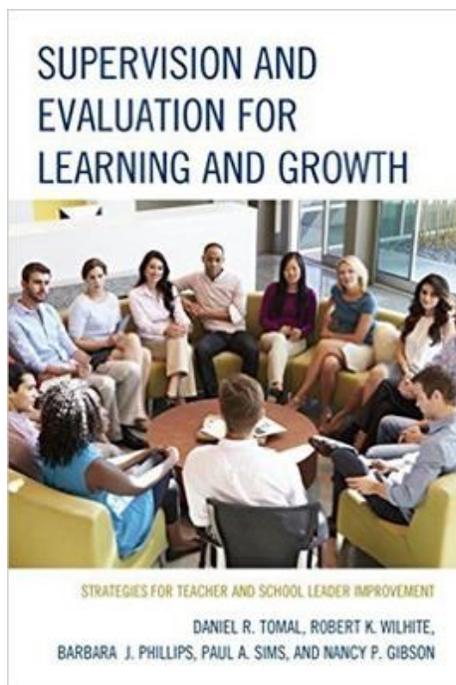


## Book Review

### **Strategies for Teacher and School Leader Improvement**

“Supervision and Evaluation for Learning and Growth” by Daniel R. Tomal, Robert K. Wilhite, Barbara J. Phillips, Paul A. Sims, and Nancy P. Gibson

By Colin Everett



The focus on teacher evaluation has increased in recent years. A corporate efficiency mindset has accompanied federal funding initiatives like No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top. Under these programs, student performance has been made a significant factor in teacher evaluation. This emphasis has further complicated the difficult task of determining the impact of teacher performance on students and student learning. *Supervision and Evaluation for Learning and Growth* seeks to go beyond the

current focus on student performance and instead aims to develop an evaluation system for learning and growth.

In this short and readable text, the authors initially focus on differentiating supervision and evaluation. Supervision is inherently a formative process of coaching and mentoring. The goal of supervisors is to be like “the conductor of an orchestra” patiently supporting and directing in an effort to improve teacher quality. Evaluation, on the other hand, is inherently summative. While supervision aims to be supportive, the ultimate goal of evaluation is making personal decisions that are in the best interest of student learning.

The authors try to untangle the competing web of state and professional organizations and their differing teacher evaluation systems.

These models include four major professional/collaborative organization standards and several state models.

Additionally, prominent personalities in education—like Charlotte Danielson, Robert Marzano, and Kim Marshall—all have their own teacher evaluation models that the authors summarize and compare. All of the different state, professional, and individual models have few profound differences. They all contain a shared emphasis on student learning, professional collaboration, and continued professional development.

Like nearly every book on education, the authors continuously seek to distinguish themselves from the world of charlatans who populate the world of educational professional development. Rather than one-day workshops lead by “insultants,” the authors emphasize continuous professional learning realized through specific teacher growth plans. Practically, these goals are achieved through clear steps and numerous short classrooms visits by supervisors. This general focus on learning gives the intent of creating an evaluation process rather than a series of bureaucratic hurdles and formulaic procedures.

*Supervision and Evaluation for Learning and Growth* is an approachable and effective introductory text for educators transitioning into roles as supervisors and evaluators. The chapters are concise and clearly written, and the graphics add to the book’s information, rather than simply summarize the major points of each section.

Perhaps one of the more valuable features of the book is the chapter case studies. These case studies present real world dilemmas that intersect with the major themes of each section. Examples include how to provide meaningful support to both tenured and non-tenured teachers, and taking over as a building principal in a school that has never had a meaningful evaluation system. Since the majority of the readers of a text like this will be students, these activities would serve as excellent prompts for learning activities and discussions.

The authors do breeze over some of the larger challenges in teacher evaluation, such as determining what qualifies as proficient instruction and how to handle belligerent educators. Additionally, a sizeable amount of the book is dedicated to preparing evaluators for selecting the best evaluation system for their schools. While it is certainly beneficial to know about the variety of teacher evaluation models,

most of these decisions are made by complex bureaucracies and are beyond the hands of the individual evaluators who are this text’s target audience. Overall, however, *Supervision and Evaluation for Learning and Growth* is a concise and valuable evaluation guide for existing and future school leaders.

**“Supervision and Evaluation for Learning and Growth: Strategies for Teacher and School Leader Improvement.”** By Daniel R. Tomal, Robert K. Wilhite, Barbara J. Phillips, Paul A. Sims, and Nancy P. Gibson. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015. ISBN: 978-1-4758-1373-9

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