



The components of a strong evaluation system

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Annual observations and evaluation ratings

A central aim of teacher evaluations is to help all teachers improve, in part by offering all teachers needed feedback on their performance every year. Having up-to-date evaluation ratings is also essential in using these ratings to inform personnel decisions (e.g., retention,ⁱ recommendations for leadership positions, additional pay).

Multiple measures

The Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) project found that multiple measures (namely classroom observations, student surveys, and objective measures of student achievement) produce more consistent, stable ratings over the years, as compared to a single measure of effectiveness.ⁱⁱ

Objective measures

Teacher evaluation systems should include objective measures of student learning, as well as other measures. Evidence shows that teachers who increase their students' learning positively influence those students' long-term achievements (e.g., higher likelihood of attending college, earning higher salaries), in addition to benefiting their immediate academic outcomes.ⁱⁱⁱ Because a teacher's effectiveness can vary from year to year, multiple years of data (e.g., two years of value-added data) should be used in determining a teacher's summative evaluation rating to increase accuracy.^{iv}

Multiple observations with more than one trained observer

Observations serve several purposes, including providing actionable feedback to teachers and informing a summative rating that can be used in staffing decisions. Observation scores are more reliable when teachers are observed multiple times throughout the year by more than one observer.^v And evaluation systems are considered stronger – and are associated with better outcomes for students – when the observers have training on the observation rubric.^{vi}

At least three rating categories

Evaluation instruments that differentiate among various levels of teacher performance, rather than those with binary satisfactory/unsatisfactory ratings, further increase the utility and validity of evaluation systems. Traditionally, binary rating systems have offered little meaningful information because virtually all teachers received satisfactory ratings.^{vii} More rating categories allow for more nuanced distinctions among levels of teacher performance.

A link to support and consequences

A primary purpose of teacher evaluations is to identify areas in which teachers are performing well and areas in which they need to improve. However, simply naming these areas is likely insufficient. States and districts should also provide professional development tailored to a teacher's specific needs.^{viii} Linking evaluation systems to positive consequences, such as additional pay, can support efforts to build a stronger teacher workforce.^{ix} Teachers' salaries are an effective tool to recruit and retain teachers, and to incentivize or reward certain behaviors.^x Additionally, not giving salary increases to ineffective teachers sends an important signal about the significance of teacher effectiveness.

Endnotes

- i. Cullen, J. B., Koedel, C., & Parsons, E. (2017). The compositional effect of rigorous teacher evaluation on workforce quality. CALDER Working Paper No. 168. Retrieved July 8, 2019 from <https://caldercenter.org/publications/compositional-effect-rigorous-teacher-evaluation-workforce-quality>.
- ii. Cantrell, S., & Kane, T. J. (2013). Ensuring fair and reliable measures of effective teaching: Culminating findings from the MET project's three-year study. MET Project Research Paper. Retrieved August 8, 2018 from <http://k12education.gatesfoundation.org/resource/ensuring-fair-and-reliable-measures-of-effective-teaching-culminating-findings-from-the-met-projects-three-year-study/>.
- iii. Chetty, R., Friedman, J. N., & Rockoff, J. E. (2014). Measuring the impacts of teachers II: Teacher value-added and student outcomes in adulthood. *American Economic Review*, 104(9), 2633–79. Jackson, C. K. (2012). Non-cognitive ability, test scores, and teacher quality: Evidence from 9th grade teachers in North Carolina (Working Paper No. 18624). National Bureau of Economic Research. Retrieved from <http://www.nber.org/papers/w18624>.
- iv. Cantrell, S., & Kane, T. J. (2013). Ensuring fair and reliable measures of effective teaching: Culminating findings from the MET project's three-year study. MET Project Research Paper. Retrieved August 8, 2018 from <http://k12education.gatesfoundation.org/resource/ensuring-fair-and-reliable-measures-of-effective-teaching-culminating-findings-from-the-met-projects-three-year-study/>.
- v. Ho, A. D., & Kane, T. J. (2013). The reliability of classroom observations by school personnel. MET Project Research Paper. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Retrieved July 8, 2019 from http://k12education.gatesfoundation.org/download/?Num=2520&filename=MET_Reliability-of-Classroom-Observations_Research-Paper.pdf. Kane, T. J., & Staiger, D. O. (2012). Gathering feedback for teaching: combining high-quality observations with student surveys and achievement gains. MET Project Research Paper. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Retrieved July 8, 2019 from http://k12education.gatesfoundation.org/download/?Num=2530&filename=MET_Gathering_Feedback_for_Teaching_Summary1.pdf. Stecher, B. M., Holtzman, D. J., Garet, M. S., Hamilton, L. S., Engberg, J., Steiner, E. D., ... & Brodziak de los Reyes, I. (2018). Improving teaching effectiveness. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.
- vi. Steinberg, M.P., & Sartain, L. (2015). Does better observation make better teachers: New evidence from a teacher evaluation pilot in Chicago. *Education Next*, 15(1), 71–77. For examples of how training is considered standard in strong evaluation systems, see, Garet, M. S., Wayne, A. J., Brown, S., Rickles, J., Song, M., Manzeske, D., & Ali, M. (2017). The impact of providing performance feedback to teachers and principals. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved July 8, 2019 from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED578873.pdf>; and Kane, T. (2012). Capturing the dimensions of effective teaching: student achievement gains, student surveys, and classroom observations. *Education Next*, 12(4), 34–42. Retrieved July 8, 2019 from <https://www.educationnext.org/capturing-the-dimensions-of-effective-teaching/>.
- vii. Weisberg, D., et al. (2009). The widget effect: Our national failure to acknowledge and act on differences in teacher effectiveness. The New Teacher Project. Retrieved August 16, 2018 from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED515656.pdf>.
- viii. For a summary of research on the importance of using compensation as an incentive or report, see NCTQ. (2017). Professional support: The district's professional development is high quality and tailored to teachers' needs. *Great Districts for Great Teachers*. Retrieved June 29, 2018 from <http://www.greatdistricts.org/district/criteria.do?detail=true#slide-2-1>; and NCTQ. (2017). Professional support: Teachers receive feedback and coaching to help them improve their performance. *Great Districts for Great Teachers*. Retrieved June 29, 2018 from <http://www.greatdistricts.org/district/criteria.do?detail=true#slide-2-4>.
- ix. Cullen, J. B., Koedel, C., & Parsons, E. (2017). The compositional effect of rigorous teacher evaluation on workforce Quality. CALDER Working Paper No. 168. Retrieved July 8, 2019 from <https://caldercenter.org/publications/compositional-effect-rigorous-teacher-evaluation-workforce-quality>.
- x. For a summary of research on the importance of tailoring professional development to teachers' individual needs, see NCTQ (2017) Professional compensation structure: Salaries reward teachers for doing a great job. *Great Districts for Great Teachers*. Retrieved June 29, 2018 from <http://www.greatdistricts.org/district/criteria.do?detail=true#slide-1-2>.

For more, see our full *NCTQ State of the States 2019: Teacher & Principal Evaluation Policy* report:
<https://www.nctq.org/pages/State-of-the-States-2019:-Teacher-and-Principal-Evaluation-Policy>