Linking Teacher Evaluation and Professional Development

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The goal of teacher evaluation

The \textbf{ultimate} goal of all teacher evaluation should be...

TO IMPROVE TEACHING AND LEARNING
Chicago Study (Sartain et al., 2011)

“The work in Chicago and across the country to improve evaluation was motivated by two main factors. First, evaluation systems were failing to give teachers either meaningful feedback on their instructional practices or guidance about what is expected of them in the classroom. Second, traditional teacher evaluation systems were not differentiating among the best teachers, good teachers, and poor teachers.” (p. 1, italics added)
Six components in well-aligned evaluation system (Goe et al., 2012)

1. High-quality standards for instruction
2. Multiple standards-based measures of teacher effectiveness
3. High-quality training on standards, tools, and measures
4. Trained individuals to interpret results and make professional development recommendations
5. High-quality professional growth opportunities for individuals and groups of teachers
6. High-quality standards for professional learning
Evaluation for accountability and instructional improvement

• Effective evaluation relies on:
  ▪ Clearly defined and communicated standards for performance
  ▪ Quality tools for measuring and differentiating performance
  ▪ Quality training on standards and tools
    - Evaluators should agree on what constitutes evidence of performance on standards
    - Evaluators should agree on what the evidence means in terms of a score
Can we use both summative evaluation results for formative purposes?

- Popham (1998): “fixing” (formative) vs. “firing” (summative) the teacher

- Milanowski (2005): Study with new teachers getting feedback from peers or from principals found “…no major differences between the groups in terms of openness to discussion of difficulties, reception and acceptance of performance feedback, stress, turnover intentions, actual turnover, or performance improvement.” (p. 153)
“Feedback on whether or not instructional practices are working can come in the form of student learning data, the teachers’ own observations of student engagement, observations from a peer or a coach, a video-taped record of the practice, discussion within a professional learning community, or the results of a formal evaluation.” (p. 6)
Multiple Standards-based Measures of Teacher Effectiveness

• Affords many benefits to a comprehensive evaluation system
  ▪ Ability to triangulate results increases confidence in evaluation outcomes
  ▪ More complete picture of teacher strengths and weaknesses
  ▪ Each type of measure provides a different type of evidence

• All work together to better inform professional development decisions
Multiple measures of teacher effectiveness

- **Evidence of growth in student learning and competency**
  - Standardized tests, pre/post tests in untested subjects
  - Student performance (art, music, etc.)
  - Curriculum-based tests given in a standardized manner
  - Classroom-based tests such as DIBELS

- **Evidence of instructional quality**
  - Classroom observations
  - Lesson plans, assignments, and student work
  - Student surveys such as Harvard’s Tripod
  - Evidence binder (next generation of portfolio)

- **Evidence of professional responsibility**
  - Administrator/supervisor reports, parent surveys
  - Teacher reflection and self-reports, records of contributions
How can evidence used for teacher evaluation help teachers grow?

- Observations
  - The observation itself will probably contribute little to teacher growth
  - *Having a conversation about the lesson helps teachers grow!*

- Teacher’s contribution to student learning
  - Student learning results will contribute little to teacher growth
  - *Analyzing results in relation to specific teaching practices helps teachers grow!*
How can evidence used for teacher evaluation help teachers grow? (2)

• Surveys
  ▪ It’s not the results themselves that matter, *it’s what teachers do with them*
    - Self-reflection & focus on improvement
    - Discussion with mentor, principal, colleagues

• Teacher portfolios
  ▪ It’s not a “brag book,” *it’s about how the teacher sets/pursues meaningful goals related to improving knowledge & instructional practice*
Questions to ask about teacher evaluation for professional growth

1. Who will conduct teacher evaluations? Principals? Trained peers? Combination?

2. How will evaluators be trained to interpret evidence (observations, student growth, etc.) and give meaningful feedback?

3. How will time and opportunities by found for teachers to analyze, discuss, and set goals for growth (with guidance)?

4. What support/oversight will be provided?
What nearly all state and district models for teacher evaluation have in common

• Observations play a prominent role
  ▪ Both full class periods and walk-throughs

• Growth models will be used for those teachers in *tested* grades and subjects (4-8 ELA & Math in most states)

• States seek to increase the number of tested subjects and grades so that more teachers can be evaluated with growth models

• States are trying a variety of approaches for measuring teachers’ contribution to student growth in non-tested subjects and grades
Recommendation 2: Employ measures of student learning explicitly aligned with the elements of curriculum for which the teachers are responsible. This recommendation emphasizes the importance of ensuring that teachers are evaluated for what they are teaching.
# Measuring teachers’ contributions to student learning growth: A summary of current models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student learning objectives</td>
<td>Teachers assess students at beginning of year and set objectives then assesses again at end of year; principal or designee works with teacher, determines success</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subject &amp; grade alike team models (“Ask a Teacher”)</td>
<td>Teachers meet in grade-specific and/or subject-specific teams to consider and agree on appropriate measures that they will all use to determine their individual contributions to student learning growth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colorado Content Collaboratives</td>
<td>Content experts (external) identify measures and groups of content teachers consider the measures from the perspective of classroom use; may not include pre- and post measures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-and post-tests model</td>
<td>Identify or create pre- and post-tests for every grade and subject</td>
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<tr>
<td>School-wide value-added</td>
<td>Used in TAP Model; teachers in tested subjects &amp; grades receive their own value-added score; all other teachers get the school-wide average</td>
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School-wide VAM illustration
Differentiating among teachers

• “It is nearly impossible to discover and act on performance differences among teachers when documented records show them all to be the same.” (Glazerman et al., 2011, pg 1)
Interpreting results for alignment with teacher professional learning options

- Different approach; not looking at “absolute gains”
- Requires ability to determine and/or link student outcomes to what likely happened instructionally
- Requires ability to “diagnose” instruction and recommend and or provide appropriate professional growth opportunities
  - Individual coaching/feedback on instruction
  - Observing “master teachers”
  - Group professional development (when several teachers have similar needs)
The 4 Ps (Projects, Performances, Products, Portfolios)

- Can be used to demonstrate teachers’ contributions to student learning growth
  - As part of Student Learning Objectives model, Colorado Content Collaboratives Model, Ask a Teacher Model, etc.

- **Can also be used to provide important information to teachers about student learning**
  - Their levels of skills and knowledge and changes in these levels in response to teaching
  - Specific strengths and weaknesses of individual students and groups of students, even when no prior achievement data is available
Most helpful measures of student learning provide teachers with information that is...
Least helpful measures of student learning provide teachers with information that is...

- Aggregated to the “topic” level
- Available long after lesson is taught
- Requires training/help to interpret
- Not obviously related to teaching practice
Questions to ask about each measure used

• How will using this measure in the teacher evaluation system impact teaching and learning in classrooms and schools?
• How will the use of this measure look different in low-capacity vs. high-capacity schools?
• How will reporting on results from this measure be done (to provide actionable information to teachers, principals, schools, districts, teacher preparation programs, and the state)?
• How will we know if this measure is working as we intended?
Lessons Learned

- There are no perfect measures
- Evaluator training is essential (for validity and fairness)
- Schoolwide averages can mask both good teaching and poor teaching
- Student learning is the product of multiple teachers’ efforts
- Principals can’t do it all (consider TAP approach, PAR, distributed leadership)
- Implementation is an iterative process which should be guided by data
References


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