Limited External Evaluation of McGrath SUCCEED with TRUE-SPEAK

[A Framework for Principled Thinking and Communicating]

The McGrath SUCCEED Framework is recommended as a supervisory and evaluative program that helps to build a climate of support and communication for instructional improvement and accountability. The framework provides beneficial applications for educational decision-makers in the supervision and evaluation process; offers school leaders relevant knowledge, dispositions, and performances; and has social, behavioral, and educational validity.

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PURPOSE OF EVALUATION

The purpose of the evaluation is to determine the merit of the SUCCEED (System Using Constructive Communication to Enhance Effectiveness and Development) program:

1. Is the program beneficial for educational decision-makers in the supervision and evaluation process?

2. Does the program offer school leaders relevant knowledge, dispositions, and performances?

3. Does the program have social, behavioral, and educational validity?

SUMMARY

In a productive and growth-oriented, employee evaluation process, educational leaders including superintendents, district-level supervisors and directors, and site-based administrators need the skills and expertise for effective dialogue in building a professional learning community. A critical component of this process is direct and prescriptive communication that builds more powerful and professional relationships. This communication provides an avenue for understanding and accountability for both the supervisor and the employee. This balance promotes a more productive and meaningful relationship.

Unfortunately, the skills and expertise needed to establish an encouraging and safe environment, where non-threatening dialogue, mutual understanding, productive evaluation, and clear communication can occur, are often taught in isolation of direct supervision and evaluation skills. Employee evaluations, often a product of legal requirements and state and district mandates, more threateningly challenge and counteract a productive and supportive relationship. Thus, the legalities of remediation and dismissal begin to override critical elements of human interaction including trust, respect, understanding, and engagement.

The McGrath SUCCEED Framework attempts to introduce educational leaders and supervisors to a new way of thinking about accountability, supervision, and evaluation. It advocates a legally sound program with heart. While established policies, procedures, and directives sometimes lose focus of the human element, McGrath seeks to incorporate her extensive legal expertise with a strong desire to improve relationships and professional discourse. The SUCCEED Program urges a blending of "essential culture-building principles with knowledge-based practices" or rather "honesty, compassion, and accountability as well as due process and just cause." Whether these two paradigms are compatible is the true test of this endeavor.

It is the favorable conclusion of this evaluation that the McGrath program successfully combines a communication format that encompasses the basic components of social and human interactions in a legally defensible document. In an attempt to change the nature of communication and interaction between supervisor and staff and school leaders and parents, it has been determined that the McGrath SUCCEED Program incorporates critical components that facilitate:

- Professional communication.
- Constructive feedback.
- Common evaluative and supervisory language.
- A cohesive framework for accountability.
- Specific resource allocation and support for improvement.
- Leadership development.
- Personal investment in human development.

External Evaluation: SUCCEED

While McGrath is certainly not the forerunner in communication techniques (e.g., Fischer and Ury, Arygris, Nichols, etc.), social dynamics and supervision in organizational structure (e.g., Senge, Covey, Blanchard, Fullan, Sergiovanni, Barth, etc.), professional educational standards (e.g., state standards, Danielson's Framework for Teaching, etc.) or even the only legal authority in supervision and evaluation (e.g., Andelson, Ribas, etc.), her program *is* a legitimate and practical attempt at *combining* each of these attributes into a process and structure that heightens a *unity of direction* for both the employer and employee. The social dynamics along with the procedural requisites coalesce into a practical tool that can be easily learned, duplicated, and applied with achievable results:

- To communicate and appreciate valuable and productive contribution and performance.
- To communicate and determine the impact of inadequate performance.
- To strengthen and support employees where needed.
- To provide constructive response for improvement.
- To clarify direction.
- To establish baseline competencies.
- To communicate applicable standards and policies.
- To assist in investigation and decision-making.

Despite a state, district, or school's current evaluative instrument (i.e., rubrics, performance assessments, administrative standards, observation check-lists, etc.), the McGrath SUCCEED program provides the foundation whereby constructive communication is an established norm. It bridges the gap between the affective domain and the evaluative process. It enhances and influences district policy concerning the collection, analysis, and interpretation of evaluation data. The *TRUE-SPEAK*™ Template is a supervisory tool that can supplement or supplant existing evaluation tools as follows:

- An instrument for immediate and specific communications with all stakeholders.

- An instrument for communication (formative or summative) to enhance and strengthen current practices (e.g., rubrics become a data collection method, whereas the McGrath template communicates the results).

- An instrument for evaluation to replace a current instrument.

The SUCCEED Framework is recommended as a supervisory and evaluative program that supports a climate of principled-thinking and communication for instructional improvement and accountability.

BACKGROUND

McGrath Training Systems

Since 1978, the McGrath Training Systems has provided professional development and training opportunities (bullying, sexual harassment, liability training, cultural and racial diversity, and principled thinking and communicating) to government agencies, schools, groups, and businesses. The program founder and author, Mary Jo McGrath, is a successful attorney specializing in employee performance and school duty and liability litigation issues. She is a former chair/participant of U.S. Department of Education Safe, Discipline, & Drug-Free School's panel.

Program Components

McGrath's *SUCCEED with TRUE-SPEAK™: A Framework for Principled Thinking and Communicating* advertises a communication course for coaching, supervision, evaluation, and leadership with the following emphasis:

> The acronym, SUCCEED, stands for System Using Constructive Communication to Enhance Effectiveness and Development. The program seeks to develop people, impact performance, and develop the following:

1. Commendation of highly effective performance
2. Encouragement and growth beyond average performance
3. Remediation of ineffective performance
4. Correction of persistently unsatisfactory performance

The Program components include objectives, address procedures and process, and description of the *TRUE-SPEAK™* standard:

McGrath SUCCEED Objectives

- Apply clear thinking and communicating to every situation
- Conduct on-the-spot decision making and problem solving
- Develop a common language and skill set for daily use
- Improve student achievement in culture of feedback
- Understand the human dynamics of giving and receiving feedback
- Build confidence and respect

SUCCEED Procedures and Processes

- Site files
- Personnel files anonymous information and rumors
- Feedback conversations
- Supervision
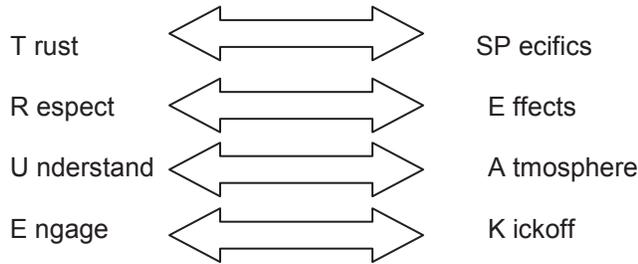- Evaluation

Professional Development Goals

> Day One: How to think, listen, speak, write, and take action.
> Day Two: Thinking and communicating the SUCCEED motto: Lead with your heart, while using your head.

External Evaluation: SUCCEED

TRUE-SPEAK™ Standard

| Principles=BEING | Practices = DOING |
| *Lead With Your Heart* | *While Using Your Head* |

T rust ⟷ SP ecifics

R espect ⟷ E ffects

U nderstand ⟷ A tmosphere

E ngage ⟷ K ickoff

PROGRAM ANALYSIS

In a review of social science research and organizational and educational psychology, there is validation for the concepts emphasized and outlined in McGrath's SUCCEED Goals and TRUE-SPEAK™ standard. Basic criteria for human interaction including communication, feedback, trust, and respect are supported in the literature.

The focus on the human element emphasized in SUCCEED is also reflected in Tennessee's Governor Phil Bredesen's words, "I believe with all my heart that the simplicity and focus that is needed in education is to refocus on the individual teacher; a commitment to getting the best possible people to teach in each and every classroom. The problem is not at its core about organization, or technology, or measurement; it's about human capital and how to maximize it. Once that is in place, everything else will fall in line" (p. 10).

Dodd and Konzal (2002) further declare that this human capital is best developed in an arena of mutual respect, "Open communication based on trusting relationships—where motives are not questioned, where honest disagreements are explored, where people listen and learn from each other, where it is safe to say what one really thinks—can lead to better educational decisions for all children" (p. 174).

A key area of concern stems in a lack of communication and feedback in a typical school's evaluation and supervision process as noted by philanthropists, Bill and Melinda Gates:

> Most teachers are evaluated by an administrator only two or three times a year. Typically, school principals or their assistants will briefly drop in to a teacher's classroom to observe a lesson. Based on what the administrator sees during that twenty minutes or so, he or she will fill out a standard evaluation form, along with checking off boxes for things like ' arrives on time' and ' maintains professional appearance.'

> There is very little professional feedback on or analysis of what the administrators saw, or how the teacher could be better. There is rarely an attempt to correlate the administrator's observations to how much, or how little, the students in the class learned.

> From our conversations with teachers and union leaders, it's clear that many educators are frustrated that they do not get the help they need to coax more from their students. In 2008 and 2009, our foundation partnered with Scholastic Inc. to conduct a national survey, and we heard from some 40,000 teachers on crucial questions facing the profession. The survey reveals that teachers overwhelmingly believe that professional development is crucial to their success and that of their students, and that they want more feedback about their performance in the classroom. (2010, p. 208)

Frase and Streshly (1994) continue, "Teacher evaluation ratings are widely viewed as having little value" (*see also* Wise, Darling-Hammond, McLaughlin, and Bernstein, 1985; Scriven, 1990; Poston and Manatt, 1992). They concur with the finding of ineffectiveness:

> Teacher evaluation has lost or never had a purpose. It has become perfunctory. Little energy is invested, and the teacher receives little if any constructive feedback for improvement. In too many districts, the only reason for complying is to meet state requirements.

> Teachers in many cases have good reasons for holding evaluation and supervision in contempt. Evaluations have not been helpful, evaluators are not adequately trained in curriculum and instruction, and feedback is either absent or of low quality. Most serious of all, they do not result in instructional improvement. Failure to provide accurate feedback accompanied by substantive and practical suggestions for improvement closes the door to improvement and enhanced internal motivation. (p. 1)

Frase and Streshly assert that the lack of accuracy, feedback, and commitment in teacher evaluation falls in four basic areas:

1. Evaluation ratings are inflated beyond reality.
2. Teachers and principals receive little substantive feedback for improvement from evaluations.
3. Professional growth plans are not aligned with personal evaluation findings.
4. Evaluators fail to assume responsibility for teacher evaluations.

Similarly, Penn State faculty researchers, Scheeler, Ruhl, and McAfee (2004), reviewed ten studies including 208 teachers (predominantly pre-service) and found that feedback could be classified in five categories:

1. Specific feedback, in which objective information related to predetermined specific teaching behaviors is offered.
2. Corrective feedback, in which the type and extent of teacher error are identified and specific ways to correct the error are suggested.
3. Non-corrective feedback, in which the type and extent of error are identified, but no corrective actions are suggested.
4. General feedback, which is vague and nonspecific, but hints at being evaluative (e.g., saying such things as "fine" or "okay").
5. Positive feedback, characterized by praise for demonstration of a specific teaching behavior.

They concluded that the most useful supervisor feedback was immediate, positive, corrective, and/or specific:

> The researchers found that when feedback content was specific, corrective, and/or positive, it was more likely to result in positive changes in the behaviors targeted by the researchers in the original studies.

> Specific feedback resulted in an increased amount of time that the teachers spent on targeted direct instruction behaviors.

> When feedback to teachers was corrective and positive, teachers ultimately asked more questions to their students in an effort to check understanding. They also engaged in more frequent verbal interactions with students, made more effective use of pacing and prompting behaviors, and decreased their usage of vague terms such as „okay' (as cited by Savrock, 2005).

Thus, the SUCCEED program seeks to promote communication principles including the understanding of human dynamics and the clear communication of direct and focused feedback. Similar to Fischer and Ury's (1991) effective approach, <u>Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving Up</u>, the SUCCEED program also emphasizes the need to separate the individual from the problem while focusing on solutions rather than deficits. Fisher and Ury concur that a working relationship should be based on "accurate perceptions, clear communication, appropriate emotions and a forward-looking, purposive outlook" (p. 21).

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PROGRAM VISION

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For educational leaders to be successful in a coaching, supervision, evaluation, and leadership role*,* McGrath identifies the SUCCEED vision: *To transform lives through TRUE communication and relationship.* Thus, leaders must 1) be skilled and inspired to have people excel around them as individuals and team members, 2) be known as a trusted and valued partner in people's growth, 3) become masterful at meaningful, honest, and transformative communication and feedback.

1) <u>**Be skilled and inspired to have people excel around you as individuals and team members**</u>.

   Peter Senge, frequently referenced as the father of learning organizational theory, declares, "When teams are truly learning, not only are they producing extraordinary results, but the individual members are growing more rapidly than could have occurred otherwise. . . . The discipline of the team learning starts with ‚dialogue,' the capacity of the members of the team to suspend assumptions and enter into a genuine ‚thinking together' " (1990, p. 9,10).

   Similarly, research on teamwork by Maeroff (1993) recommends that individuals in a team acquire skills, knowledge, and understanding in the following areas:

   1. Group Roles
   2. Stages of Group Development
   3. Leadership in Small Groups
   4. Effective Communication
   5. Trust Building
   6. Problem Solving, Planning, and Decision Making
   7. Effective Ways to Conduct Meetings
   8. Conflict Resolution
   9. Group Process Evaluation (as cited by Peterson, K., 2000, p. 3)

   The concept of having people excel as individuals and team members is further validated in the principle of "distributed cognition." Teamwork requires allowance and understanding of this psychological principle that confirms the need for group thinking where higher levels of thinking and production are achieved as a group rather than as an individual (DeBono 1999, Ormrod, 2003; Brown, A.L., Ash, D., Rutherford, M., Nakagawa, K., Gordon, A. & Campione, J. C., 1993; Hewitt & Scardamalia, 1998; Salomon, 1993a, 1993b).

2) <u>**Be known as a trusted and valued partner in people's growth**</u>.

   Jim Burke, former Chairman and CEO of the Johnson & Johnson, maintains, "You can't have success without trust. The word trust embodies almost everything you can strive for that will help you to succeed. You tell me any human relationship that works without trust, whether it is a marriage or a friendship or a social interaction; in the long run, the same thing is true about business, especially businesses that deal with the public" (as cited in Covey, 2006, p. 6).

In addition, leaders in an instructional capacity "are more likely to be successful in creating professional communities" if they have the trust of those they lead (Matthews and Crowe, 2010, p. 226).

In a study by Hoy, Tarter, and Witkoski (1992), "Supportive relationships between principal and teachers influenced collegiality among teachers and trust in the principal, which in turn influenced a school-wide trust in colleagues. This collegial trust then can lead to school effectiveness and improved student learning" (as cited in Matthews & Crowe, 2010, p. 247).

Being a trusted and valued individual may be rooted in an actual "interpersonal" intelligence as defined by noted educator, author, and research, Howard Gardner. Daniel Goleman extends this ability as an "emotional intelligence" or as "a different way to being smart. It includes knowing what your feelings are and using your feelings to make good decisions in life. It's being able to manage distressing moods well and control impulses. It's being motivated and remaining hopeful and optimistic when you have setbacks in working towards goals. It's empathy; knowing what the people around you are feeling. And it's social skill—getting along well with other people, managing emotions in relationships, being able to persuade or lead others" (as cited in O'Neil, 1996, p. 6).

3) **Become masterful at meaningful, honest and transformative communication and feedback.**

Hoy and Miskel, authors of Educational Administration: Theory, Research, and Practice (2008), state, "Communication is so pervasive in schools that it is a fundamental and integrative process in educational administration. Communication means sharing messages, ideas, or attitudes to produce understanding or shared meanings among people" (p. 414).

Senge (1990) further describes masterful communication, "The discipline of the team learning starts with ‚dialogue,' the capacity of the members of the team to suspend assumptions and enter into a genuine ‚thinking together'" (1990, p. 10).

And finally in a study and exploration of the impact of active feedback on organizational behavior, Lin (2000) discovered the following:

> The issue of whether feedback will benefit performance has been supported but this is also an indication that receiving feedback may have benefits in addition to task or job performance. Specifically, receiving feedback may increase satisfaction, contribute to long term task behavior and reduce the likelihood that individuals will seek out alternative employment.

> Another important component in the effectiveness of feedback is the source of the feedback. If the person giving the feedback (the source) is seen as trustworthy and as having good intentions then the feedback is much more likely to be accepted and acted upon the receiver of the feedback (p. 44).

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE GOALS

Once the purpose and direction of the SUCCEED program are crystallized, the emphasis is directed to the performances that will create and develop the relationships and environment necessary to attain the vision. In support of the vision, McGrath articulates six performance goals that are well-grounded in social, behavioral, and educational knowledge, dispositions, and performances. Brief statements of validation and support are noted in each of the following defined areas:

Performance # 1: Apply clear thinking and communicating to every situation.

Clear communication encompasses expressive and receptive skill: a specific and articulate message and attention to what is being heard. Hoy and Miskel clarify, "Richness, repetition, and feedback enhance the likelihood that the intended effort of gaining the shared meaning of the message will occur" (p. 388).

Wood (2006) defines critical thinking skills for effective communication as follows:

1. Identify assumptions behind statements, claims, and arguments.
2. Distinguish between logical and illogical reasoning.
3. Separate facts from inferences.
4. Evaluate evidence to determine its reliability, relevance, and value.
5. Connect new information and ideas to familiar knowledge; apply concepts learned in one context to another context; recognize when and where specific principles are and are not appropriate.
6. Distinguish between personal experiences, attributes, and behaviors and generalizations about human beings.
7. Identify and consider alternative views on issues, solutions to problems, and courses of action.
8. Define problems and questions clearly and precisely.
9. Draw reasonable conclusions about the implications of information and arguments for thought and action.
10. Determine how to find answers to important questions by considering what needs to be known and what sources might provide relevant knowledge. (p. 22)

Not only must the communication be purposeful, but the attention to listening is a key component. Michael Nichols, renowned family therapist and author declares that listening requires far more than linear thinking. Nichols declares that every listener, measures the intentions of other speakers by what they said—or what was heard—and asks that others measure him by what was meant to be said" (1995, p. 55). Thus, congruency of message is imperative.

Gibbs further validates the listening component, "Attentive listening is probably the most important social skill to be taught and practiced by everyone in the learning community. Unfortunately, for many students (and adults) the experience of being listened to in a caring way rarely happens.   Attentive listening is a gift to be given." Gibbs notes this attentiveness depends upon the following components:

- Acknowledging the person who is speaking with full attention and eye contact
- Withholding one's own comments, opinions, and need to talk at the time
- Affirming through body language that the speaker is being heard
- Paying attention not only to the words but also to the feelings behind the words (p. 93)

Nichols expands this communication principle, "When people don't listen to us, we can't help feeling it's their fault: they're selfish or inconsiderate. (When *we* don't listen, it's because we're bored or tired or don't like being talked down to.) The truth is, listening is a complex process. Even though failures of listening all end in the same painful experience of not being heard, there are many reasons people don't listen" (p.38).

One of the reasons, listening is thwarted is due to emotional-driven responses. Nichols declares, "Reacting emotionally to what another person says is the number-one reason conversations turn into arguments" (p. 93). For communication to be purposeful and direct and the message to be appropriately conveyed, distractions such emotion-driven responses must be neutralized. Nichols continues, "Reacting emotionally to what another person says is the number-one reason conversations turn into arguments" (p. 93). Nichols

maintains that one of the major reasons for the lack of listening is emotional reaction, "Something in the speaker's message triggers hurt, anger, or fear, which activates defensiveness and blocks understanding" (p. 88). He further declares, "Shame and insecurity are wounds that make people react violently to criticism. Some people retreat from hurt feelings, while others attack. . . . The universal human vulnerability to criticism is related to the universal yearning for love and approval" (p. 92).

[McGrath similarly emphasizes the need for clear and factual communications without emotion-driven references and responses.]

Performance #2: Conduct on-the-spot decision making and problem solving.

Consistency, timeliness, and focused attention in decision making and problem solving create the environment for confidence and respect to flourish. When accuracy in identification and description of a problem can be easily defined and addressed, the influence is then pro-active rather than reactive.

Blanchard, author of several leadership books including his classic: One Minute Manager, suggests, "A problem only exists if there is a difference between what is actually happening and what you desire to be happening" (1982, p. 31). It is a careful supervisor that handles routine decisions in prescriptive and efficient manner.

Gibbs (2001), successful developer of the TRIBES program and author of the TRIBES Process: A New Way of Learning and Being Together, utilizes a similar problem solving strategy, "Let's Talk ," for effective communication, personal responsibility, and a plan of action (p. 138):

Gibbs	**[McGrath]**
• Define the problem, situation, or concern.	[**SP** Specifics]
• Repeat the problem back (if in a discussion).	[**SP** Specifics]
• Think it through.	[**E** Effects]
• Look at both sides.	[**A** Atmosphere]
• Decide and act.	[**K** Kickoff]
• Evaluate the outcome.	[**SP** Specifics]

Performance #3: Develop a common language and skill set for daily use.

For a team to successfully unify and develop, a common or shared vocabulary is needed for a declaration of goals and a unity of direction. The New Jersey Professional Development Partnership (2010) perhaps best articulates this need: "A common language provides a description of the essential terms most commonly used in shaping and discussing a PLC (professional learning community)." A common language invites an "understanding of the terminology, purpose and processes involved in establishing and sustain a PLC" (p. 2).

In a study of effective team communication at Pepperdine University, Gibson (2008) found that "using a common language in a team setting does have an effect how successful a team will be in completing their assigned work" (p. 73). Gibson continues, "I find that far too often teams fall far short of projected goals simply because they use words, terms, and phrases that are strictly a creation specific to their work group" (p. 75).

Performance # 4: Improve student achievement in a culture of feedback.

Mathews and Crow (2010) affirm, "Dialogue is what you get when active listening spreads throughout the school. A learning community develops among teachers when they can openly speak with one another about their teaching practices and student learning. In a profession that has been shrouded in isolation, teacher and principal

dialogues is a welcome and important step toward improving the instructional climate in schools" (p.164).

Byrk and Schneider (2003) cite research of Professional Learning Communities: achievement increased in environments of trust and feedback; teacher dialogue then provided an increased attention to student need; and reading and math scores of elementary students improved in these schools.

Performance #5: Understand the human dynamics of giving and receiving feedback.

Prior to giving and receiving feedback, SUCCEED explores the basic human need for acceptance and the desire to be understood. Similar to Maslow and his Hierarchy of Needs, SUCCEED explores the needs of the whole person as noted in the following chart.

Maslow: Hierarchy of Needs	SUCCEED: Whole Person Needs
Safety: • The need to feel safe & secure in one's environment. Love & Belonging: • The need to have affectionate relationships with others and to be accepted as part of a group.	Impostor: • Go into defensive reasoning • Anxious about "not being good enough • Is today the day they'll find out "I'm faking it?" • Internal vocalizing instrument called the "constant critic"
Esteem: • The need to feel good about oneself and to believe that others also perceive oneself favorably.	"Smart" Person: • Sense of self is highly invested in what we do. • Want to be perceived by others as doing a good job. • Want to be respected, upset if not. • "I" (ego) based.
Self-Actualization: • The need to reach one's full potential—to become all that one is capable of becoming. *(Ormrod, 2003, 373)	Questing Person: • A deep desire to make a difference • Wants to reach out and impact the world in a positive way. • Purpose-based rather than reactive. • Often succumbs to the "Smart" Person and Impostor.

Comparable to Maslow's "self-actualization" and McGrath's "questing person", Dweck (2008), a world-renowned Standford University psychologist, explores a "fixed" and "growth" mindset. In a brain-wave lab at Columbia University, it was discovered that people with a "fixed mindset" were only interested when the feedback from difficult questions reflected on their ability. They paid close attention when told whether their answers were right or wrong. Those with a growth mindset, however, paid close attention to information that could stretch their knowledge. Fixed mindset leaders reaffirm status by demeaning others whereas growth mindset leaders are never threatened by high-performing employees and view competency as a rich addition to a collaborative team. They create a culture of "self-examination, open communication, and teamwork" (p. 143). Alternative views and constructive criticism are fostered.

In review of feedback, Perkins (2008) discusses the three different styles: corrective, conciliatory, and communicative. The communicative feedback is structured to ensure good communication. It involves three key elements:

- Clarification. To guard against misunderstandings of what's on the table, communicative feedback allows for some kind of upfront check, such as questions of clarification. Although this is easiest in one-on-one conversations, the principle applies to written work also.
- Appreciation. Communicative feedback includes clear identification of positive features as seen by the evaluator. This may not be as elaborate as the critical comments to follow, but it is a clear developed presence. The recipient of the feedback knows what in your view worked well, what to hold onto, and what to keep doing.
- Concerns and suggestions. Then communicative feedback shares concerns and suggestions. These focus on a positive future: how to improve this or do better next time. They avoid criticisms of the person's capabilities or character and address the situation. (2008, p. 86)

Gardner (2008) also supports specific feedback, "Make it clear to the worker that he needs to improve with respect to one or more of these competences. Model the desired behavior, and point to clear positive (and negative) models. Create positive, trusting atmospheres. Set reasonable goals. Provide regular, pointed feedback" (p. 166).

Performance #6: Build confidence and respect.

According to Senge (1990) learning organizations are those "where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together" (p. 3).

Gardner (2008) elaborates this collective aspiration, "It is up to the educational system as a whole—the educational system in the broadest sense—to ensure that the ensemble of minds is cultivated" (p. 165). For such an organization to exist, confidence and respect must be a foundational principle.

Gibbs (2001) affirms that mutual respect assures all participants that "their individual cultural values, beliefs, and needs will be considered and properly honored" (p. 96).

Abraham Maslow, a leading humanistic psychologist, summarized the concept of respect as follows:

> Let people realize clearly that every time they threaten someone or humiliate or hurt unnecessarily or dominate or reject another human being, they become forces for the creation of psychopathology, even if these be small forces. Let them recognize that every man who is kind, helpful, decent, psychologically democratic, affectionate, and warm, is a psychotherapeutic force even though a small one (1970, p. 254).

Finally, Purkey and Novak (2005), advocate "intentionally inviting" schools where confidence is evident and an atmosphere of respect is easily observable. Intentional invitations help to build the associations necessary for meaningful and successful practices to flourish.

COMMON LANGUAGE

In her TRUE-SPEAK™ principles, McGrath outlines key components of communication. Her approach balances critical basic human needs with the requirements for accountability in a legally sound, reflective, and data-driven model. McGrath uses easily identifiable terms and principles in her communication template. Again, a brief validation and statements of support are noted in each of the following defined areas:

PRINCIPLES OF BEING	*PRACTICES OF DOING*
TRUST	**SPECIFICS:** *What happened?*
Trust is the foundational principle upon which everything is built. Being objective elicits people's trust of you. Base your reasoning on specific, observable facts. Leave adjectives and adverbs that reflect judgment and opinion out of the SPECIFICS section. To avoid surprises, be sure the standard against which the performance or behavior is measured has been previously conveyed. (Components: Aboveboard, Engaged, Clear, Objective/Candid, Consistent) –Mary Jo McGrath	*In your verbal or written communication, include a description of specific observed behaviors without opinion. This provides a mirror in which the person is able to see his/her own performance, rather than your judgment about that performance. If there is a pattern of behavior, prior occurrences should be mentioned after the current incident is described. Beware of the tinged words; they convey disapproval and rejection, and obscure the point of the communication. (Components: Timely Interaction; Nature of Communication; Focus of Attention; Specific Facts, Conveyed Expectations) –Mary Jo McGrath*

In his book, <u>The Speed of Trust: The One Thing That changes Everything</u> (2009), Stephen Covey, psychologist and distinguished author, defines trust as follows:

> Simply put, trust means confidence. You can't have success without trust. The word trust embodies almost everything you can strive for that will help you to succeed. You tell me any human relationship that works without trust, whether it is a marriage or a friendship or a social interaction; in the long run, the same thing is true about business, especially businesses that deal with the public (2006, p. 5).

Covey further outlines the critical dispositions needed for trust development:

1. Talk Straight
2. Demonstrate Respect
3. Create Transparency
4. Right Wrongs
5. Show Loyalty
6. Deliver Results
7. Get Better
8. Confront Reality
9. Clarify Expectation
10. Practice Accountability
11. Listen First
12. Keep Commitments
13. Extend Trust

Blanchard (1982), co-author of the highly acclaimed and most widely used text on leadership and organization behavior, identified a brief, direct, specific, and immediate "one minute management" program that became a standard for supervision. He suggests, "Most managers are ‚gunnysack' discipliners. That is, they store up observations of poor behavior and then some day when performance review comes or they are angry in general because the ‚sack is so full,' they charge in and ‚dump everything on the table.' (p.86)."

Perhaps the strength of this SUCCEED program lies in the "no surprises" realm. McGrath specifies the standard of due process is one of no surprises; just cause as fairness; and fitness for service as a focus on the connection of behavior to the effects or rather than a "gunnysack" approach.

Covey (1991) summarizes the role of trust in communication, "People instinctively trust those whose personalities are founded upon correct principles. We have evidence of this in our long-term relationships. We learn that technique is relatively unimportant compared to trust, which is the result of our trustworthiness over time. When trust is high, we communicate easily, effortlessly, instantaneously. We can make mistakes, and others will still capture our meaning. But when trust is low, communication is exhausting, time-consuming, ineffective, and inordinately difficult" (p.18).

For over 20 years, the Twelve Great Places to Work Institute has compiled the list of the hundred best American companies for whom to work. They reached the conclusion that "trust between managers and employees is THE primary defining characteristic of the very best workplaces" (2006, p. 5).

Hord (2007) declares, "Trust provides the basis for giving and accepting feedback in order to work toward improvement. Building trust requires substantial time and appropriate activities that enable the individual to experience the trustworthiness of colleagues and to extend or become trustworthy to complete the cycle" (p. 2).

Finally, Argyris (2010) asserts, "Without interpersonal competence or a 'psychologically safe' environment, the organization is a breeding ground for mistrust, intergroup conflict, rigidity, and so on, which in turn lead to a decrease in organizational success in problem solving."

RESPECT	EFFECTS: *What was the impact of what happened?*
Rely on the belief that most people intend to do a good job. Trust that once they understand how particular practices do not fulfill their intentions, people will alter their practices. In having this belief, you treat people with dignity and respect. At the same time, you hold people accountable for the consequences of behavior . . . not just that a behavior was performed, but that it was effective. (Components: Responsible, Answerable, Forthright, Willing, Balanced) –Mary Jo McGrath	*The descriptions in the SPECIFICS and EFFECTS sections should show a cause-and-effect relationship between behavior and its outcomes. Highlighting this relationship allows the learner(s) to self-correct by enabling them to understand the rationale of the requested behavior change. Further, the communicator needs to be sure that SPECIFICS and EFFECTS are in balance, neither one under- or over-stated. (Components: Impact of Facts; Comments of Others; Source of Information; Attitude Displayed; Group and individual Interests) – Mary Jo McGrath*
A demeanor and manner that treats another with appropriate attention and dignity is the basis of respect. Carl Rogers (1983), humanist psychologist and forerunner in self-concept theory, declared, "It's possible to hold an individual accountable for their mistakes yet not make them feel like failures."	Blanchard (1982) identifies the number one motivator of people as feedback on results, "Feedback keeps us going." He maintains that we often have a "leave alone-zap style" of management, which means "you leave a person alone, expecting good performance from them, and when you don't get it, you zap them" (p. 83). Thus,

Collins (2006) declares, "When things go well, look through the window; when things go badly, look in the mirror. In other words, give credit generously and take the blame for problems. Celebrate your staff with respect to what they do and who they are."

Spaulding (1992) continues, "It is also possible to admonish for error without holding grudges from one day to the next" (1992).

Gibbs (2001), an advocate of mutual respect, declares that the purpose of such a behavior "is to assure everyone that their individual cultural values, beliefs, and needs will be considered and properly honored" (p. 96). She further maintains that "confidentiality/no rumors-no gossip" is an important aspect of mutual respect. This attention to personal confidences displays respect and builds trust (p. 47). [McGrath, likewise, calls attention to the role of anonymity: The source of the information cannot be anonymous or unidentified to the employee (8.9).]

In her widely used Framework for Professional Practices, Danielson (2007) likewise promotes an environment of respect and rapport for establishing and maintaining professional interactions.

feedback should be for positive performances as well as performances needing improvement and should be in observable, measurable terms.

Similarly, Ribas (2005), attorney and developer of E.L.P.S. (Educational, Legal, Public Relations-Political, and Social-Emotional Standards & Processes of Effective Supervision and Evaluation) promotes subjective conclusions (claims, judgment, impact) supported by observable and/or variable data (evidence).

UNDERSTAND	ATMOSPHERE: *What are the other factors to consider?*
People are influenced by many different things in their personal and professional lives. Without recognition of this dynamic, there could be a lack of compassion for the effect certain variables are having on a person's performance. This principle allows for performance to be viewed from a 'big picture' perspective. Look at the whole human being and the system in which they are function, rather than a particular behavior in isolation. (Components: Recognition, Assistance, Perseverance, Awareness/Compassion, Appropriate Weight) –Mary Jo McGrath	*Factor in variables that may be influencing a person's performance makes this approach an open system, rather than a closed system. These variables may extend into health, family or personal issues that are disrupting a person's ability to perform effectively. Some personal matters may be addressed verbally rather than in writing. The rule is – Always talk first, write second. (Components: Prior Preparation/Training; Prior Help Given; Efforts Toward Growth; Other Circumstances; Pattern of Performance) –Mary Jo McGrath* *Evaluators' NOTE: The term "atmosphere" has dual meaning in educational literature (i.e., school climate, environment). McGrath uses the term to designate the "context" of the communication.*
Nichols (1995) maintains, "Unshared thoughts diminish us not only by making us less authentic and less whole, as we've discussed, but also by eating at us relentlessly. Repression is not like putting something away on the closet shelf and forgetting about it; repression takes a constant expenditure of energy that slowly wears us slowly down.	Blanchard (1982), influenced by Carl Rodgers, specifies a consistent, sincere, familiar, honest, and open relationship with employees.

The feeling of not being understood is one of the most painful in human experience. Not being appreciated and responded to depletes our vitality and makes us feel less alive" (p. 35).	Gibbs (2001) describes several similar atmosphere components: As one of the key systems, the school must examine its own environment, or climate. School climate is the spirit that prevails for teachers, students, administrators, resource people, and parents. It is the music underlying the words—an energy that either contributes to or inhibits learning. A positive classroom climate evolves out of the following • An atmosphere of trust • A sense of belonging and community • Involvement in decision making • Kindness and encouragement from peers • The teacher's energy and morale • The teacher's authenticity and nonjudgmental attitude • Clear expectations, goals, learning outcomes • Fairness and equity in participation
ENGAGE	**KICKOFF:** *Next action steps?*
Growth is the contextual principle within which feedback, coaching, discipline, and effective leadership occur. The intention is that correction or enhancement can be effectively accomplished on an immediate basis. McGrath SUCCEED allows everyone to engage in their own improvement, rather than being forced to utilize a "one size fits all" system. (Components: Leadership, Investment, Achievement, Diligence, Transparency) –Mary Jo McGrath Kohn (1993) declares, "It needs to be said that allowing people to make decisions about what happens to them is inherently preferable to controlling them" (p. 111). Similarly, Lambert (2000) contends, "Interesting, as a profession, we've attended to the learning of students, and we've attended to the learning of ourselves; but oftentimes we haven't raised our eyes around the table to say, „I am also responsible for your learning, as a colleague, and you're responsible	***Given that this is a logic-based formula for thinking and problem-solving, the appropriate action step to be taken is determined by working the formula: TRUE (SPECIFICS + EFFECTS) ATMOSPHERE = KICKOFF. Because this is a dynamic system, each set of actions generates a new formula cycle: TRUE (SPECIFICS + EFFECTS)= ATMOSPHERE=KICKOFF. Each action taken must correspond to the above formula. If not, there will be a mismatch between people and systems. (Components: Recommendations/Directives; Resources Available; Measures of Progress; Schedule of Follow-Up; Retained/Respond) –Mary Jo McGrath*** The action steps in the McGrath formula call for specificity and must be tailor-made to the teacher and situation. This strategy holds great promise for helping teachers improve their professional practice. McLean (1995) contends that "implementation of a complete program of data collection and use can lead to the improvement of education as has no other educational innovation of the last century" (p. 87)

for my learning.' Embedded in that is one of the most essential factors in learning, which is reciprocity. I have something to learn from you. You have something to learn from me. And we have something to learn together."	Argyris (1999) declares that if any company aspires to be successful they must "first resolve a basis dilemma: success in the market place increasingly depends on learning" (p. 267). Thus, the action step is the foundation whereby the learning begins. Gibbs (2001) further maintains, "Action plans are ‚group contracts,' which remind people of their accountability to one another" (p.139).

CONCLUSION

Leading educator in supervision and instruction, Roland Barth (2002) summarizes, "To change a school's culture requires mustering the courage and skill to not remain victimized by the toxic elements of the school's culture and to address them instead. Culture building requires the will to transform the elements of school culture into forces that support rather than subvert the school's purposes. Of course, these acts violate the taboos of many school cultures, which is why culture changing is the most important, difficult, and perilous job of school-based reformers" (p. 7).

Mary Jo McGrath seeks to change the nature of the culture in schools. She brings her legal expertise in schools to the arena of communication. Her TRUE-SPEAK™ model provides relevant and teachable supervisory performances to develop people as she seeks to commend, encourage, remediate, and correct while accomplishing the means to enhance the culture and climate of the workplace (2.8).

Thus, the program meets the established criteria:

1. Provides beneficial applications for educational decision-makers in the supervision and evaluation process;

2. Offers school leaders relevant knowledge, dispositions, and performances; and

3. Has social, behavioral, and educational validity (*as noted in the Program Analysis*).

Existing publications, documents, and records (e.g., materials, books, manuals, and communications) from the McGrath program were the major source of data gathered and analyzed for this evaluation. Although limited, the evaluation provided an extensive review of published documents. To provide a comprehensive representation of the SUCCEED Framework, further evaluation would need to be conducted after full implementation. Meanwhile, there is some current anecdotal evidence of its implemented success. Future qualitative and quantitative design and methods may include the following:

- Conduct interviews with stakeholders including trainers of the program, administrators implementing McGrath in schools/districts, teachers who are being supervised using the McGrath program.
- Conduct observations in schools that have implemented the program and observe administrative and employee interactions.
- Complete survey data with administrators and employees on attitudes toward values and merit in the program.
- Utilize a comparative analysis of past employee evaluation and observation feedback to current feedback including facts, impact, support, and direction.

Minor recommendations and suggestions for program and material enhancement will be discussed in personal communications with Mary Jo McGrath.

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