

# Implementing Performance-Based Evaluation for Teachers

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## ABSTRACT

Teacher evaluation plays an important role in enhancing educational quality by ensuring accountability and professional growth. Performance-based evaluations provide a more comprehensive approach than traditional methods by incorporating both qualitative and quantitative assessments of teaching effectiveness. This paper explores the significance of performance-based evaluations, highlighting their impact on teacher development, student achievement, and institutional competitiveness. It examines different evaluation models, including formative and summative assessments, and proposes an integrated framework that balances fairness, objectivity, and practical implementation. Key challenges such as evaluator bias, resistance to change, and resource limitations are also discussed, with recommendations for improving the reliability and effectiveness of evaluation processes in educational institutions.

**Keywords:** Teacher Evaluation, Performance-Based Assessment, Formative and Summative Evaluations, Educational Accountability, Professional Development, Student Learning Outcomes.

## INTRODUCTION

The evaluation of educators' job performance is essential, providing educational authorities with insight into in-class practices, learning environment creation, and student interaction. The formal structure mandates that "all educators must be evaluated formally every school year by an appropriately credentialed evaluator" using the Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching. Fair evaluations must distinguish between performance levels to enhance educational quality, necessitating radical changes in assessing educators' classroom practices. Unlike quantitative metrics, qualitative evaluations often carry excessive subjectivity, potentially leading to unfair judgments. As the significance of teacher evaluations rises, the challenge lies in performing these assessments effectively, fairly, and objectively. Linking evaluations to institutions' competitive performance enhancement is crucial, although consensus on the best approach is lacking. Educational systems in developed nations face scrutiny to justify their quality and relevance through evaluation methods borrowed from the private sector and academia, which are also under criticism [1,2].

### The Importance of Performance-Based Evaluation

Performance-based evaluation is essential for enhancing educator practices. There's increasing agreement that these evaluations should reflect job performance due to the complexity of teaching. Traditional methods often neglect this intricacy, necessitating diverse methodologies to assess teaching effectiveness accurately. Both public and private sectors are increasingly adopting enhanced performance-based evaluations. This article outlines a framework with seven performance categories and various evaluation tools. Key teaching elements, such as student engagement and real-world application, are frequently overlooked by test scores. Evaluations must accurately depict the teaching process, moving beyond mere content coverage. Criticisms of value-added models have led many to suggest modifications to conventional observation methods, highlighting the need for policies that address these shortcomings. Recent data reveals that 99.6% of teachers are evaluated through observations, while only 24.8% are

assessed based on student work. Less than 0.5% are evaluated through their work or by National Board standards, and only 6.4% are assessed regarding student learning connections. Over the past fifty years, teacher evaluation has evolved from relying heavily on observational evaluations and test scores. Research and policy advancements have pushed a focus on more evidence-based practices. Historically, evaluations emphasized qualitative measures agreed upon by observers, which often had minimal impact on employment due to difficulties in distinguishing effective practices. This emphasizes the need for a system that accurately evaluates qualitative and non-quantifiable practices. In response, states are crafting evaluation methods prioritizing student performance and observable teacher practices. Cuts to education budgets have diminished programs such as physical education and music, severely impacting student opportunities. Recently, education systems have been restructured, requiring students to receive instruction from multiple teachers daily. This strategy aims to improve educational experiences by promoting hands-on activities and higher-order thinking through interdisciplinary approaches. Recently, shorter 55-minute exams have replaced longer assessments, with scores rated on a 4-point scale. These performance-based evaluations have led to increased student scores as teachers focus on the enacted curriculum. Additionally, teacher wellness standards have been introduced, establishing a zero-failure policy to motivate teachers in aiding students' subject proficiency [3, 4].

### **Key Components of Performance-Based Evaluation**

As the desire for more accountability in the schools grows, so does the interest in improving methods for evaluating teachers. More and more educators are calling for incorporating a classroom component into evaluations because they believe that such an evaluation is more accurate, fairer, and more meaningful than evaluations based solely on principal or administrative observation. When done correctly, teacher evaluations that include both direct and indirect measures offer numerous benefits. A review of the limited research on combining both types of evaluation indicates the potential for improved staff development and better teacher performance. Teacher evaluation is a comprehensive appraisal of teacher performance and the level of achievement and growth of each student relative to the district model of teacher professional performance. Performance-based teacher evaluations must be planned and job-related, goal-oriented, and must need to be fully known and commonly understood by everyone concerned. The single most critical method used to make judgments about teacher performance is measurement. Consequently, to the greatest extent possible, performance appraisal forms are based on measurable tasks, assignments, and goals. Complete any teacher evaluation form by considering all standards, objectives, goals, and accomplishments agreed to by both the evaluator and the individual. In its ongoing commitment to the career development, job performance, and personal satisfaction of school district staff at all levels, Factors finds it essential that regular, honest, and constructive communication occur at all levels between supervisors and subordinates concerning performances in the current position. This procedure is established to formalize and document the frequency and result of such communication. The summative appraisal is most often used for decisions regarding salary administration and personnel recommendations initiated by the district regarding dismissals, reductions in rank, or other actions. Additionally, the evaluator, considering the professional growth goals or appraisal factors, submits, discusses, and suggests achievable performance improvement objectives in relevant areas [5, 6].

### **Types of Performance-Based Evaluations**

Another way by which there has been hope to promote productive changes in teaching performance is to make such performance the focus of competency assessment. Several types of performance-based evaluations exist, and choices about one rather than another has implications. Among the types that any school, district, or state might consider including in a teacher assessment system (formative and summative evaluations), there are not only different purposes and methodologies but also different implications attached to them. The method used to help someone become proficient at the job is considerably different from that used to ascertain on infrequent occasions whether or not they are proficient. Formative performance assessments are generally conducted not more than yearly and by someone directly responsible for coaching the teacher toward higher levels of expertise. Summative performance assessments are generally conducted no more than yearly and by someone not professionally responsible for the teacher's performance and thus free of any conflict of interest concerning the pursuit of actions to remove deficiencies haunting those being evaluated. There is nothing about a formative school-synthesized teacher performance assessment system that would preclude the inclusion of on-demand, public, summative, professionally-conducted teacher performance assessments as a comprehensive evaluation. Formative teacher performance assessments would precede, would not be the sole basis for, and could inform the structure of the summative. They are also psychosocially unobtrusive, which is not true of most workplace competency assessments. Since the different types of teacher

performance assessment serve different purposes and might give rise to different outcomes, the discussion of the potential policy implications of teacher performance assessment is cast in terms of methodological “type” choices. Described here are six methodological types of teacher performance assessment (three formative and three summative), including an exemplar of each type. In the categories of formative and summative demonstrations, these will serve to prepare the way for a more detailed discussion of individual design parameters [7, 8].

### **Formative Evaluations**

Performance-based evaluations set out with the aim to release a draft of the revised performance-based evaluation system for counting teachers. Every local educational agency has the right to develop an evaluation system for its teachers that could be adopted by other local educational agencies. The traditional summative evaluation systems are of two kinds: (1) Performance or domain-specific rubrics and (2) values-added measures of student growth over a fixed period. Arguments are made here for an additional layer of formative evaluation. Formative evaluations address the importance of an ongoing stream of feedback available to the instructor in real time, with the intent of altering instruction as needed to improve student performance and understanding. Furthermore, formative evaluations are formative insofar as they are intended to improve teaching and learning as a result of a given lesson. The end goal of any formative approach to evaluation is typically to guide the development of professional practitioners toward improvements in their ability to teach, plan, and/or manage a classroom. Methods of formative evaluation might include observations of the instructor or the student, peer review, student self-evaluation, or a rubric-based scoring of an instructional product. An idealized process might include a pre-observation diagnostic or teacher-reported measure, followed by observation, followed by a series of rubric assessments, followed by collaborative discussion of the results and a plan for instructional improvement. To fully realize this idealized model, a high degree of coordination and collaboration across schools and evaluation agencies would be required. The feedback loop would have to be short, with information ideally provided in advance of the next observed lesson. Responsive feedback would need to be connected to observable teacher practice. To streamline rubric implementation, video recording and scoring tools might be made available to teachers. There would be strong encouragement if not requirements, for collaboration with the other teachers on shared lesson plans, curriculum review, and professional development. Such a vision would require dramatic shifts in culture and practice across the education landscape to emphasize continuous learning [9, 10].

### **Summative Evaluations**

The purpose of summative evaluations is to assess overall teacher performance at the end of the instructional cycle, measuring the teaching impact on student outcomes and informing decisions on promotion, compensation, retention, training, or termination. These evaluations primarily rely on comparative student achievement scores, like standardized tests, contrasting pre- and post-instruction results. They can also include lesson samples and portfolios. Assessing teacher-based evidence enhances representation of instructional practices. Practitioners and administrators must understand the limitations and biases that accompany summative evaluations. Increasing pressure for fairness from teachers and unions has sparked research indicating that evaluations can impose undue pressure. Policies must balance accountability and support, shifting from a culture of fear towards one that encourages reflection and growth. Summative evaluations fit within comprehensive incentive systems, with a focus on their role in teacher evaluations. Typically, after three years, teachers undergo evaluations using pre/post-student surveys, interviews, submissions, principal surveys, and classroom observations. Classroom data includes observational logs, lesson plans, and videos of four lessons. Research reveals that teachers passing expert certification significantly enhance student learning by an average of 0.18 years compared to control groups, and positive effects are consistent across gender, reflected in both test scores and instructional practices [11, 12].

### **Designing An Effective Evaluation Framework**

After reading, annotating, and reflecting on the agreed upon material, I have learned a plethora of new knowledge about performance-based compensations. Performance-based evaluation processes prioritize competency over compliance. For the process to be truly effective, it must both describe satisfactory job performance as well as measure it accurately. Teacher performance evaluation processes can be improved by prioritizing the perceptions of the teachers being evaluated. Additionally, evaluations that are carried out using multiple measures are associated with satisfaction. Upon evaluating all levels of professionalism, teachers make suggestions about the use of additional assessment measures to encourage fairness in evaluations. All suggestions are taken into account in the short-term, as they offer excellent proactive steps when implementing this practice in any school system. When turning focus to the design, there are

many essential pieces needed to develop a meaningful and effective teacher performance evaluation process. As mentioned, the goals of the evaluation must be aligned with those of the larger organization. Therefore, from the outset of designing the process, clear objectives must be defined. Goals and the overall mission should be used to establish the kind of change that the process will inform. Additionally, in schools, goals related to the amount of student improvement aimed to affect must be considered. After establishing the purpose of the evaluation, collaboration is the next necessary piece. Any evaluation process will require substantial collaboration between teachers, school administrators, and the community. Implementation of a teacher evaluation process cannot fall squarely on the shoulders of the school administration. Collaboration is critical to help schools meet their professional expectations. Multiple measures should be used to evaluate teachers, as they allow evaluation processes to inform not only individual teaching practices but also the conditions that make district supports in providing effective instruction. When educating supervisors about using the evaluation tool, data showed that teachers who had coaches engaged in favorably their perceptions of the instrument [13, 14].

### **Data Collection Methods**

Evaluation procedures for assessing teacher performance emphasize the importance of mixed methods that combine quantitative and qualitative approaches. Data collection methods should include observations, student evaluations (standardized tests, essays, presentations), and teacher evaluations of student learning (surveys, completion certification). Incorporating 360-degree feedback from principals, parents and tracking average yearly student improvement further enriches this evaluation. Utilizing digital tools for lesson planning and professional development is also discussed. Best practices advocate for multiple performance assessment methods rather than a single perspective. Quantitative data provides numerical insights into teacher performance, while qualitative data offers contextual information. Observations by administrators who use rubrics for performance evaluation are typical. Quantitative measures can assess work quality with defined traits, ensuring reliable evaluations. Qualitative insights supplement this by highlighting ignored aspects, allowing for partial credit in evaluations where necessary. Emerging digital tools aid in lesson planning and facilitate ongoing professional development. Observations lead to discussions between teachers and evaluators, fostering constructive dialogues rooted in data rather than subjective feelings. Ensuring the reliability and validity of data is critical; sources must yield accurate and relevant information. Ethical considerations arise when data is gathered by untrained personnel, risking privacy violations. Effective data collection involves thorough analysis and constructive feedback with the person being evaluated. Consistency across evaluators is vital to maintain evaluation standards. Sunshine has adhered to guidelines to enhance evaluation practices. Constructing a professional development plan without sound metrics is inadequate. Careful data collection supports both formative and summative assessments and informs action plans for professional growth and success evaluation. Challenges arise with evaluating a subjective field like teaching. Rigorous evaluation requires diverse and reliable data sources to mitigate the risk of biased observations skewing outcomes. All data must be scrutinized before assessing an implementation model's effectiveness. Documented actions based on the data must align with a solid organizational framework to substantiate evaluative decisions [15, 16].

### **Analyzing Evaluation Data**

Translating raw evaluation data into meaningful pieces of information about a teacher's performance is, arguably, the most significant part of the evaluation process. To function effectively for formative and summative purposes, the translation should be done in a way that is fair and fully validates the data being collected. Observations, student data or surveys, artifacts, beliefs and practices data, learning climate data, and professional activities data obtained during evaluations can all be analyzed through quantitative or qualitative means; triangulating from multiple data sources is known to strengthen findings. In this setting, technology can facilitate both the analysis of such data as well as the visualization of resultant analyses. However, the most important factor to bear in mind revolves around the "tricky business" of data interpretation. This is particularly salient given that the results of the analyses performed serve as the basis for the kind of feedback teachers receive. Because this feedback will, in turn, dictate the decisions that both teachers and the schools they work in will take for professional development and policy-making purposes, any errors in the interpretation of results will, in a sense, trickle down and affect all subsequent judgments. As such, training is very much needed in this respect for evaluators to calibrate their analytical techniques and ensure accurate results. In effect, this is what will differentiate a fair and reputable evaluation from one that will be ignored or resented. In terms of analysis, several video-recorded lessons may be observed in a given school. On the one hand, this gives evaluators a fuller picture of a teacher's practice and the video collection, its "average" lesson, what frequent pedagogy looks like,

and whether this lesson differs much from the observed range. On the other hand, taking many measurements and carrying out many tests on a given data often raises the danger of observing false effects. Furthermore, visualizing data through various means highlights particular aspects of the data that wouldn't be apparent through descriptive analysis alone [17, 18].

### **Challenges In Implementation**

Implementation of new evaluation practices through the observation of educators faces many challenges. Evaluators often need training and experience to assess teaching practices fairly. Teachers accustomed to privacy and autonomy may resist observation and feedback procedures, perceiving evaluative scores as a loss of control, especially if they view data as misrepresentative of their impact on students. Training that influences perspective can lead to accusations of subjectivity, complicating administrators' efforts. Many small and rural school districts lack the resources for effective data collection, storage, and analysis, with funding concerns frequently raised regarding new evaluation requirements. These districts feel inadequately funded by state departments to comply with such measures. Additionally, focusing on external reliability and validity may overshadow discussions on effective implementation. This analysis employs secondary data to examine these "implementation questions," revealing that even when accounting for various factors influencing implementation professionalism, significant effects on perceptions of the new evaluation system persist [19, 20].

### **Best Practices for Performance-Based Evaluation**

Performance-based evaluation is on the rise in virtually all fields and is sure to be used much more extensively in education. For performance evaluations to be useful and help teachers grow, the Anne Arundel County school system offers the following best practices. Whether you are an administrator who supervises and/or evaluates the performance of educators or an educator who is supervised and/or evaluated by a teacher or principal, research can offer insight into the sometimes fraught relationship between supervisors and the supervised. The key to a good teacher evaluation system is a clear statement of what constitutes good teaching. Ideally, evaluations should be based on clearly articulated goals that can be measured. It is best if the goals are created collaboratively by the educator and the supervisor. A large body of research demonstrates the importance of professional development not only for educators but also for those doing the evaluation. Educators should be encouraged to be involved in their evaluation, inspect the data collected, and be active participants in constructing their professional development goals. Likewise, supervisors and evaluators should receive ongoing training to develop their observational/evaluation skills—classroom observations are the prime data sources used in evaluations—and should be up-to-date with the latest research. Validation research demonstrates that feedback is the most powerful tool in any performance evaluation framework. Regular and consistent feedback helps build a culture of improvement. An evaluation system is not a panacea or big brother and should not be used as a punitive measure—evaluation findings have real consequences on careers—action should be treated seriously, but with consideration of the high stakes. The best use of evaluations may well be for professional development. Schools and districts should be transparent about evaluation practices. A policy of "calculated teacher ratings in secrecy" is the most devastating approach to teacher evaluators as it is based on an adversarial culture of blame. A useful framework for evaluations includes multiple data sources and a focus on improvement.

### **Case Studies of Successful Implementations**

Since the mid-1980s, a series of reviews and publications has called for improvements in the evaluation of teacher performance. Schoolteachers consistently identified the use of weak teachers as one factor making schools less effective. These early calls for improved teacher evaluation were quickly underscored by comprehensive school reform efforts demanding more accountability on the part of American schoolteachers. An increasing number of schoolteachers embrace some form of performance-based incentives for teachers, including higher pay for improved student performance. In terms of teacher performance evaluation, this concern has been expressed in a call for the development and evaluation of improved tools and processes, including value-added measures of student performance as evidence of teacher effectiveness. Though support for incentives and the use of student performance in evaluation has grown, the knowledge about how to design effective performance evaluation systems and incentives for teachers remains limited.

Case Study A: Brownsville Independent School District, Brownsville, Texas the Brownsville Independent School District (BISD) has developed a searchable database of instructional activities. These databases allow classroom observers, district representatives, and even teachers themselves to document the presence or absence of specific instructional activities or teaching strategies during a given class period. This database has been used to increase the accuracy and objectivity of classroom observations. Based on

data that demonstrate an impact of teacher behavior on student achievement, this system reports the strength and alignment within campus and subject area of teacher-student assignment. The district system, though still a work in progress, could serve as a model for other districts preparing for the implementation of standards-based teacher evaluation systems, particularly those focusing on increased documentation.

**Case Study B: The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS)** Since 1987, the NBPTS has developed high and rigorous standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do. NBPTS has also developed a performance-based, peer-review process for the assessment of teacher practice. Currently, there is a national field test of the written assessment component of NBPTS certification for an elementary teacher. One of four standards used in the NBPTS assessment called for reflection. Eight teachers were trained on the assessment process and asked to complete primary, or “breadth”, NBPTS certification. Classroom observers, teachers, and students identified significant increases in the frequency with which the teacher implemented practices, including those sought by the process, following the initial submission of the portfolio. The written assessment is working well as a gatekeeper in the NBPTS assessment process; however, it alone is not sufficient in maintaining or increasing the use of high-quality instructional practices over time [21, 22].

### **Legal and Ethical Considerations**

Performance-based evaluation of teachers raises several legal and ethical issues. Educational assessment is a complex field, and many of the technical and legal implications are misunderstood even by educators with high levels of experience with traditional forms of evaluation. Data privacy laws are complicated, and the evaluation of performance can collect certain types of information that raise privacy concerns. However, there are certainly responsibilities of evaluators that are clear and not the domain of arcane regulations and overblown fear. One important aspect of evaluation is that it is unethical to not present data ethically. All evaluation of individuals has the potential to be biased, either intentionally or unintentionally. While no evaluation can be perfectly fair, it must be defensible as fair. The more transparent the criteria and process, the more likely that the evaluation results will be perceived as fair, and the more likely that all involved will trust that process. It is the hope that all educators are motivated to conduct the ethical evaluation of peers, recognizing that the integrity of any system is only sustained by dedicated attention to it. In the last few years, several court cases have underscored the legal issues involved in evaluations, particularly in how the data generated are shared. Recently, the state of Florida has specifically named a requirement in the contract with several commercial firms that the names of evaluators who use the firm’s materials are submitted to the state. School districts need to be operating within a policy that specifically describes how performance-based evaluation data will be handled to ensure that there are no legal entanglements. There are also many clear instances of bad intentions in the demeaning or abnegation of evaluation. And again, even when practices do not rise to the level of legal infringement, they can have the effect of casting considerable doubt on the integrity of the evaluation system and the administrators who operate it [23, 24].

### **Future Trends in Teacher Evaluation**

Although quite a few districts statewide volunteered to split the cost of the CEL 5D rubric training with SIG funds, only a quarter of respondents reported receiving the partnership training in 2013-14. Therefore, many schools lost instructional and administrative support staff who had been trained and familiar with the analysis tool below during the grant’s second year, making the measure more difficult to administer accurately. Teachers who are trained and supported by their school, district, and professional learning communities in observably skilled pedagogical techniques tailored for their school’s unique situation are the best fit for continued SIG funding. Properly supported teachers were not only able to improve their practice but also their students’ academic growth of at least level 3 or 4 on the SBA. Moving forward, teams of one instructional staff, one trained administrator, and a neutral third party with training on the CEL 5D should be utilized. Best practice would employ a leveling of 5 observations each year by 3 separate evaluators with the timeliness of feedback exceeding half an hour. Moreover, evaluators should be required to follow a rubric and engage in at least one prior practice observational round and post conference, respectively, for those observed. One-on-one conferences were neither the most efficient or beneficial, and low-fidelity observations were not shown to enhance teacher evidenced-based practice [25, 26].

### **CONCLUSION**

Performance-based teacher evaluations serve as a vital tool for improving instructional quality and student learning outcomes. A well-structured evaluation system should integrate multiple assessment methods, ensuring a balance between accountability and support for educators. While challenges such as

subjectivity, implementation difficulties, and resistance to change persist, adopting transparent, data-driven, and collaborative evaluation models can lead to more meaningful professional development and institutional improvements. By refining evaluation frameworks and addressing existing gaps, educational systems can create fair and effective methods that foster teacher growth and enhance overall learning experiences.

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