

*A*DVANCING

<sup>the</sup>  
THREE-MINUTE

WALK-THROUGH

**Mastering Reflective Practice**

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So we are not necessarily suggesting that there is one approach that works with each person, but we are highly recommending that you be aware of your beliefs about how you view the human nature of people and how people are motivated. From that understanding should then come actions that are congruent with those beliefs as they relate to supervision, coaching and mentoring. When we apply these beliefs to our walk-through and follow-up conversation actions, it readily becomes apparent that our beliefs about people and how they learn and grow influence our actions and purpose of coaching and supervision.

The key is that we want to make sure that our supervision, coaching and mentoring will have long-lasting influence over those with whom we interact. We encourage you to see individuals as good people who are working to make a difference and to contribute. Therefore, posing reflective questions to help the individual think about their own practice is a viable strategy in helping influence a person's growth and professional practice.

## USING VARIOUS TYPES OF INTERACTIONS CONGRUENT WITH A THEORY Y PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH

In the Downey approach to follow-up conversations, she provides for a continuum of interactions from direct to indirect to collaborative. One can believe in a Theory Y approach and use various types of interactions. The words used, the power of choice and the encouragement of reflection can take place in all types of interactions.

Some have interpreted Downey's direct approach as not including reflection. This is not the case. Her approaches always include reflection. When she uses the term *direct*, she means that the supervisor/coach is going to be in a teaching mode. During the conversation, the coach provides ideas for reflection regarding a specific purpose and the thinking that might go on to make decisions regarding that particular practice.

Downey, in *The Three-Minute Walk-Through* (Downey et al., 2004) wrote extensively about the three types of interactions – how they might sound. Figure 1.1 illustrates the range and approaches of a conversation for a direct, indirect and collaborative approach. Notice that reflection is built into all three of the types of interactions.

Chapter 4 provides more detail about these types of conversations.

One of the misunderstandings of some individuals using the Downey approach is that they think a direct approach is linked to Theory X, while the collaborative approach is linked to Theory Y. This is not the case. Downey believes in a Theory Y approach with all three types of interactions and recognises that people are at different stages of their careers and

This chapter is to supplement the original book, *The Three-Minute Classroom Walk-Through: Changing School Supervisory Practice One Teacher at a Time* (Downey et al., 2004). In this book, the five-step structure was described in detail. The focus of this chapter is on either the misunderstanding or misapplication of the observation lens as we have watched individuals and groups of individuals attempting to implement the approach. Also, additional ideas are being shared about the process.

## CLARIFYING THE FIVE-STEP OBSERVATION STRUCTURE APPROACH

The classroom observation segment is a few-minute walk into classrooms with a non-judgemental lens. The Downey observation structure has five steps as described in the book, *The Three-Minute Classroom Walk-Through: Changing School Supervisory Practice One Teacher at a Time* (Downey et al., 2004). The five steps provide a lens for the observer walking into classrooms, and Downey stresses that Steps 2 and 3 are the most important. The steps with sub-steps are illustrated in Figure 3.1 below:

**Figure 3.1** Five-Step Observation Structure of the Downey Walk-Through

<b>Step 1</b>	<b>Orientation to the work:</b> Are students doing what the teacher wants them to do? Are they attending?	
<b>Step 2</b>	<b>Curricular decisions:</b> What standards and objectives is the teacher teaching to, and how do they match system curricular standards/expectations?	
	Part I: Taught objectives	What is the content of the taught objectives? What is the context of the taught objectives? What is the cognition type being used in the taught objectives?
	Part II: Intended objectives	What is the congruence between the actual taught objectives and the teacher's intended (stated or written) objectives?
	Part III: Calibrated objectives	What is the alignment between the content of the taught objectives and the system curricular standards/expectations?



**Figure 4.15** First-Order and Second-Order Reflective Question Examples

<i>First-Order Reflective Questions</i>	<i>Second-Order Reflective Questions</i>
<p><b>Use of pacing charts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When planning your lessons around the curriculum and pacing chart,</li> <li>• and thinking about the sequencing of objectives of your lessons within a six-week period,</li> <li>• what criteria do you use to decide the order of the objectives</li> <li>• to impact student achievement?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Use of pacing charts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When planning your lessons around the curriculum and pacing chart</li> <li>• and thinking about the sequencing of objectives of your lessons, the readiness of your students to learn the objectives, and whether to follow the pacing chart suggestions,</li> <li>• what criteria do you use to decide which objectives and the order of the objectives</li> <li>• to impact individual student achievement?</li> <li>• Use of pacing charts and assessments</li> <li>• when planning your lessons around the relevant curriculum and pacing chart,</li> <li>• and thinking about how you will formally and informally assess students to determine their readiness for the various objectives within the pacing chart,</li> <li>• what criteria do you use in selecting those formal and informal assessments in order to determine which objectives to teach to which students including prerequisite learnings or more advanced learnings</li> <li>• so that each student is learning at a challenging level?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Use of resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When you are planning your lessons around the curriculum</li> <li>• and thinking about the resources you will use to teach the objectives such as the adopted textbook, videos, computer programs and so on,</li> <li>• what criteria do you use to decide on the resources to use</li> <li>• in order to help students achieve the curriculum learnings?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Use of resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When you are planning your lessons around the relevant curriculum and each student's individual learning needs</li> <li>• and thinking about which of all the resources to use and whether to use any of the adopted resources,</li> <li>• what criteria do you use to decide on the resources to use</li> <li>• in order to help each student move forward on the curriculum learnings?</li> </ul>

## BEING REFLECTIVE ON CHAPTER CONTENT

Here are some questions for you to reflect on with respect to the content of this chapter:

1. In your experience, how have you evaluated the viability of the connection between data gathering by the principal and conversations between teachers and principals about school practices? What would you do to improve the connection?
2. This chapter talks about building trust in the workplace between supervisors and those supervised. From the chapter's point of view, how would you decide to develop trust and collegiality in problem solving to enhance effectiveness in the workplace?
3. How would you explain to your colleagues the precept that changes need to occur in teachers' perceptions of their effectiveness in practice before student learning can be improved? What examples in your own professional life might you use to support the idea?
4. What implications have you drawn for yourself after reading the finding that schools organised without shared understanding, common efforts and participatory conversations and with teachers working independently with little direction from school leaders showed little evidence of a coherent, instructional framework and collaborative work to improve instruction? How might you contradict that result?
5. In your own mind, what conclusions have you reached about sharing decision-making authority with colleagues? How is this likely to change your behaviour as a leader?