

Title:

Best Practices in Teacher Evaluation

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Summary:

This presentation summarizes research and current trends in the evaluation of teachers. From this discussion, the presenters will propose key components for a better evaluation process.

Purpose:

It seems as though there are as many teacher evaluation methods as there are school systems, each with different philosophies, guidelines, and purposes. The purpose of this study was to examine several existing evaluation methods and compare them to literature and suggestions by reputable educational organizations. From this research, the presenters propose a few key components for a successful teacher evaluation process.

Research Questions:

- What are the major evaluation philosophies present today, and which is more beneficial to student learning?
- Which aspects of teacher evaluation are the most effective?
- What teacher qualities should be included in the evaluation instrument?
- Is it possible to create a teacher evaluation process that incorporates these best qualities?

Findings:

There are two dominating philosophies in current teacher evaluation processes, and the most beneficial to students focuses on improving teaching. A second, less-effective addresses job performance in which educators are usually measured against itemized standards. Nearly all evaluation methods, regardless of its underlying philosophy, include a process for removing employees deemed substandard.

Of all the different aspects found in teacher evaluation, three seem to stand out as being the most effective. First, mentors should be included in the process as they are usually most familiar with the teacher being evaluated. Students should also have some input into the evaluation process as well, either directly through surveys or indirectly through student work or assessment results. As for time spent with evaluators, short and more frequent visits seem to provide a better analysis of teacher effectiveness versus annual visits that last an entire class period.

In the actual evaluation instrument, three qualities or standards should be included – teacher progress, professionalism, and communication. Student progress should be imbedded in the first standard. Professionalism deals with teacher responsibilities outside of actual instruction, and communication should include parents, students, and other educators. While there are many other valid qualities that can be included in evaluation, these three should not be left out.

From the research, it is possible to create an evaluation process that incorporates the mentioned qualities. Better yet, the proposed process should fit the requirements of most school systems with minor modifications. The key to its success is communicating to all involved of its purpose.

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