There are nine items in the rubrics that lay out how teachers can improve their involvement in the cycle of continuous improvement, and principals should *highlight* these items. Examples include:

- Uses data from assessments to adjust teaching, re-teach, and follow up with failing students.
- Reflects on the effectiveness of lessons and units and continuously works to improve them.
- Collaborates with colleagues to plan units, share teaching ideas, and look at student work.

**2. Use the rubrics for teachers to self-assess and set goals**

The rubrics are a useful tool for teachers to self-evaluate at the beginning of the year and to create clear, specific, and measurable goals for the year. Then teachers can use the rubrics again at the end of the year for a thorough self-assessment by filling out the rubrics themselves and then comparing ratings with the principal.

**3. Chart faculty results**

Once a principal has filled out the rubrics for an entire faculty, it is easy to compile the results into a spreadsheet so it becomes clear what areas should be addressed in professional development and which teachers need the most help. The spreadsheet might look like this excerpt which reveals the staff needs to work on Assessment, Monitoring, and Follow-Up, and that Mark is an expert in this area:

	A. Planning & Preparation	B. Classroom Management	C. Delivery of Instruction	D. Assessment & Monitoring	E. Parent & Community Outreach	F. Professional Responsibilities	TOTAL for each teacher
Cynthia	3	3	3	1	3	3	16
Mark	4	4	4	4	4	4	24
Richard	2	3	2	1	2	1	
Etc.	Etc.	Etc.	Etc.	Etc.	Etc.	Etc.	Etc.
<b>TOTAL</b>	34	36	34	23	34	35	

## Time Management and Conclusions

How is it possible, for a principal who works really hard, not to see gains in student achievement? By spending too much time on the wrong things and too little time on the right things. To help prevent this situation, Marshall has developed a set of ten practices that improve time management so a principal can not only save time, but can focus on the right things -- improving student achievement. Below is a summary of these ten best practices for principals to work *smarter*. Note that this is just an overview – for the more specific time management suggestions see Chapter Eight in the book.

1. **Focus on Student Achievement** -- In order not to get overwhelmed by day-to-day responsibilities, the principal needs to look honestly at the achievement data, set a long-term goal, and choose the three or four areas that need the most improvement from the following list: mission, climate and culture, curriculum alignment, resources, good instruction, interim assessments, collaboration, struggling students, and families. After choosing the areas most in need of improvement, principals should create two to three initiatives along with action plans to carry them out.
2. **Clarify Expectations** – Make sure staff knows what is expected in terms of curriculum (“slim booklets”) and discipline.
3. **Plan Systematically** – Daily to do lists often miss larger goals. Principals need a way to keep the larger goals in mind when planning what to do on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis. These larger goals need to be broken down into smaller chunks so they do not fade into the background.
4. **Insist on Team Meetings** – Team meetings need to be a regular part of the schedule to make sure they happen. Otherwise they will be pushed to the side and ignored.
5. **Not Losing It** – Principals need a good system for writing things down. New principals quickly realize that they need to write things down. While it might look awkward to walk around with a clipboard or an electronic device clipped to one’s belt, principals need to write things down. Principals need to deal with great quantities of information. To deal with email, principals should schedule one or two thirty-minute blocks rather than answer one or two here and there. To deal with all of the incoming information, it helps to create bins to sort that information into the following categories:
  - Put in the weekly staff memo
  - Suggest to grade-level team
  - Delegate to the counselor
  - Talk about in the weekly assembly
  - Put on the afternoon paperwork pile
  - Write a note to a group
  - Put in the weekly parent letter
  - Delegate to the assistant principal
  - Announce over the PA
  - Politely say no
  - Discuss in visit to a classroom
  - Drop everything and do now
  - Put on the next faculty meeting agenda
  - Delegate to the secretary
  - Have face-to-face conversation with the person
  - Put on the agenda for the leadership team
  - Write an individual note for a teacher’s mailbox
6. **Delegate Effectively** -- Put competent people in key roles and delegate responsibility.
7. **Observe the Work** -- Get into classrooms and team meetings and give teachers feedback.

8. **Administer That Ounce of Prevention** -- Prevent time-wasting crises and activities. Walk around to deal with issues before they become crises. Also, have clear meeting agendas, multitask when possible, and stay out of your office to avoid the time-sapping drop-in visit, "Got a minute?"
9. **Get a Life** -- Take care of yourself by making time for family, health, exercise, sleep, and vacations.
10. **Keep Improving** -- Regularly evaluate your own progress. It is hard yet vitally important to set aside time for reflection. Marshall created a rubric of these ten time management practices principals can use to self-evaluate to help identify areas that need improvement. See the excerpt below (the full rubric is on pp. 196-7.)

<b>Principal's Time Management Rubric</b> (excerpted from pp.196-197)				
<b>Time Saving Practice</b>	<i>4 – Expert</i>	<i>3 – Proficient</i>	<i>2 – Developing</i>	<i>1 – Novice</i>
1. Focus	I have a laser-like focus on student achievement and my strategic plan for the year.	I keep student achievement and my strategic plan in mind every day.	I periodically remind myself of my strategic plan and the goal of student achievement.	Each day is driven by events, not by my long-term goals.
2. Expectations	Staff know exactly what is expected of them in terms of classroom instruction and discipline.	Most of my staff know what is expected in terms of instruction and discipline.	I often have to remind teachers of policies on instruction and discipline.	I am constantly reminding staff to use better procedures for instruction and discipline.
Etc.	Etc.	Etc.	Etc.	Etc.
Overall rating and comments:				

### Conclusions

When principals put Marshall's model into place – the mini-observations, backwards curriculum design, interim assessments, and teacher rubrics – and they use the time management techniques above, they will find that the problems of traditional supervision and evaluation introduced in the beginning, are solved. Principals see authentic teaching, teachers and administrators work from a common definition of good teaching, principals provide effective feedback because of their involvement in curriculum planning and interim assessments, teachers understand and accept feedback, teachers use feedback in team meetings about curriculum and interim assessment results to improve classroom practice, and as a result of all of this, student achievement improves. Overall this new model insures that the largest problem with traditional supervision – that it *doesn't* improve teaching and learning – is finally overcome.

## The Main Idea's Professional Development Suggestions: Strengthening the Principal's Role in Supervision

### Take an honest look at your school's approach to supervision and evaluation

Do a self-assessment by thinking about how effective your current approach to supervision and evaluation is. Give yourself a rating of 1 (the far left) to 4 (the far right) for each of the following:

1 – Novice Supervisor & Evaluator	4 – Expert Supervisor & Evaluator
Principal sees tiny percent of teaching...	...Principal sees a real sampling of teaching throughout the year
Teachers put on special show for observation...	...Principal sees typical day-in-the-life teaching
Principal's presence changes classroom dynamics...	...Both teachers and students are used to principal and ignore presence
Principal's write-up misses big picture...	...Principal's feedback focuses on the core issue of student learning
Evaluation forms are cumbersome...	...No forms are used. Instead, face-to-face feedback is given
Critical evaluations shut down learning...	...Conversation is two-way and fosters respect which leads to learning
Principal doesn't confront bad or mediocre teaching...	...Principal has mechanism (the conversations) to offer critical feedback
Principal is too harried/too trapped in office to do effective evaluations...	...Principal makes time for mini-observations
Focus of evaluation is on pleasing principal...	...Focus of mini-observation is on improving student learning
Teachers rarely get feedback...	...Teachers often get feedback

### Get Ready for Mini-Observations and Teacher Evaluation Rubrics

1) *First your school needs to define "good teaching."* This is no easy task but it is a very worthwhile exercise to get everyone on the same page. To do this, you can: A) Provide teachers with some articles or chapters about what the research says about good teaching, show some videos of excellent teaching, or just have them work from their own experience. B) Put teachers into pairs to create a list of 10 elements of good teaching (e.g. a clear objective). C) Then have two pairs work together to come to consensus and create one list of the 10 elements of good teaching. Then have them whittle that down to 5 elements. D) Continue to bring groups together or have a larger group discussion to bring the group to consensus about what is it that makes teaching effective.

2) *Use your definition of good teaching to create a teacher evaluation rubric and a mental checklist of what the principal will look for in mini-observations.* You can assign this to a subcommittee or have your leadership team, in consultation with you, create a fleshed out rubric which will be used to evaluate teachers at the end of the year (see the process Marshall went through to create his on pp. 141-50). Share examples of what others have chosen as their "domains" of teaching to be evaluated like those below:

Charlotte Danielson's domains	Jon Saphier's short list	Kim Marshall's domains
1. Planning and Preparation	1. Classroom teaching	A. Planning and preparation for learning
2. The Classroom Environment	2. Contributing member of the staff	B. Classroom management
3. Instruction	3. Communication with parents and community	C. Delivery of instruction
4. Professional Responsibilities	4. Routine and administrative duties	D. Monitoring, assessment, and follow-up
	5. Continuing professional growth	E. Family and community outreach
		F. Professional responsibilities

Then, faculty will be more likely to buy into mini-observations if they can use the school's definition of good teaching to help create the "mental checklist" the principal will be using when visiting classes. Share Marshall's mental checklist: **S** (Safety – class runs smoothly), **O** (Objectives – it's clear where the lesson is going), **T** (Teaching – learning experiences are skillfully orchestrated), **E** (Engagement – students are involved), and **L** (learning – what's being taught is being learned) and have the subcommittee outline 5-6 items the principal and other administrators will look for in mini-observations.

3) *Create an action plan to get started with mini-observations.* Look at Marshall's list of what makes for the effective implementation of mini-observations, and think about what steps you will take to ensure your approach will work. Below is a sample action plan:

Elements of Effective Mini-Observations	What To Do and By When (some sample ideas for the action plan)
Stay 5 – 10 minutes	<i>Do some trial 5-minute visits with content coaches to make sure I can extract a key teaching issue to discuss. (by 3/10)</i>
Set a goal for a specific number of mini-observations a day	<i>Calculate how many times I would visit each teacher this year if I observed 1 teacher a day, 2 a day, etc. and then set a goal. (by 2/20)</i>
Be clear about what to look for in observations	<i>Use next staff meeting to begin to distill elements of good teaching and have leadership team refine this by 3/1 so I can have a "mental checklist" when visiting.</i>
Use a systematic approach to visit all classes and capture key insights	<i>Use a notecard for each visit – buy notecards and a box by 3/4/10.</i>
Deliver feedback face-to-face to foster two-way conversations	<i>Send an intro memo to teachers so they know I will be checking in during preps and after school. Create a notecard-sized schedule of teacher free periods to keep in pocket. Practice 30-second conversation openers before we meet. (by 3/15)</i>
Link mini-observations to PD and student results	<i>After 2 cycles create a PD plan for the next month (by 4/15). After 3rd cycle meet w-teachers to look at grade books, teacher-created quiz results, etc. (by 5/15)</i>

Assist Teachers with “Backwards” Curriculum Design

After your teachers have a curriculum calendar for the year to work from, set aside time for faculty create their first “backwards” designed unit. You can show them a sample unit (just Google ‘sample backwards design units’ and print one you like) or even better, your leadership team can create a template your school will use. The benefit of creating your own template is that it can reflect your school’s priorities. If there’s a section on the template for “vocabulary” teachers will know to think about and include vocabulary in each unit. If there’s a section on “integration of technology” they will know technology is a priority. Below is an example of a backwards-designed unit template (obviously you would need more space for answers in each box):

Unit topic, length (number of weeks), and state standards it covers:	
The Big Ideas and Essential Questions of the Unit:	Knowledge and skill covered:
Formative and summative assessments to be used:	Vocabulary for the unit:
Lesson activities/plans:	

Prepare to visit team meetings

It is by getting involved in team curriculum planning and assessment data analysis that really *expands* the principal’s supervisory role to have a much more dramatic impact on teaching and learning. So, what exactly should the principal be looking for when visiting teacher teams? It would help to go into these meetings with a mental checklist of what to look for in the same way you go into a mini-observation with a mental checklist. To create your own mental checklist below are some ideas of what you might include:

<u>Possible items to look for when visiting a team meeting</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Results-focused</b> –Are student results at the heart of every conversation? Do teachers have a clear understanding of the skills and knowledge students need to develop in this grade/subject? Do teachers know what to do when students fail to learn (strategies for re-teaching, small group instruction, etc.)? Do they bring evidence of student learning to the meeting? Can the group name the 3 students who need the most intervention?</li> <li>• <b>Collaborative</b> – Are all voices heard? Does everyone pull their weight? Does the group know how to deal with disagreement?</li> <li>• <b>Honest</b> – Has the group fallen into a “culture of nice” in which no one honestly criticizes anything? Do they have the tools to honestly critique unit plans and assessment results? Does the group identify when they need help and seek outside assistance?</li> <li>• <b>Run well</b> – Is there a clear facilitator, note-taker, agenda, etc.? Does the meeting stay on task? Start on time? Does the group have norms and protocols to run smoothly? Does the group create concrete action plans for next steps and hold members accountable?</li> <li>• <b>Self-reflective</b> – Does the group schedule time to discuss how the group is running and if changes need to be made?</li> <li>• <b>One thing this team needs to improve</b> – Do they need expertise from another teacher or team? Do they need resources? Do they need PD in a particular area? Do they need a protocol for discussing unit design or student results? Do I need to speak to a difficult member?</li> </ul>

Help Data Discussions by Modeling

For teacher teams that have little experience working with assessment data results, one of the most valuable things a principal can do is to model and provide models for them. Below are some suggestions:

- Having teachers turn their results from assessments into a graphic form is incredibly useful when discussing that data.

However, teachers often do not know the variety of graphic formats they can use. The principal can bring in data, displayed in a variety of ways, to show teams what these might look like. Below are samples of different ways to display data.

Writing Results – by proficiency	
Advanced	4 students
Proficient	9 students
Needs Improvement	8 students
Failure	3 students

Writing results – by skill assessed	
Strong thesis	56% Proficient or above
Writing organization	82% Proficient or above
Use of evidence	41% Proficient or above
Grammar and spelling	72% Proficient or above

Student Reading Level Progression Over Time							
Reading Levels:	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Juan				Achieved in 9/06			Achieved 1/07
Natalie		Achieved in 9/06				Achieved 1/07	Achieved 4/07
Jermaine Etc.			Achieved 9/06		Achieved 1/07		

- Find a team that is effective in their discussions of student assessment results and create a “fishbowl” for the rest of the teachers. Have the identified team conduct one of their meetings in a small circle in the center of a room and have the rest of the faculty watch, without interrupting. After this modeling, have the observers share what they noticed. If they need question prompts, here are a few: Was the discussion low-stakes? Was anyone blamed for poor results? Was the focus on student data? Did the team have a protocol to discuss the results? How did the team represent the data results? Did the team focus on an overall percentage of proficient students, an item-by-item analysis, or did they focus on those students who struggled most? What next steps were planned?

Work Smarter – Time Management and Focusing on the Right Things – A Reading Assignment for School Leaders

Chapter 8 in the book has lots of great time management tips school leaders can readily use and it can be read on its own for a leadership team (or principals if you are a superintendent) meeting. *Before* you assign the reading, make a copy of the *Principal’s Time Management Rubric* on pp.196-7 for everyone and have them use the rubric to evaluate themselves. *Then* they should read the chapter and come to the meeting. You can have a discussion about working *smarter* using questions like these:

- Of the 10 areas in the rubric, which 2-3 were your strongest areas? Weakest?
- If we pool our results, collectively, in which areas is our group strongest and weakest?
- Which specific tips that Marshall recommends seem worth adopting?
- For your own areas of strength, can you share with the group your strategies, tools, or approaches so others might adopt them?
- Can we individually, and as a group, create action plans for the next few months to improve areas of weakness?