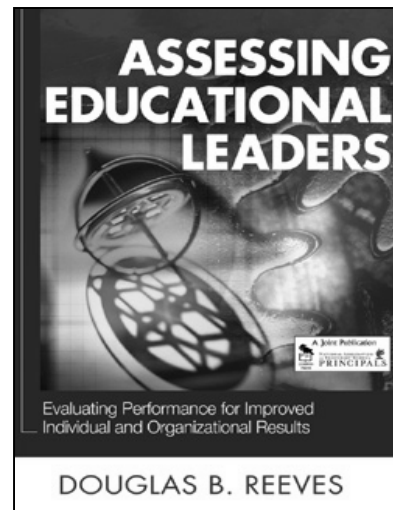


Study Guide for:

Assessing Educational Leaders

Evaluating Performance for Improved
Individual and Organizational Results

By Douglas B. Reeves, Ph.D.



Suggestions for effective book studies:

1. Set the dates with specified readings well in advance.
2. Ensure that participants have a personal copy of the book.
3. Provide the book study guide before starting to read the book.
4. Select a location that allows for the participants to be able to spread out books and writing materials.
5. Provide a comfortable meeting place with plenty of light.
6. Beverages and snacks are always welcome.
7. The role of the facilitator is to ask open-ended questions and stimulate discussion, not to lecture. Consider changing the role of facilitator and being very clear about norms for participants and facilitators.

Advanced Learning Press provides study guides to complement your comprehensive professional development plan. These guides represent the author's suggested questions and activities to lead to full comprehension and implementation of the ideas in the publication. Focused group discussion leads to individual reflection as well as having the group develop common understandings and language regarding the book's content. For additional insights or questions, please email the author at info@MakingStandardsWork.com. You will receive a response within two business days.

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Introduction

1. Describe the current paradox in educational leadership. Does this paradox exist in your school district?
2. Recent improvements in teacher evaluation provide some insight into possible changes in leadership evaluation. What modifications are taking place in teacher evaluation nationally? Compare and contrast these trends to the teacher evaluation process in your district.
3. Describe the three conclusions at the heart of this book. How should these conclusions affect a leader's sense of efficacy? What implications do these conclusions have for the evaluative process?
4. Describe the concept of proactive evaluation. How does this concept align with the leadership evaluation process in your district?
5. Should effective leadership evaluation be aimed at administrators only? How could evaluation affect the professional development curriculum of a district?
6. Recall some of your own evaluation experiences. Discuss those experiences with your study group comparing your experiences with the ideas contained in this section.

Chapter 1: Why Leadership Evaluation Is Broken

1. The current state of leadership evaluation is compared to the “perfect storm.” What evidence is there of the growing storm in leadership evaluation? How many administrators in your district are eligible for retirement in the next three years? Discuss with your study group the effectiveness of your recent evaluations for improving teaching and learning. Do you see a growing “storm” in educational leadership in your district?
2. What is meant by the “knowing-doing gap”? Reflect on your own educational practice. Have there been times when there has been a discrepancy between what you knew and what you did? What conditions created that gap?

3. Examine your current leadership evaluation instrument. What percentage of the standards/indicators on the instrument are ambiguous? Are there descriptors on the instrument that are undefined? Does a responsibility/authority gap exist in any of those indicators?
4. How does your current evaluation instrument define levels of performance? Are the distinctions clear or open to interpretation?
5. Compare the concept of the multidimensional leadership assessment to your current evaluation system. What issues are apparent after the comparison?

Chapter 2: Reframing Leadership Evaluation

1. Two distinctly different risks of leadership evaluation are presented. Why would leaders make Patrick's choice? Describe the environment that must be present for the leader's gambit to be successful. Does that environment currently exist in your district?
2. Reflect again on your experiences in education while examining Figure 2.1 *Evaluation Risks and Rewards*. Categorize your experiences with different leaders according to the quadrants. How did you feel during those experiences?
3. How are effective accountability systems and multifaceted leadership evaluations linked? How does multifaceted leadership evaluation help an organization avoid Santayana's prediction?
4. What are the dangers of the third alternative of evaluation practices? Why do school systems fall into this alternative? Which alternative do you feel your district has chosen? Why?
5. Why must effective leadership evaluation systems be robust? What changes have taken place in your school system in recent years? How has your evaluation instrument evolved to reflect those changes?
6. Describe the proactive criteria for leadership evaluation. When have you given or received proactive feedback?

7. What is meant by the reciprocal criterion of leadership evaluation? Why should participants in the evaluative process be able to provide feedback to the organization? How is the concept of reciprocity related to the purpose of multidimensional leadership evaluation?
8. What is required for evaluation to be empowering? Why is empowerment, as defined here, crucial for organizational improvement? Does your school district's evaluation system meet this criterion? Why or why not?
9. How does basing leadership evaluation on standards serve to improve the school system? Why is a common language crucial to the successful use of leadership standards?
10. What factors in your school district could contribute to a lack of truthfulness in the evaluation process? How could those factors be changed to improve the effectiveness of the process?
11. Examine your current leadership evaluation instrument. Discuss with your study group examples of objective and subjective language within the instrument. How could any subjective language be clarified?
12. What implications for your school district do you see after reviewing the criteria for multidimensional leadership assessment?

Chapter 3: Moving Beyond One-Dimensional Leadership Evaluation

1. Why is a one-dimensional evaluation system dangerous? What dimensions are used to evaluate schools and leaders in your district?
2. Why is it important to go beyond an emphasis on test scores in order to improve leadership?
3. Describe the conundrum created by the demand for popularity. How is authenticity the remedy for the search for popularity? What environmental factors are required to support authentic communication?
4. When does obedience become detrimental? How is obedience encouraged in your district and non-compliance discouraged?

Chapter 4: Creating an Improved Leadership Evaluation System

1. Contradictory expectations leave senior leaders three choices. Why is transparency the best of these three choices? Examine your evaluation instrument. Are there any areas that have contradictory expectations?
2. Why is it important to consider the degree of influence a leader has over a domain before including it in a leadership evaluation instrument? Are there areas for which you are held responsible that you are unable to influence?
3. Use the three filtering questions provided to review your current evaluation instrument. Are there domains present that should not be? Are there domains missing that should be present?
4. What should the focus of the evaluative process be? Why should we compare leaders to an objective standard rather than to their colleagues?
5. Review the provided case studies of Roger Blackburn and Laurie Golden. What lessons can we learn from those case studies? Do similar pressures exist in your district?
6. How does providing context resolve the dilemma between short-term versus long-term success? Choose an area of your evaluation or accountability structure and provide context for the numbers that would ordinarily be provided in that area.
7. How would you distinguish exemplary performance from proficient? Why is exemplary performance important for an organization? Choose one domain on your current evaluation instrument and describe exemplary performance in that area.
8. Why should the criteria for proficient performance be very rigorous? How rigorous is the proficient criteria on your evaluation system. Choose one domain on your current evaluation instrument and describe a more rigorous level of proficiency in that area.
9. How should you discriminate between an individual whose performance is progressing and one whose performance is not meeting standards? Why is it important to focus resources on those leaders who are progressing? Choose an area of progressing performance from your evaluation instrument or from the sample provided in the text. Describe the professional development that you would provide for a leader found to be progressing in that domain.

10. Why do school systems tolerate leaders who do not meet existing performance standards? What conditions exist in your district's culture that could contribute to such a tolerance?

Chapter 5: Using Evaluation to Improve Performance

1. Why should those who are conducting leadership evaluations not be content to just render a judgment? How does this compare with the idea of formative assessment in a classroom?
2. You have been asked to defend the proposed changes in your district's leadership evaluation system as captured in Figure 5.1 *Coaching Continua for Leadership Evaluation*. Use current research on setting objectives and providing feedback to support the contention that evaluations should be the basis for action

Possible resources:

- a. *Classroom Instruction That Works*, Marzano, Pickering, and Pollack
 - b. *Accountability for Learning*, Reeves
 - c. *Accountability in Action*, Reeves
 - d. "Classroom Assessment for Learning," Chappuis and Stiggins, *Educational Leadership*, September 2002
3. Why is it important to plan specific actions for exemplary leaders? How does the Churchill Impasse relate to educational leaders? You have several leaders who are exemplary in different domains of leadership. Describe a course of action for those leaders considering the strategic needs of your district.
 4. Why is it dangerous to ignore proficient leaders? How could you "constructively break" your current evaluation system as Peters and Austin suggest?
 5. What is the distinction between the coaching and counseling continuums? Why is it important to categorize personnel who are not performing at acceptable standards? Examine your evaluation instrument. Could your current instrument help you distinguish between those leaders in need of coaching or counseling?

6. Specificity is crucial to the success of leadership evaluation. What risks are associated with the use of specific language? Choose one domain of your current evaluation system. Are the different performance levels specific enough to provide clear distinctions? Draft a revision of that domain that clearly specifies the difference between levels of performance. Share that draft with colleagues and see if your descriptors are successful in communicating your intentions.

Chapter 6: Developing a Multidimensional Leadership Assessment

1. An acid test for an evaluation system is the degree to which it can provide a research goldmine. Why is that important to organizational improvement?
2. Review your current evaluation instruments and other organizational documents. Reference the resources provided in this text as well as other sources such as *Standards for School Leaders* from the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium. Draft a list of possible leadership domains for a multidimensional leadership assessment. Use the questions from page 42 to narrow your potential list.
3. Choose one of the most accessible potential domains and describe the continuum of performance from not meeting standards to exemplary. Share those descriptors with your colleagues. Use a case study as a test of each domain to see if you and your colleagues have 80 percent agreement. Revise your descriptors until you do.
4. How is the multidimensional leadership assessment used to systematically observe the relationship between leadership performance and organizational performance? Use your drafted leadership domains to formulate some possible hypotheses for internal research.
5. In *Credibility*, Kouzes and Posner describe conducting a values survey in order to determine what is important to an organization when attempting change. What are the explicit and implicit values of your school district? To what degree are those values reflected in your draft multidimensional leadership assessment?

6. An organization communicates its values and goals through the evaluation process. Based on your evaluation experiences, what would you say that your organization truly values? What is valued according to your district's mission statement and public goals? How would you need to revise your draft multidimensional leadership assessment in order to close a gap between the stated and actual goals and values?
7. Why is it crucial to organizational improvement for any multidimensional leadership assessment to require qualitative data?
8. Chappuis and Stiggins, in "Classroom Assessment for Learning" (*Educational Leadership*, September 2002), describe the importance of the goal of students becoming self-evaluators. Why is it just as important that educational leaders practice the self-assessment that we ask of students?

Chapter 7: Building the Next Generation of Leaders

1. Why is it imperative that school systems enlarge the leadership talent pool?
2. Examine the description of exemplary performance in one domain of your draft multidimensional leadership assessment. Create a vignette based on that description and your own experiences with challenging situations within that domain.
3. Why should a school system create realistic leadership scenarios? How could these scenarios be used to improve organizational performance?
4. How does the concept of validity apply to leadership evaluation? Have you ever been evaluated using criteria other than that stated in a given domain?
5. How does the concept of reliability apply to leadership evaluation? How could you use your vignettes to ensure reliability?

Chapter 8: Leading Leaders

1. Why is a balanced focus on results and process important for successful leadership?
2. Describe some implicit hypotheses that are infrequently assessed in your district. How could you empirically test those hypotheses?
3. Examine Figure 8.1 *The Leadership and Learning Matrix*. Why is it important that senior leaders focus their energy on the continuum between the learner and the leader? What might happen if senior leadership focuses their time, energy, and resources on other continua?
4. Describe the environment that would need to exist in order for a leader to post her evaluation for her faculty to see. What specific actions would need to be taken in order to create such an environment in your building or district?

Chapter 9: Improving Leadership Evaluation With Multidimensional Leadership Assessment

1. Analyze a sample of anonymous evaluations from your system. Categorize the comments contained on the documents. What percentage of the comments is constructive and could provide a guideline for growth? What percentage of comments provides no clear description of how to improve performance? What percentage of comments is actually destructive?
2. Create an action plan for field-testing your draft multidimensional leadership assessment. Considerations for the plan include:
 - a. Who has volunteered to assess/be assessed?
 - b. What levels of the district will participate in the field test?
 - c. How will you coordinate the assignment of two evaluators to each leader?
 - d. How will you structure the collaborative review of the assessments to measure inter-rater reliability?
 - e. How will you communicate the results of the test?

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- *The Leader's Guide to Standards: A Blueprint for Educational Equity and Excellence*
- *Accountability in Action: A Blueprint for Learning Organizations*
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