

# Assessing Teacher Effectiveness

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## Why Assess Teacher Effectiveness?

- Quality Assurance
- Professional Learning

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## Defining Effective Teaching

Two basic approaches:

- Teacher practices, that is, what teachers *do*, how well they do the work of teaching
- Results, that is, what teachers *accomplish*, typically how well their students learn

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## Defining What Teachers *Do*

Two basic approaches:

- As judged by internal assessors, within the school or district, based on specific criteria
- As judged by external assessors, for example National Board Certification

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## Assumptions of Defining Good Teaching Based on What Teachers Do

- There is consensus on what excellent teachers do, that is, on standards of practice
- Teachers and administrators can accurately recognize exemplary practice in different contexts
- School leaders have the skills to promote excellent teaching with their teachers

These assumptions are difficult, but not impossible, to realize.

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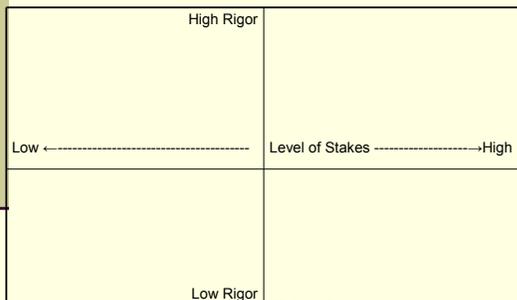
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## Teacher Evaluation System Design



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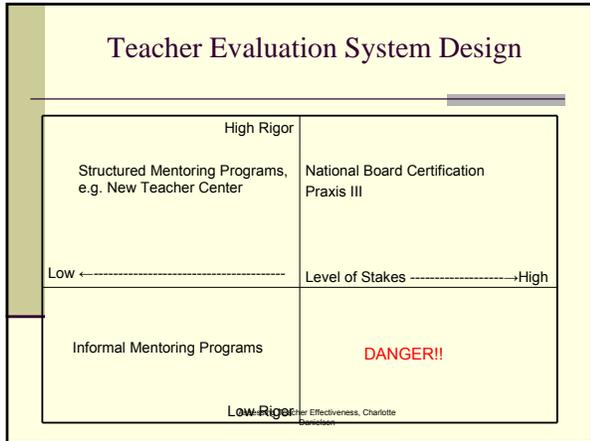
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### Defining What Teachers *Accomplish*

- Typically linked to student achievement on state-wide assessments
- Because of the importance of out-of-school factors, validity and equity demand “value-added” measures
- Recent approaches encourage classroom-based assessments, school/district end-of-course exams, etc.

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### Assumptions of Defining Good Teaching Based on Student Test Scores

- Available assessments include all valuable learning
- Assessments are available for all teachers
- In preparing students for the assessments, teachers will use good instructional strategies (That is, “teaching to the test” is good teaching)
- Statistical techniques can attribute student learning to individual teachers

These assumptions are questionable

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### Negative Consequences of Defining Effectiveness Based on Test Scores

Even if the assumptions are satisfied, and especially if the stakes are high:

- Cheating, by teachers or administrators
- Narrowing the curriculum to what is assessed, and the manner in which it is assessed
- If student achievement is defined as the percentage who exceed a standard, teachers concentrate their efforts on those close to the line, shortchanging others

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### Unintended (but negative) Consequences of Assessing Teacher Practice

In their concern to “look good” on the rubric, especially if the stakes are high:

- Teachers become “legalistic,” parsing the words, defending their performance
- Teachers adopt a low-risk approach, not willing to try new approaches
- Teachers are unwilling to accept challenging students in their classes
- Teachers may be reluctant to share materials, expertise, etc.

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### Unintended (but positive) Consequences of Assessing Teacher Practice

- Training for teachers and assessors encourages them to better understand good teaching
- Results of the assessment provide specific feedback for teachers on where they should focus their improvement efforts
- The assessment procedures themselves can promote professional learning

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## Contributors to Teacher Learning

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- Self-assessment
- Reflection on practice
- Professional conversation

All done in an environment of trust

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## Defining What Teachers *Do* The Four Domains

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Domain 1: Planning and Preparation

Domain 2: The Classroom Environment

Domain 3: Instruction

Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities

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## The Framework for Teaching Second Edition

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|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Domain 1: Planning and Preparation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy</li> <li>• Demonstrating Knowledge of Students</li> <li>• Setting Instructional Outcomes</li> <li>• Demonstrating Knowledge of Resources</li> <li>• Designing Coherent Instruction</li> <li>• Designing Student Assessments</li> </ul> <p><b>Domain 3: Instruction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicating With Students</li> <li>• Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques</li> <li>• Engaging Students in Learning</li> <li>• Using Assessment in Instruction</li> <li>• Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness</li> </ul> | <p><b>Domain 2: The Classroom Environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport</li> <li>• Establishing a Culture for Learning</li> <li>• Managing Classroom Procedures</li> <li>• Managing Student Behavior</li> <li>• Organizing Physical Space</li> </ul> <p><b>Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflecting on Teaching</li> <li>• Maintaining Accurate Records</li> <li>• Communicating with Families</li> <li>• Participating in a Professional Community</li> <li>• Growing and Developing Professionally</li> <li>• Showing Professionalism</li> </ul> |
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## Common Themes

- Equity
- Cultural sensitivity
- High expectations
- Developmental appropriateness
- Accommodating individual needs
- Appropriate use of technology
- Student Assumption of responsibility

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## Domain 2: The Classroom Environment 2a: Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport

**Figure 4.2b** DOMAIN 2: THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT  
COMPONENT 2A: CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT OF RESPECT AND RAPPORT  
Element: Teacher interaction with students; Student interaction with one another

| ELEMENT                              | LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE  |  |  |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|--|---|
|                                      | UNSATISFACTORY  | BASIC  | PROFICIENT   | DISTINGUISHED   |
| Teacher interaction with students    | Teacher interaction with at least some students is negative, demeaning, sarcastic, or inappropriate to the age or culture of the students. Students exhibit disrespect for the teacher. | Teacher-student interactions are generally appropriate but may reflect occasional inconsistencies, favoritism, or disregard for students' cultures. Students exhibit only minimal respect for the teacher. | Teacher-student interactions are friendly and demonstrate general caring and respect. Such interactions are appropriate to the age and cultures of the students. Students exhibit respect for the teacher. | Teacher's interactions with students reflect genuine respect and caring for individuals as well as for groups of students. Students appear to trust the teacher with sensitive information. |
| Student interaction with one another | Student interactions are characterized by conflict, sarcasm, or put-downs.  | Students do not demonstrate respect for one another.   | Student interactions are generally polite and respectful.  | Students demonstrated genuine caring for one another and monitor one another's treatment of peers, offering clearances respectfully when needed.  |

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## Features of The Framework for Teaching

- Comprehensive
- Grounded in research
- Public
- Generic
- Coherent in structure
- Independent of any particular teaching methodology

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### One Use of Teacher Evaluation: Differentiated Career Status

Possible career levels, for example:

- Probationary, or non-tenured teacher
- Career, or tenured teacher
- Master teacher, e.g. mentor or instructional coach
- Faculty leader, e.g. department chair, team leader, or peer evaluator

Some of these roles require additional skills, but high-quality teaching is essential

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### When is Robust Evaluation of Teacher Effectiveness Essential?

- When offering a teacher a continuing contract
- When conducting a periodic assessment of tenured teachers' practice (in a multi-year cycle)
- When determining a teacher's eligibility for a new career status
- When moving a teacher to, or removing the teacher from, an "action plan"

In other situations, teacher evaluation plays a developmental role, emphasizing professional learning

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### Challenges in Implementing Robust Teacher Evaluation Systems

- Clearly defining good teaching
- Building understanding and consensus on the description of good teaching
- Developing instruments and procedures to capture evidence of practice
- Training (and certifying?) evaluators
- Structuring expectations to permit time for high-quality evaluation, including time for professional conversation

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## State Policy Levers to Influence Teacher Effectiveness

- Articulation of professional teaching standards
- Certification of teacher preparation programs
- Teacher licensing and re-licensing
- Student assessments on state content standards
- Certification of administrator preparation programs
- Administrator licensing and re-licensing
- State support for mentoring programs
- Requirements for district teacher evaluation
- State grants for district programs to encourage and reward exemplary practice
- Direct state support for National Board Certification

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