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# A Study of Teacher Effectiveness Evaluation Models in American Schools

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Is approved by the final examining committee:

F. Robert Sabol

Chair

Kathryn Reeves

David Parrish

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Approved by Major Professor(s): F. Robert Sabol

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A STUDY OF TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS EVALUATION MODELS IN  
AMERICAN SCHOOLS

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty

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by

Lacey Bowman

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*For Jason*

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## ABSTRACT

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The quality of education in America is an issue currently being examined through various perspectives. The use of a teacher effectiveness evaluation model is one method used to determine the link between student achievement and the instructional practices of the teacher. The study reported here will focus on the factors leading up to the increased attention on student achievement in American schools, the role of teacher effectiveness evaluation models in delivering a quality education, and the consequences of using such evaluation models. A comparison will be made between the models developed by Charlotte Danielson and Robert Marzano. In addition, the study compares these models to three teacher effectiveness evaluation models being used in public school systems across America. The relationship between teacher effectiveness evaluation models and delivering a quality education will be discussed in terms of how it relates to what is known about how students learn effectively.



## INTRODUCTION

The initial foundation of this study is based on my own personal experiences in the classroom as an art educator. Art education involves personal expression with the inclusion of authentic, desirable outcomes generated by the learner. The role of the teacher is to suggest through experience, and his or her own understanding, a route that would be most successful for students. Meaningful learning rarely takes place under a prescribed, step-by-step formula strictly enforced by the teacher. Free expression fostered without guidance, however, falls short of meeting established state and national standards and assessment goals. Students, as the product of instruction based upon prior personal experiences and knowledge, will learn and create meaning in the context of an authentic process.

The intention of this study is to inform those who are in a role capable of carrying out the methods, concepts, and ideas discussed here. In addition to this, consideration is needed for obtaining the comprehensive goal of redefining the current views about art education in relation to student achievement and standardized testing. Art education, along with other classroom disciplines, should be taught with specific integration in order to maintain meaning and authenticity. An overarching support and belief system are the necessary structures needed for a school-wide or district-wide educational community to operate based on this type of student-centered learning.

## CHAPTER 1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Currently, the implementation of art in school curriculum as an academically relevant subject is not entirely accepted or understood across the country. Art instruction, in some cases, is still based on teacher-directed instruction pertaining to form and design without much deviation from the example. Learning is based on action and experimentation. Students need intrinsic motivation in order to produce art, or any other work. This motivation will, in turn, provide the meaning for what they are doing and make their learning more concrete.

This study takes into consideration the needs of students, as well as the needs of the educational system in America, in order to cultivate a broad range of intellectual skills that are meant to inspire and develop the full potential of every child. Findings from this study are intended to inform educational leaders and others who shape educational policy. Administrators and teachers need to participate in a dialogue with those who implement educational policy so that communications necessary for reconsidering the relationship between teacher evaluations, student achievement, and the skills necessary for Americans to compete in the international marketplace can be achieved.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### CHAPTER 2. PRECURSORS TO INCREASED TEACHER PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

The struggle to adjust to the changing cultural and demographic make-up of the United States and to compete in the world marketplace as a leader has contributed to the educational reform that has been taking place in the United States for decades. In 1981 the Secretary of Education, T. H. Bell, created the National Commission on Excellence in Education in order to determine qualities of education in America. Findings from a study of American education were published in the report, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*. The report, presented a portrait of a national education system in steep decline. This conclusion was based on such factors as consistently decreasing scores on standardized tests, declining adult literacy rates, the inability of many high school students to utilize higher order thinking skills for certain tasks, and the need for increased remedial courses at the college level and in the workforce (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Bell assembled the Commission due to the widespread public perception that there were serious problems with the American educational system. He launched the Commission based on his “responsibility to provide leadership, constructive criticism, and effective assistance to schools and universities” (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 7) Furthermore, the purpose

of the Commission was not only to suggest solutions to the educational problems facing the country, but also to identify factors that were responsible for contributing to its decline. With input from all concerned about the future of education, including the American citizens and public leaders, the Commission believed educational concerns could be improved if everyone involved was fully committed to resolving them. The document states, “This report, nevertheless, gives evidence that men and women of good will can agree on common goals and on ways to pursue them” (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 8).

The Commission reported that the weakening academic achievements of students fueled concerns about America’s ability to keep up with technological advancements made by other industrialized nations, such as the Soviet Union, Japan, South Korea, and Germany. “We compete with them for international standing and markets, not only with products, but also with the ideas of our laboratories and neighborhood workshops” (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 10). Undoubtedly, keeping the country in good economic standing as compared to foreign competitors is a benefit to all citizens alike. Not only for material gains, but also from the standpoint of the quality of life, it is necessary for education in America to reach the same level as the other nations with which the United States competes. Knowledge and skill are the new resources most valuable for affirming our position in the international marketplace. “A high level of shared education is essential...especially in a country that prides itself on pluralism and individual freedom” (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 10). The findings in *A Nation at Risk* also came at a time when local occupations were rapidly changing because of the increased reliance on technology in such fields as

health care, construction, and energy production (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). In light of the unfavorable performance identified for student achievement and the growing demand for better scientific and technological skills, the need for increased focus on higher order thinking skills is becoming fully realized. Evidence of the talents possessed by students has largely been reported through the use of standardized testing. However, emphasis on such outcomes has distracted attention from certain proficiencies that may substantially help America's goal of producing students who can successfully compete in a global society. Comprehension, analysis and problem solving abilities, and drawing conclusions are vital cognitive competencies needed for advanced performance in the workplace and for functioning in daily life. From another point of view, leaving out the arts and humanities from the core of curriculum in schools is a disservice by allowing them to be overtaken by technical and occupational demands. "Knowledge of the humanities...must be harnessed to science and technology if the latter are to remain creative and humane, just as the humanities need to be informed by science and technology if they are to remain relevant to the human condition" (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 12).

Underlying assumptions and dispositions are embedded in the statistics and findings published in the report (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Frustration and hope for delivering a quality education for our students is evident in school systems across the nation. Political and educational leaders are called upon by the public to answer and address the issues facing education. According to the Commission, solutions could only be found if, "...we avoid the unproductive tendency of some to search for scapegoats among the victims, such as the beleaguered teachers"

(National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 13). The Commission also suggested that English, history, geography, economics, and foreign languages would need to provide a more comprehensive reform for improving excellence in education in the future. Moreover, the report suggested that excellence is defined by two groups of stakeholders. First, by the individual learner who is responsible for performing to the fullest extent of his or her abilities in ways that challenge their personal limits. Second, by schools and colleges that are held accountable by assigning high expectations to each individual learner as well as aiding students in achieving those goals through all means possible (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Striving for a high level of excellence in our schools, however, should not come at the expense of sacrificing equity for all students. Balance between the two concerns presents the opportunity for students to refine their personal skills to their highest potential. By focusing on individual abilities, development of a society which thrives on life-long learning is possible. “In a world of ever-accelerating competition and change in the conditions of the workplace ...and of ever-larger opportunities for those prepared to meet them, educational reform should focus on the goal of creating a Learning Society” (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 14). Creating learners who seek knowledge throughout their lives and careers will aid our country in producing citizens who are able to compete in rapidly advancing work, social, and living environments.

In its report, the Commission states that the educational process is most affected by insufficiencies in four areas: content, expectations, time, and teaching. Content, in this case, is defined by the Commission as curriculum. The area of expectations refers to the degree of knowledge, abilities, and skills high school and college graduates should have.

The use of time in American schools as reported by the Commission suggests that: (1.) students in America spend less time in school than other countries; (2.) class time and homework time are used ineffectively; (3.) schools do not provide enough guidance in helping students develop adequate study skills, time management skills, or the willingness to spend more time on school work. With respect to teaching, four main factors were identified: (1.) pre-service teacher programs needed improvement; (2.) the professional life of teachers is undesirable; (3.) the shortage of teachers is significant in key fields; and (4.) academically qualified students shy away from becoming teachers. In terms of meeting the high standards of providing a high-quality, effective system of education, schools along with members of society, seem to have lost sight of what achieving such a goal would entail. The many diverse demands placed on schools by policy makers and the public are not easy to address. “They [schools] are routinely called upon to provide solutions to personal, social, and political problems that the home and other institutions either will not or cannot resolve.” (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 9).

The following study examines similar educational concerns about the quality of education in our country through the lens of art education. A survey conducted by the U.S. Government Accountability Office, (GAO) (2009), regarding access to arts education found that in schools recognized as needing improvement and/or with a higher percentage of minority students, teachers reported significantly less time available for arts instruction. Proper funding also is essential in education. The absence of adequate funding results in inequities related to the accessibility and the value of schooling in both rural and urban areas (Duvall, 1998). Students in schools with the highest need and

highest demand for student intervention and support are given less opportunity to participate in arts education programming. As a result they are least likely to experience such gains (Israel, 2009). Legislatures often fail to recognize that certain factors contributing to poor test performances can be diminished with increased funding and yet schools with good test performances continue to be financially rewarded, while low performing schools that could benefit most from increased funding are denied such resources (Cawelti, 2006; Zellmer, Frontier, & Pheifer, 2006). As a discipline, art education has been involved in an ongoing struggle to solidify its position as a significant contributor within the school curriculum. Art educators realize that art education is on the sidelines of education and often viewed as less important by the public and decision-makers (Sabol, 2006). Art educators often find themselves in an advocacy role more focused on justification than those who are teaching in other subjects.

In the current educational climate, policymakers are at a crucial intersection in which they need to understand how teachers' performances affect student success in the classroom (Sabol, 2013). Concerns of the public and other interested stakeholders have caused leaders and administrators to find solutions for meeting student needs. "Although problems may appear to be similar, in reality, they are unique to each educational context and require solutions that apply to individual schools or settings" (Clark & Zimmerman, 2000). It is the responsibility of school administrators working in both rural and urban environments to examine social constraints on the unique situations each face as they address various educational concerns. For example, negative social influences for rural populations can include substance abuse, transient populations, truancy and absenteeism, teen pregnancy, poverty, dysfunctional families, lack of artistic literacy, lack of student



discipline, bigotry, prejudice, and intolerance to diversity (Sabol, 1999). For urban populations factors such as truancy and absenteeism, student turnover, gangs and violence, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, overcrowding, inclusion, low student motivation and poor attitude, dysfunctional families, teacher burnout, child abuse, racial tension, suicide, incarceration, and homelessness (Sabol, 1998). In association with these findings, the involvement of parents and community members in school decision-making reduced discipline referrals, lowered absenteeism and class failures, improved test scores, and increased graduation rates (Olson, 1998). In order to bridge the gap between school and community, supervisors and administrators must be mindful of the need for their own ongoing professional development (Sabol, 2005). Quality leadership, making informed decisions, and developing and implementing effective change are all dependent upon cultivating the necessary professional skills.

Schools in America have had the reputation of preparing students for the workplace without emphasizing the knowledge and skills necessary to perform in the workplace. An overemphasis on practical capabilities in disciplines such as language arts and mathematics has allowed a dramatic disregard for how basic skills will be applied in real-life situations (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983).

Underfunded schools are incapable of providing quality educational experiences, but the narrowing of curriculum also has been seen as the product of increased accountability on basic skills (President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, 2011). An arts education provides experiences beyond rote learning by requiring individuals to use what they know in order to solve problems, make assumptions, and consider multiple possibilities. William J. Bennett, the U.S. Secretary of Education in 1988, stated that,

“Art, no less than philosophy or science, issues a challenge to the intellect...teaching lessons about order, proportion, and genius” (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 1). Interdisciplinary by nature, the arts are important in the lives of America’s youth. An extensive understanding of how the arts maintain an important role within all subjects is the basis for a transformation in education. “Reformers are now calling for transformation of learning, that is, fundamental change in what and how students learn” (President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, 2011, p. 30).

Another publication of significance was released in May of 1988 by the National Endowment for the Arts. It focused on the quality of arts education for American students. In *Toward Civilization* agreement was expressed with the findings published in *A Nation at Risk*. The unavoidable need for our county to adequately prepare our students for the future is addressed.

Many of the challenges [of the future] will, obviously, be scientific and technological – and our schools must give our children the tools to deal with them. Less obviously, many of the challenges will be cultural. They will pose questions concerning what it is to be an American and what our civilization stands for. Education in the arts can help with this. (National Endowment for the Arts, 1988, p. v).

The report about the status of arts intended to identify which arts were necessary for addition to the current school curriculum and provide rationales for why they were important. Furthermore, the status of arts education at that time, and for previous generations, was deemed unsatisfactory and the report recommended ways to make improvements. The purpose of arts education, as stated by the National Endowment for

the Arts, is not to create pleasant performances and exhibitions for parents and the community to enjoy. Instead, it was recommended that resources should be used to create culturally meaningful and relevant experiences for all students. An articulated curriculum which follows a prescribed scope and sequence had not been established, and therefore, reliable evaluation measures did not exist. Preparation of teachers to instruct students in art history and art criticism was lacking. As a result, increased emphasis was placed on production or the creation of art.

Compatible with the current Administration's goal that U.S. post-secondary achievements provide examples of global leadership by 2020, it is imperative that the significant percentage of students whose needs are not being met along with a dramatic shift in K-12 education become a priority. Meeting the needs of diverse learners is more relevant now than in previous educational reforms. "School leaders and teachers will need to step up to the challenge of finding new ways to engage many more students in meaningful learning to meet the goal at a time when schools are grappling to reach a broadly culturally diverse student body" (President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, 2011, p. 27).

## CHAPTER 3. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT BASED TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS EVALUATION MODELS

### 3.1 The Danielson Teacher Effectiveness Evaluation Model

Addressing concerns regarding the state of education in America today relies on hard evidence provided by school districts across the country. In addition to student test scores, teacher evaluations also are seen as a crucial indicator for evaluating the quality of education students receive in American schools. Danielson (2010/2011) introduced a teacher evaluation system, The Framework for Teaching, which “provides the vehicle for teacher growth and development by providing opportunities for professional conversation around agreed-on standards of practice” (Danielson, 2010/2011, p. 39). The problem, Danielson states, is that current evaluation systems carry very little consistency or clear definition regarding how certain evaluative terms are used. A lack of consistency in how evaluators and administrators assign ratings to individual teachers from one school to another is an issue which presents “a violation of a fundamental principle of equity” (Danielson, 2010/2011, p. 35). Current evaluation models also fail to include conversations about improving teaching practices. Instead, evaluators identify what teachers are doing wrong in a judgmental manner instead of focusing on how to improve instruction.

According to Danielson, a successful teacher evaluation system needs to reveal sufficient answers to four distinct questions: How good is good enough? Good enough at what? How do we know? and Who should decide? (Danielson, 2010/2011). In order to gain a deeper understanding, knowing why teachers are evaluated in the first place is extremely important as reported in *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). State laws require proof that certain standards are being taught and measured in schools. These laws are in place because schools receive public funds and therefore the public has a right to obtain evidence of students receiving a high-quality and globally competitive level of education (Danielson, 2010/2011). Danielson's model for teacher effectiveness evaluation uses a rubric format to evaluate teacher performance – much like a teacher would use in class for student assignments. One goal of the system is to create the needed consistency lacking in current procedures. Administrators should have the ability to state: “Everyone who teaches here is good – and here's how I know” (Danielson, 2010/2011, p. 35). Consistency is achieved by not only finding good teaching practices in the classroom, but also by what the teacher does before and after a lesson outside of normal instructional time in order to prepare or perform necessary professional duties. After identifying an element of performance, a shared understanding of what it means to have a rating of Unsatisfactory, Basic, Proficient, or Distinguished is understood by all teachers, mentors, and administrators in the school district. Along with this unified understanding, evaluators must also be skilled enough to know whether or not a teacher is adequately performing according to the standards of their discipline while in a classroom setting. Once this information has been gathered, it also is the responsibility of the evaluator to use the information for comparison against the agreed upon ratings for

teacher performance in order to make a qualified judgment. Engaging teachers, both new and experienced, in conversations about their practice as a means to recognize areas of improvement, provides another level of quality assurance that the evaluations of the evaluator are fair, reliable, and valid (Danielson, 2010/2011).

Ongoing professional development is a benefit experienced through conversations between teachers and their evaluators as well as through interactions teachers have with colleagues and other professionals involved in the evaluation process. This view is supported in other studies, “Supervisors and administrators must be mindful of the need for their own ongoing professional development. In order to provide quality leadership, make informed decisions, and develop and implement effective change, they must continuously seek and engage in professional development” (Sabol, 2005, p. 172). The practice of teaching is a continuous and challenging process, “Just as in other professions, every teacher has the responsibility to be involved in a career-long quest to improve practice” (Danielson, 2010/2011, p. 37).

The intention of Danielson’s teacher evaluation system is to bring together the idea of fair, reliable, and valid evaluations with ongoing professional development. Her system adds a collaborative approach to teacher evaluation while at the same time acquiring “hardsounding” qualities. By merging these two categories into the design of the system, the teacher is taken out of a passive role. This stance is usually a consequence of teacher evaluations which focus primarily on the findings of the evaluator. As Danielson states, most current evaluations do not ring true with our basic understandings of teaching and learning.

The process violates everything we know about learning – that learning is done by the learner through a process of active intellectual engagement. If we want teacher evaluation systems that teachers find meaningful and from which they can learn, we must use processes that not only are rigorous, valid, and reliable, but also engage teachers in those activities that promote learning – namely self-assessment, reflection on practice, and professional conversation. (Danielson, 2010/2011, p. 37).

Danielson's system allows the teacher to actively participate in their own evaluation by embedding the opportunity for them to experience self-assessment. Rather than the findings of the evaluator remaining secretive or hidden, they are given to the teacher after a classroom observation. As the teacher reflects upon his or her performance in relation to the notes taken by the administrator, a personal evaluation of how their teaching relates to the criteria and rating system also takes place. Before meeting, both the teacher and the evaluator have an opportunity to think about the teacher's performance. Strengths and weaknesses, challenges with student behavior, and other influential factors can all be addressed through discussion. This collaborative approach enables both parties to work under shared ideas and goals toward good teaching (Danielson, 2010/2011).

The Framework for Teaching, as explained by Danielson, has a few impediments to be addressed during implementation. For administrators and others, establishing a consistent mindset while using an evaluation system can be difficult. Practice is needed for evaluators to become like-minded as well as for them to become familiar with the framework used for evaluations. Several steps are included in the training of evaluators.

They include the following: (1.) Participants gain familiarity with the four domains of teaching responsibility including planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities. In addition, they learn the twenty-two components that describe each of the four domains and the two to five elements that describe each component; (2.) Participants understand how to recognize sources of evidence for all components and elements listed under each of the four domains; (3.) Participants learn how to interpret the evidence against the rubrics for each component's levels of performance; (4.) Participants learn how to calibrate their judgments against those of their colleagues (Danielson, 2010/2011).

A second consideration that influences evaluations is the amount of time necessary for conducting meaningful conversations about good teaching practices. "We can't create more hours in the day, but careful setting of priorities and judicious scheduling of both observations and conferences can make the best use of the time available" (Danielson, 2010/2011, p. 38). Devoting time to productive conversations can facilitate evaluations which follow a more thoughtful approach. Allowing teachers a chance to reflect on their practice with an administrator is beneficial in upholding agreed upon standards of practice (Danielson, 2010/2011).

### 3.2 The Marzano Teacher Effectiveness Evaluation Model

Increased attention on teacher evaluation systems has influenced many evaluation models to become more focused on teacher development, rather than success rates with students. Marzano (2012) believes that placing more emphasis on teacher learning will produce systems which are unlike those intended to measure teacher competence. The growing number of school districts working to create and implement more effective



teacher evaluation systems is linked to past inadequacies in measuring the performance of teachers. He states that the first weakness is due to teacher evaluation systems which have not accurately differentiated between effective and ineffective teachers. Second, teacher evaluation systems have not contributed to the development of a highly skilled teacher workforce. According to Marzano, developing teachers and measuring teacher effectiveness have very different implications. In a study, Marzano surveyed over 3,000 educators. He asked them to indicate the degree of importance they placed on measurement as the sole purpose of teacher evaluation, the degree of importance of development as the sole purpose of teacher evaluation and the degree of importance that the purpose of teacher evaluation structured to be half measurement and half development. A majority of the respondents believed that development was more important than measurement.

A teacher evaluation model which leads to enhancing the performance of teachers is both comprehensive and specific. “Comprehensiveness” indicates that the model includes all elements which have been identified through research as having an impact on student achievement. “Specificity” means that strategies and behaviors to be observed in the classroom are pinpointed to the exact characteristics needed under each element.

Marzano’s teacher evaluation model includes four domains. They include the following:

- Domain 1: Classroom Strategies and Behaviors
- Domain 2: Planning and Preparing
- Domain 3: Reflecting on Teaching
- Domain 4: Collegiality and Professionalism

To use Domain 1 :Classroom Strategies and Behaviors as an example, the lesson segments identified under this section are I. Segments Involving Routine Events; II. Segments Addressing Content; and III. Segments Enacted on the Spot. Design Questions within each of the lesson segments in Domain 1 organize forty-one different comprehensive elements which are instructional categories that happen in the classroom. Marzano uses these forty-one elements to “represent the diversity of strategies that a comprehensive model of teacher evaluation should include” (Marzano, 2012, p. 16).

An evaluation system which develops teachers should also have a scale that supports tracking and guiding teachers’ progress. This scale includes clearly stated levels of development as follows: Not Using, Beginning, Developing, Applying, and Innovating (Marzano, 2012). “Not Using” indicates that a teacher is either unaware or has not employed a certain strategy in the classroom. “Beginning” means that a teacher has used a strategy, but with errors or incompleteness. “Developing” indicates that a teacher is conducting the use of strategies with relative competency and minor mistakes. “Applying” means that a strategy has begun to create a positive effect on students in the classroom. At the highest level, teachers are innovating by employing strategies which not only produce positive results, but the teacher is troubleshooting in order to help all students benefit. In contrast to a system geared toward measurement, this model provides specific guidance on how to improve at each level.

In addition to being comprehensive, a teacher evaluation model should reward growth for transitioning to a higher level on the developmental scale. This would lead to teachers obtaining two different scores by the end of the school year. A “status” score, which indicates teacher performance at its current level, is given first, followed by a

growth score. A growth score is decided upon by the teacher setting a goal toward a higher level on the developmental scale. For example, if the status score was at the “developing” level and the goal for the teacher was to reach the “applying” level by the end of the year, the teacher would be evaluated again on how far he or she came in accomplishing their goal. Both scores are considered when determining the summative evaluation of the teacher at the end of the year, which may include levels of Advanced, Proficient, Needing Improvement, or Not Acceptable levels. “Such a system would communicate to teachers that the school expects-and rewards-continuous improvement” (Marzano, 2012, p. 19).

### 3.3 Comparison of the Danielson and Marzano Teacher Effectiveness Evaluation Models

Similarities between the Danielson and Marzano evaluation models are based on the most important aspects of each system. The most obvious and significant of them is that they both believe that teacher evaluation should be driven by the need for teachers to improve their practice. Danielson recognizes the need for teachers to align their strategies with the requirements set forth in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). “They emphasize active, rather than passive learning by students” (Danielson, 2013, p. 5). As stated in *A Nation at Risk*, it is imperative that we prepare our students for what lies ahead in their futures. CCSS support that belief and educators will need to develop new skills in order to keep up with such demands. “Teaching for deep conceptual understanding, for argumentation, and for logical reasoning have not, after all been high priorities in most school districts or preparation programs” (Danielson, 2013, p. 5). The Domains set up by Danielson and Marzano are very specific in identifying where and

how teachers and administrators should direct their attention in order to align teaching expectations with student achievement expectations. Danielson establishes four domains:

- Planning and Preparation
- The Classroom Environment
- Instruction
- Professional Responsibilities

Each domain includes respective components which highlight elements of good teaching followed by indicators of achieving such elements. Four levels of performance can then be used to score the teacher on how well they implemented elements within their classroom. This rating scale can be compared to the developmental rating scale used by Marzano. Both scales are comprehensive and specific in identifying the characteristics of rating at each level. For example, in Danielson's framework, Domain 1, Component 1a: Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy the Unsatisfactory, Level 1 rating includes a detailed explanation: In planning and practice, the teacher makes content errors or does not correct errors made by students. The teacher displays little understanding of prerequisite knowledge important to student learning of the content. The teacher displays little or no understanding of the range of pedagogical approaches suitable to student learning of the content.

Critical attributes for this level include: The teacher makes constant errors; The teacher does not consider prerequisite relationships when planning; and The teacher's plans use inappropriate strategies for the discipline. Possible examples of these attributes are listed as: The teacher says, "The official language of Brazil is Spanish, just like other South American countries," or the teacher says, "I don't understand why the math book

has decimals in the same unit as fractions,” and the teacher has students copy dictionary definitions each week to help them learn to spell difficult words (Danielson, 2013, p. 10).

The content in each domain of the Danielson and Marzano models exhibit similarities as well. In her first domain, Planning and Preparation, Danielson emphasizes a teacher’s need to thoroughly understand the discipline they are teaching. Furthermore, teachers are required to understand the most effective pedagogical approaches to teaching students about various areas of subject matter. Domain 1 is categorized into the following components:

- Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy
- Demonstrating Knowledge of Students
- Setting Instructional Outcomes
- Demonstrating Knowledge of Resources
- Designing Coherent Instruction
- Designing Student Assessments

Demonstrating Knowledge and Content includes the following elements: (1.) Knowledge of content and the structure of the discipline. Every discipline has a dominant structure, with smaller components or strands, as well as central concepts and skills; (2.) Knowledge of prerequisite relationships. Some disciplines, such as mathematics, have important prerequisites. Experienced teachers know what these are and know how to use them in designing lessons and units; (3.) Knowledge of content-related pedagogy. Different disciplines have “signature pedagogies” that have evolved over time and been found to be most effective in teaching. Each element of Danielson’s domain is followed by a set of indicators. For example, Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy

is identified by: lesson and unit plans that reflect important concepts in the discipline, lesson and unit plans that accommodate prerequisite relationships between concepts and skills, clear and accurate classroom explanations, accurate answers to students' questions, feedback to students that furthers learning, and interdisciplinary connections in plans and practice.

Marzano's four domains include:

- Classroom Strategies and Behaviors
- Planning and Preparation
- Reflecting on Teaching
- Collegiality and Professionalism

Each domain is organized into respective segments which are followed by a series of elements explaining their role in the classroom. The first domain, Classroom Strategies and Behaviors, requires that the "appropriate strategy be used at the appropriate segment of the lesson." The first segment of this domain, Involving Routine Events, includes:

Design Question (DQ1): Communicating Learning Goals and Feedback; What will I do to establish and communicate learning goals, track student progress, and celebrate success?

- Provide Clear Learning Goals and Scales (Rubrics)
- Track Student Progress
- Celebrate Success

Also in the first segment, Design Question 6 (DQ6), What will I do to establish and maintain classroom rules and procedures?

- Establish Rules and Procedures

- Establish Classroom Routines
- Organize the Physical Layout of the Classroom

As with Danielson's framework, Marzano includes detailed and descriptive information for each element. For example, Element 1: Providing Clear Learning Goals and Scales (Rubrics) is identified as: "The teacher provides a clearly stated learning goal accompanied by scale or rubric that describes levels of performance relative to the learning goal." Teacher Evidence would be:

- Teacher has a learning goal posted so all students can see it. The learning goal is a clear statement of knowledge or information as opposed to an activity or assignment
- Teacher makes reference to the learning goal throughout the lesson
- Teacher has a scale or rubric that relates to the learning goal posted so that all students can see it
- Teacher makes reference to the scale or rubric throughout the lesson.

Student Evidence would be as follows:

- When asked, students can explain the learning goal for the lesson
- When asked, students can explain how their current activities relate to the learning goal
- When asked, students can explain the meaning of the levels of performance articulated in the scale or rubric

The correlational rating scale for evaluating this portion of the observation is established as: Innovating (4) Adapts and creates new strategies for unique student needs and situations; Applying (3) Provides a clearly stated learning goal accompanied by a

scale or rubric that describes levels of performance and monitors students' understanding of the learning goal and the levels of performance; Developing (2) Provides a clearly stated learning goal accompanied by a scale or rubric that describes levels of performance; Beginning (1) Uses strategy incorrectly or with parts missing; Not Using (0) Strategy was called for but not exhibited.

Contrasting features of the teacher effectiveness evaluation models produced by Danielson and Marzano are identified in the differing terminology and length of descriptions for evaluators to use during teacher observations. Although both use four primary domains, each domain is broken down differently into different parts. For example, Danielson divides her Domains first into components which each include a summary of how it aligns with good teaching practices and the benefits of applying it successfully. To use a component from Domain 2, 2a: Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport, as an example, it states: An essential skill of teaching is that of managing relationships with students and ensuring that relationships among student are positive and supportive. Teachers create an environment of respect and rapport in their classrooms by the ways they interact with students and by the interactions they encourage and cultivate among students. An important aspect of respect and rapport relates to how the teacher responds to students and how students are permitted to treat one another. Patterns of interactions are critical to the overall tone of the class. In a respectful environment, all students feel valued, safe, and comfortable taking intellectual risks. They do not fear put-downs or ridicule from either the teacher or other students. "Respect" shown to the teacher by students should be distinguished from students complying with standards of conduct and behavior.



Caring interactions among teachers and students are the hallmark of component 2a while adherence to the established classroom rules characterizes success in component 2d: Managing Student Behavior. Following this information, this domain is then classified into elements, indicators, and a rating scale of Unsatisfactory, Basic, Proficient, and Distinguished. The levels are summarized in terms of expectations of teacher performance at each level. Unsatisfactory in relation to component 2a is explained as: Patterns of classroom interactions, both between teacher and students and among students, are mostly negative, inappropriate, or insensitive to students' ages, cultural backgrounds, and developmental levels. Student interactions are characterized by sarcasm, put-downs, or conflict. The teacher does not deal with disrespectful behavior. To further illustrate the unsatisfactory level, critical attributes such as "The teacher is disrespectful toward students or insensitive to students' ages cultural backgrounds, and developmental levels are identified. Possible examples are also included "A student slumps in his chair following a comment by the teacher."

In Marzano's model, the terminology used breaks down the domains into segments, followed by design questions, then elements. The elements can be identified through evidence. For example: Domain 2: Planning and Preparing:

- Planning and Preparing for Lessons and Units
  - Element 1: Planning and preparing for effective scaffolding and information within Lessons: Within lessons, the teacher prepares and plans the organization of content in such a way that each new pieces of information builds on the previous piece

An example of planning evidence includes: Content is organized to build upon previous information. Teacher evidence includes: When asked, the teacher can describe the rationale for how the content is organized. A five level rating scale then follows with a brief description of each level. For example, Innovating (4) “The teacher is a recognized leader in helping others with this activity.”

As an evaluator, the use of either model provides specific examples and descriptions of what to look for when observing teachers in the classroom. However, Danielson gives a more in-depth view of what these behaviors look like and includes meaningful rationales for how and why teachers should perform according to good teaching practices.

Each domain for both models also differs in size and content. For example, Marzano’s first domain includes forty-one of the sixty elements intended to inform the instructional practices of teachers. Danielson’s domains are not entirely equal in the number of respective components, but the amount in each only differs by one component. Domain 1 includes six, Domain 2 includes five, Domain 3 includes five, and Domain 4 includes six. The bulk of Marzano’s model is shifted toward the first domain, Classroom Strategies and Behaviors, followed by Planning and Preparing. Danielson gives somewhat equal attention to both, but established Domain 1 to focus on Planning and Preparation, followed by a focus on The Classroom Environment in Domain 2.

For teachers, it is ideal to share experiences in a collaborative setting for the exchange of ideas, methods, and resources for instructing a wide range of students with various backgrounds and abilities. Professional development opportunities provide a forum for many different teaching styles to intermingle and reshape themselves into other

situations where problems can be solved or incidents explained. Collectively, teachers can support each other in understanding the importance of having a means to express knowledge in a way that encourages personal interpretation and multiple outcomes over choosing predetermined right or wrong answers. In addition to this, within their school environments, teachers can work together toward integration of these ideas across all instructional disciplines. The teacher evaluation models identified by Danielson and Marzano are examples of handling the art of teaching as an ever-changing evolution of thoughts and ideas.

## CHAPTER 4. TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS EVALUATION MODELS IN PRACTICE

### 4.1 The Indiana Department of Education RISE Model

In the push toward accountability for delivering a high quality education to American students, many school systems are looking in a new direction for teacher effectiveness evaluations. An overview of three models currently being used in schools from various parts of the country will be discussed next through the lens of frameworks developed by Danielson and/or Marzano. The models will be explained in relation to their structure, attentiveness to cultivating good teaching practices and the amount of guidance evaluators provide to support teachers through the evaluation process.

A state-wide evaluation model in Indiana labeled the RISE Evaluation and Development System was initially piloted during the 2011-2012 academic year by the Indiana Department of Education (2011/2012). The system is divided in to three primary domains. The first domain, Purposeful Planning, includes five competencies. Purposeful planning is defined as “Teachers use Indiana content area standards to develop a rigorous curriculum relevant for all students: building meaningful units of study, continuous assessments and a system for tracking student progress as well as plans for accommodations and changes in response to a lack of student progress.” This is measured through the following competencies:

- 1.1: Utilize Assessment Data to Plan
- 1.2: Set Ambitious and Measurable Achievement Goals
- 1.3: Develop Standards-Based Unit Plans and Assessments
- 1.4: Create Objective-Driven Lesson Plans and Assessments
- 1.5: Track Student Data and Analyze Progress

Following each competency is a rubric which includes: Highly Effective (4), Effective (3), Improvement Necessary (2), and Ineffective (1). Descriptions for each level are included. For example, Competency 1.1: Utilize Assessment Data to Plan includes this description for the Highly Effective (4) level: At Level 4, a teacher fulfills the criteria for Level 3 and additionally: Incorporates differentiated instructional strategies in planning to reach every student at his/her level of understanding. In Domain 2: Effective Instruction, the model includes the following competencies:

- 2.1: Developing student understanding and mastery of lesson objectives
- 2.2: Demonstrate and Clearly Communicate Content Knowledge to Students; 2.3: Engage students in academic content
- 2.4: Check for Understanding
- 2.5: Modify Instruction As Needed
- 2.6: Develop Higher Level of Understanding through Rigorous Instruction and Work
- 2.7: Maximize Instructional Time
- 2.8: Create Classroom Culture of Respect and Collaboration
- 2.9: Set High Expectations for Academic Success

Domain 3: Teacher Leadership includes competencies:

- 3.1: Contribute to School Culture
- 3.2: Collaborate with Peers
- 3.3: Seek Professional Skills and Knowledge
- 3.4: Advocate for Student Success
- 3.5: Engage Families in Student Learning

A fourth part of the model, not referred to as a domain, but considered in equal portion, is Core Professionalism. This section includes the indicators of: (1.) Attendance; (2.) On-Time Arrival; (3.) Policies and Procedures; (4.) Respect. Each indicator is then measured by either a Does Not Meet Standard or Meets Standard Category rating.

The amount of explanations provided in each domain of the RISE model is brief as compared to the structure of the Danielson framework. This can be seen in Domain 2: Effective Instruction, which is defined as “Teachers facilitate student academic practice so that all students are participating and have the opportunity to gain mastery of the objectives in a classroom environment that fosters a climate of urgency and expectation around achievement, excellence, and respect” (Indiana Department of Education, 2011/2012, p. 4). Each competency which follows is then divided within the descending levels of performance in the accompanying rubric without further information describing its importance to good teaching practices or specific indicators of what the behavior would look like. Examples of evidence to identify a teacher’s level of performance are provided beneath each heading on the rubric: Highly Effective (4); Effective (3); Improvement Necessary (2); Ineffective (1). Teachers are able to adapt and reflect on instruction by using examples of desired teaching practices provided in the model. By

studying the rubric, teachers are able to identify required behaviors along with their matching levels of performance. For example, in Domain 2: Competency 2.1, a Highly Effective teacher (4) should demonstrate one or both of the following characteristics: Students can explain what they are learning and why it is important, beyond repeating the stated objective; Teacher effectively engages prior knowledge of students in connecting to the lesson. Students demonstrate through work or comments that they understand this connection.

Of the three domains in the RISE model, instruction carries the most weight in determining a teacher's Teacher Evaluation Rating (TER) score at seventy-five percent. This is similar to the framework created by Marzano in that both put more emphasis on instruction over planning or the classroom environment. In the RISE model, planning equals ten percent and the third Domain, Leadership, accounts for fifteen percent. Evaluators then multiply a teacher's rating (1-4) in each domain by its percentage weight which produces a weighted rating. The value of each weighted rating creates a total from which points may be subtracted if a teacher has failed to meet any of the expectations from the Core Professionalism category. After calculating the total and considering the professional expectations, a final TER score is established. Throughout the year, evaluators collect information from observations in four separate periods during the school year. A beginning of the year conference is held the teacher and the evaluator. They discuss the observation process and rubric. Qualifying teachers also will write a professional development (PD) plan with their primary evaluator. This is followed by three short observations taking place between Quarters one and two, two and three, and three and four. Extended observations also take place between the first short observation

and the second. Short observations are done between two and three with an optional mid-year conference at the same time as short observation two. The teacher and evaluator meet for an end of the year summative evaluation conference to discuss feedback on all performance components and the teacher's final rating.

During an evaluator's time in the teacher's classroom, careful attention is paid to collecting evidence which is concrete and specific. For example, a post-conference conversation between teacher and evaluator would proceed as follows: E: "I observed that you didn't check for understanding as often as you could have." T: "Can you give me an example?" E: "When you transitioned from modeling the exercise to independent practice, you didn't have a strategy for checking to see if students' understood the process. This would have been a great time for a pair and share exercise." The evaluator is providing a detailed description of what and how the teacher needed to improve. The RISE model explains that a judgment made by an evaluator is based on what is observed. Ultimately, evaluators make a judgment, but specific evidence is needed to give teachers constructive feedback for further developing their skills. Several observations take place throughout the school year; however, only two conferences between the evaluator and teacher are required to take place. Only qualifying teachers with a plan for professional development have an opportunity to track progress with competencies needing improvement. An optional mid-year conference allows for additional feedback from evaluators with information gathered up to that date if deemed necessary.

#### 4.2 The Fairfax County Public Schools Teacher Performance Evaluation System

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) in Fairfax, Virginia has developed the *Teacher Performance Evaluation System* "to help both teachers and their evaluators



collect more comprehensive and accurate assessment data for judging teacher effectiveness and to support quality teaching every day in every classroom” (Fairfax County Public Schools, 2013, p. iv). In comparison to Danielson’s and Marzano’s evaluation models, the FCPS model aligns with the goal of placing teachers at the center of the evaluation. “Without capable, highly effective teachers in America’s classrooms, no educational reform effort can possibly succeed. Moreover, without high quality evaluation systems, we cannot know if we have high quality teachers” (Fairfax County Public Schools, 2013, p. iv) As stated in the program handbook for 2012-2013, FCPS differs from other models in the following ways: There is a focus on the relationship between professional performance and improved learner academic achievement; sample key elements for each of the teacher performance standards; matrices for the seven standards that describe four levels of teacher performance; a system for documenting teacher performances based on multiple data sources; a procedure for conducting performance reviews that stresses accountability; promotes professional development; and increases the involvement of teachers in the evaluation process and a support system for providing assistance when needed.

The structure of the FCPS’s *Teacher Performance Evaluation System* consists of seven performance standards, several key elements, and a performance matrix in order to assign a rating. The Performance Standards are as follows:

- Performance Standard 1: Professional Knowledge
- Performance Standard 2: Instructional Planning
- Performance Standard 3: Instructional Delivery
- Performance Standard 4: Assessment of and for Student Learning

- Performance Standard 5: Learning Environment
- Performance Standard 6: Professionalism
- Performance Standard 7: Student Academic Progress

Each Performance Standard is given an explanation in addition to the Key Elements. For example, Performance Standard 1: Professional Knowledge – The teacher demonstrates an understanding of the curriculum, subject content, and the developmental needs of students by providing relevant learning experiences. Key Elements: Examples may include, but are not limited to: The teacher:

- 1.1 Demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of subject content and curriculum standards
- 1.2 Demonstrates knowledge of best practices
- 1.3 Knows how to differentiate to make subject content relevant, challenging, and meaningful for all students
- 1.4 Establishes instructional goals that demonstrate an accurate knowledge of students and assigned subject content

The performance rating scale provides examples of behaviors at each rating level. In Performance Standard 1, (1.) a Highly Effective teacher: is expert in the subject area and has an understanding of current research in child development and how students learn, designs highly relevant lessons that will challenge and motivate all students and highly engage active learning; (2.) designs lessons that break down complex tasks and address all learning needs, styles, and interests; (3.) projects high expectations and determination and convinces all students that they will master the material; (4.) actively embeds a “growth” mindset so that students take risks, learn from mistakes, and understand that

effective effort leads to achievement; and (5.) continually holds student interest and makes connections to prior knowledge, experience, and reading. Teachers receive a rating for each of the seven standards as well as a summative evaluation rating which is intended to give an overall rating of the teacher's performance. Performance Standards 1-6 account for sixty percent of the evaluation, Standard 7, Student Academic Progress, accounts for forty percent. A rating scale involves the following performance levels: Ineffective = 1; Developing OR Needs Improvement = 2; Effective = 3; and Highly Effective = 4. Scores are then multiplied by their weight, standards 1-6 = 1 and standard 7 = 4. The weighted total (points x weight) becomes the Cumulative Summative Rating. Then, teachers are assigned a summative rating based on the following scale: Ineffective = 10-19; Developing OR Needs Improvement = 20-25; Effective = 26-34; Highly Effective = 35-40. Effective is the expected level of performance for teachers as stated by the *Teacher Performance Evaluation System*.

FCPS has categorized teacher evaluations into seven Performance Standards unlike the four Domains of the Danielson and Marzano frameworks. Similar to Danielson's framework are the explanations for teacher behaviors contained in the rating scale. The explanations are very specific and encourage the teacher to consciously reflect on meaningful teaching practices. For example, Performance Standard 2: Instructional Planning, Ineffective: Does not plan lessons in advance and has little familiarity with state standards and test requirements or the FCPS Program of Studies and strategic goals. The expectations of performance at each level of the rating scale are presented in a manner which communicates very clearly defined professional responsibilities. A teacher's professional growth in this model is also supported through the completion of a

self-assessment form, which is discussed during the self-assessment and goal setting conference at the beginning of the school year. This form includes each Performance Standard along with the Key Elements. Teachers have the opportunity to reflect and record strengths and growth development for each standard. Having the opportunity to reflect upon challenges and successes in the classroom is an extremely helpful tool for teachers. “Evidence suggests that self-assessment is a critical component of the evaluation process and can help a teacher to target areas for professional development” (Fairfax County Public Schools, 2013, p. 6). Following the Self-Assessment, teachers also complete a form titled: “Goal Setting for Student Progress”, which is meant to identify a goal that produces measurable student progress. The following factors are addressed: (1.) Setting, which describes the student population and special learning circumstances; (2.) Content/Subject/Field Area, which is the topic area addressed based on learner achievement, data analysis, or observational data; (3.) Baseline Data, which states what is shown by the current data; (4.) Goal Statement, which is what teachers want the learners/program to accomplish; and (5.) Means for Attaining Goal, which are strategies used to accomplish the goal. Teachers record strategies and evidence along with a desired date for accomplishing the activity. Goal progress is covered during the mid-year review.

An evaluator working with the FCPS *Teacher Performance Evaluation System* may collect information about teacher performance through several different methods including: (1.) Observations with formal and informal classroom observations which focus directly on the performance standards; (2.) Documentation Log with specific required artifacts and teacher-selected artifacts that provide evidence of meeting certain

performance standards; (3.) Student Opinion Surveys used at the secondary level that provide data which can influence teacher strategies in many of the performance standards. Sharing survey results is optional in some cases; (4.) Structured Interview designed to gather information from the teacher about his or her performance as it pertains to the seven standards; (5.) Other Relevant Information that includes data which can be used for assessment provided that it is shared with the teacher. This includes, but is not limited to, written communication about the teacher, patterns of discipline referrals and follow-ups, and requests for student placement; (6.) Measures of Student Progress including standardized test results and other pertinent data. For teachers who need additional help improving their professional performance, evaluators may employ one or both of the following including: Support Dialogue which is a school-level discussion between an administrator and the teacher in order to address performance needs, or a Performance Improvement Plan which is a plan developed by the teacher and evaluator to identify strategies for improvement in specific areas. Teachers who receive a summative evaluation at the end of the year also must attend a mid-year performance assessment meeting with their evaluator in order to be given systematic feedback on their progress.

#### 4.3 The Miami-Dade County Public Schools Instructional Performance Evaluation and Growth System

Miami-Dade County Public Schools (MDCPS) in Miami, Florida utilize an *Instructional Performance Evaluation and Growth System (IPEGS)* as a means to measure teacher effectiveness. Unlike the four Domain systems of Danielson and Marzano, MDCPS identifies teacher performance through eight Performance Standards. These include:

- Performance Standard 1: Learner Progress
- Performance Standard 2: Knowledge of Learners
- Performance Standard 3: Instructional Planning
- Performance Standard 4: Instructional Delivery
- Performance Standard 5: Assessment
- Performance Standard 6: Communication
- Performance Standard 7: Professionalism
- Performance Standard 8: Learning Environment

Each standard includes a description, for example: Performance Standard 1: Learner Progress is based upon a discussion between the evaluator and teacher regarding student performance data. A rating scale for this section is not applicable. Performance Standard 2: Knowledge of Learners: The teacher identifies and addresses the needs of learners by demonstrating respect for individual differences, cultures, backgrounds, and learning styles. Performance Standards also contain the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices (FEAPs) which pertain to that standard. Performance Standard 2 contains FEAPs 1, 2, 3, 4. FEAP 1, for example reads as follows: Accomplished Practice #1: Assessment: The professional teacher collects and uses data gathered from a variety of sources. These sources include both traditional and alternate assessment strategies. Furthermore, the teacher can identify and match the students' instructional plans with their cognitive, social, linguistic, cultural, emotional, and physical needs. Sample Key Indicators include, but are not limited to: analyzes individuals' learning needs and practices techniques which accommodate differences, including linguistic and cultural differences, draws from a repertoire of techniques to accommodate differences in students' behavior, and

identifies potentially disruptive student behavior. The rating scale for standards 2-8 includes four levels of performance: Highly Effective, Effective, Developing/Needs Improvement, and Unsatisfactory. Performance Standard 2: Knowledge of Learners, lists Highly Effective as: “The teacher consistently meets the individual and diverse needs of learners in a highly effective manner.” Effective characteristics are defined by restating the performance standard.

MDCPS supports teacher growth through specific and observable examples as listed in the FEAPs included with standards 2-8. FEAPs are similar to the Elements used in Marzano’s teacher effectiveness evaluation model, and the Components used in Danielson’s version of the same model. Knowledge of these indicators allows teachers to align current practices with what is considered high quality teaching. In addition to this, teachers complete an Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP) as a means to reflect on their current professional practices. As teachers develop the IPDP, they are encouraged to review their IPEGS Summative Performance Evaluation from the previous year to aid in determining areas of improvement. As a basis for the IDPD, teachers have an option of one or more of the following: Student Achievement Data, School Improvement Plan Objective, region or district data, or school/program initiatives as per your job assignment, and/or IPEGS Summative Performance Evaluation from the previous year. Teachers also develop an Individual Learning Goal, identify Professional Development Activities, and analyze their Performance Outcome.

Evaluators can provide assistance during the evaluation process by scheduling a Support Dialogue (SD) meeting. This meeting is conducted between observations one and two. After the initial observation, evaluators may determine that a teacher is in need

of supportive actions that will aid in instructional performance improvement. In addition to the SD, some teachers may need an individualized Improvement Plan (IP). The evaluator will determine deficiencies in one or more of the Performance Standards and work with the teacher to correct the identified deficiencies. A Formative Evaluation meeting is conducted to track performance status in addition to a Summative Performance Evaluation completed at the end of the school year. The Summative Performance Evaluation includes teacher performance in relation to Learner Progress (Standard 1) and Professional Practices (Standards 2-8). In Performance Standard 1: Learner Progress Contribution to the total rating is worth a maximum of 50 points. According to the rating scale, the point values are as follows: (1.) Highly Effective = 50; (2.) Effective = 37.5; (3.) Developing/Needs Improvement = 25; and (4.) Unsatisfactory = 12.5. IPEGS Performance Standards 2-8 are also worth a maximum of 50 points comprehensively. This is divided up into thirty-two possible percentage points for Observable Standards and eighteen possible points for Non-Observable Standards. Observable Standards include:

- Performance Standard 2: Knowledge of Learners
- Performance Standard 3: Instructional Planning
- Performance Standard 4: Instructional Delivery and Engagement
- Performance Standard 8: Learning Environment

Each standard previously mentioned is worth eight possible points. The points are divided as follows: (1.) Highly Effective = 8; (2.) Effective = 6; (3.) Developing/Needs Improvement = 4; (4.) Unsatisfactory = 2. Non-Observable Standards include (1.) Performance Standard 5: Assessment; (2.) Standard 6 = Communication; (3.)



Performance Standard 7: Professionalism. Non-Observable Standards are worth six possible points each. They are divided as follows: (1.) Highly effective = 6; (2.) Effective = 4.5; (3.) Developing/Needs Improvement = 3; (4.) Unsatisfactory = 1.5. A Unified Summative Rating assigned to teachers at the culmination of the evaluation is determined by adding the number of points earned in Performance Standards<sup>1</sup> together with the number earned in Standards 2-8. Out of a one hundred possible points, a teacher who scores between: 89-100 is Highly Effective; 74-88 is Effective; 37-73 is Developing and can only be given in years 1, 2, or 3 of teaching; 37-73 is Needs Improvement and can only be given in the fourth year and above of teaching; and 0-36 is Unsatisfactory.

## CHAPTER 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The current educational climate in America has shifted to a primary focus on teacher effectiveness evaluation. The goal of creating future citizens who are able to adequately use 21st century skills and help to firmly establish America's standing as a leader in the world has initiated a domino effect of reform across many aspects of the educational system in this country. The growing attention caused by a significant decrease in student achievement over subsequent years on standardized testing scores has motivated leaders and policy makers to look closely at accountability factors related to teacher effectiveness. Many factors contribute to explaining why America's students are not performing at desired levels. These include funding and varying socioeconomic circumstances among others. The following discussion will concentrate on teacher effectiveness evaluations currently being used to determine the various levels of teachers' performance in the classroom. This discussion will focus on how current teacher effectiveness evaluations compare to what educators know about how students learn, the outcomes of increased attention on evaluating teachers, and what is anticipated for the licensure of pre-service and practicing teachers.

### 5.1 How Students Learn

Current teacher effectiveness evaluation models in practice place little emphasis on student learning outside of what is measured on standardized tests. An individual's

thought processes evolve according to the constantly changing structure of knowledge and ideas formed as they acquire new information. To simply accept information without an attempt to understand the meaning of the information on a personal level may be harmful to authentic learning. The application of critical thinking is the foundation for creating an educational environment which promotes the integration of multiple perspectives and the role of self-reflection as a means of acquiring true understanding.

From a philosophical standpoint, critical thinking generates an understanding of our thoughts. The desire to know the meaning behind how things work and why they work the way they do is enticing to the mind. Children from all cultures and backgrounds are naturally curious and seek to find answers to questions. Psychologically, at some point during their development, however, this characteristic begins to lose its allure slowly. Perhaps it diminished due to behavioral influences to always act “right” or from certain classroom disciplines which primarily stress the need to discover the “correct” answer. Perhaps the longing to know what lies beneath the surface of what appears to be true and factual is lost when children reach an age when self-consciousness no longer allows them to ask questions with uninhibited wonder. Educators are in a position to cultivate thinking when our students have become accustomed to mostly receiving and storing information without first processing it through multiple lenses or examining it for multiple layers of meaning. Encouraging children to identify and consider the influences on their reasoning will develop their ability to determine for themselves what is important and meaningful in their world. They should be mindful of their decisions and provide evidence of thinking the way they do in order to make choices about personal beliefs, behaviors, and goals. Teachers should play an active part in modeling the critical thinking

process for students. They should integrate their own ideas and reflections related to subject matter into conversations with students so it becomes apparent that the body of knowledge one possesses is constantly changing and progressing through analytical interactions with others. Demonstrating understanding is an interactive process in the classroom. Everyone involved should feel a sense of ownership over their contribution to the collective knowledge gained by the group as well as confidence in knowing the causes behind their own opinions.

Critical thinking, from a sociological perspective, is becoming increasingly vital in our current educational system. Trying to address a solution to the achievement gap and an overall decrease in test scores is complex and challenging. In the case of improving the student achievement, a variety of causes can be assigned to the disproportionate levels of success between children of minority groups and those of affluent, white schools. Unfortunately, pressure for students to do well is placed heavily on the schools. From a critical perspective, we must look at the issues facing our society today and how certain attitudes are playing a role in the decline of student progress. Until the dispositions and social behaviors of our population no longer sustain an environment which produces exceedingly unequal levels of student accomplishment, as individuals we must attempt to influence constructive thought and implement change. Critical understanding of how various educational views affect our social surroundings and the success of our students is a key component of teaching in our schools today.

To use the Miami-Dade County Public School's *Instructional Performance Evaluation and Growth System* as an example, Performance Standard 1: Learner Progress is based upon student performance data. This standard alone is worth fifty percent of a

teacher's total summative evaluation score. Standards 2-8 are divided up to account for the remaining fifty percent. Fairfax County's *Teacher Performance Evaluation System* also places more emphasis on student performance data with Performance Standard 7: Student Academic Progress representing forty percent of a teacher's total score.

According to these models, important teaching practices regularly factored into everyday instruction, such as student engagement, learning environment, and knowledge of learners, are given less importance in terms of a teacher's performance. Increasing the amount of attention on student testing data is therefore subtracting attention away from the individual needs of students. In terms of teacher evaluation, shifting the focus away from the interaction teachers have with students and instead concentrating on numbers, a perspective emerges that what goes on in the classroom to enhance student learning outside of what is relevant to student testing data has significantly less importance. Activities that will encourage students to engage in higher order thinking processes will become fewer as a result of instruction which is more focused on mastering a specific set of knowledge and skills.

## 5.2 Outcomes of Increased Attention on Teacher Evaluations

Society, teacher education programs, and administrators within school districts all share a portion of the responsibility in shaping how curriculum and instruction are developed and implemented. For teachers, it is important for them to act as reflective practitioners and conscientious observers of their surroundings throughout their careers. Teaching practices and subject matter should connect educational standards to issues students currently are facing. Teaching methods being used to achieve desired scores on standardized tests have overwhelmed student-focused and problem-solving based

instructional practices. From a critical point of view, we must look at the issues facing our society today and determine how certain prevailing attitudes are affecting the decline of student progress. The dispositions and social behaviors of our culture are significant contributors to how students ultimately perform in school. Students construct their own knowledge through hands-on learning. The experience of relating one's understanding to broader concepts is effective and necessary for building upon higher-order thinking skills over time. Teachers should link together opinions shared by students and acknowledge the backgrounds and experiences they bring to their reflections about beliefs, ethnicity, and customs that exist in their home lives. Supporting the many cultural upbringings students bring to the table is vital to achieving a successful educational atmosphere where learning from each other's different ways of thinking fuels an instructional objective. Teachers should consider their current instructional practices as a way to gain insight into how students learn and how they can connect students' learning to the broader content within the curriculum. Highlighting connections between subjects as an alternative to assessing them in isolation is important to a student's overall understanding and comprehension. As a result, our students will have the opportunity to discover concepts and skills in a multitude of fashions that work best for them. Teachers should generate learning experiences that are authentic and student-centered, so that students can begin to see that there is not always one correct answer to a question and not always one correct way to arrive at a conclusion to a problem. The goal of some teacher evaluation systems, as described earlier in this report, is to place quantitative results pertaining to student achievement at the forefront of determining a teacher's success at delivering a high-quality education. As a consequence, the critical thinking and student-centered learning

environment loses its value as a focal point of good teaching practices. Achievement scores based on standardized testing funnel knowledge and student performance down to extremely narrow and specific elements. Unfortunately, when test scores such as these are raised, the attention toward cultivating critical thinking is lessened and the skills needed for our students to truly compete in an increasingly global society are greatly compromised. As a complement to standardized testing, critical reflection can foster and promote a wide range of skills and understanding that are actually transferrable to those areas in which students are being tested.

All teachers and administrators contribute to the success of substantial and effective instruction which supports an understanding of personal interpretation and expression as a way to unite multiple perspectives and construct knowledge. The increased focus on teacher effectiveness evaluations has helped to make teachers and administrators more mindful of their approaches to instruction, assessment, and professional development. Accountability for what students are learning and whether or not they are learning effectively are significant aspects of a teacher's performance. The opportunity for teachers, administrators, and other school staff to meet and discuss student achievement is a benefit of current evaluation models. New ideas and information that will aid student learning have a greater ability to be utilized and shared because of the meetings and observations scheduled during an evaluation.

### 5.3 Pre-Service Teachers, Licensure, and Current Evaluation Models

Pre-service teachers and those in the field who are keeping up-to-date with licensure requirements are in need of support and knowledge about the teacher evaluation process. For pre-service teachers especially, the importance of working collaboratively across all

discipline levels is a key element of high-quality instruction. With professional development as the central idea to many of the evaluation systems currently being used, an approach to instruction which is founded on the incorporation of multiple perspectives and methods is essential to what is needed in schools today. The inclusion of collaboration across disciplines into the professional development portion of evaluations will aid in bringing teachers together. This will not only increase student understanding and plant the seeds to begin thinking critically, but also provide the same understanding for teachers as they develop instruction.

Confusion about the importance of the arts can be linked to the training given to teachers in schools where the role of the arts is not valued and instead the subject of accountability that is heavily dependent on test scores, is the main concern. Unfortunately, the higher-level thought processes promoted by the arts are not easily recognized on standardized tests. To better understand the need for the arts to play an active role in preparing America's students for the future, all teachers should recognize the link between various cognitive skills acquired through the arts and how they are applied to other academic areas. To avoid the possibility that art education will fall under a workhouse mentality for the purpose of improving standardized test results, there needs to be an understanding of the actual learning that takes place through art education. The importance of various art forms in the context of when they were created, applying aesthetic awareness to art and life, acquiring a feeling for translating thoughts, ideas, images into a visual form, and learning how to accept multiple resolutions and perspectives are key elements of an education in the arts. As an inherent part of good teaching practices, teachers should reflect on their current behaviors to gain a deeper



understanding of how children learn and how we can connect their learning to the bigger picture within the curriculum. Students should create meaningful work guided by a teacher who interdependently connects learning from various disciplines to learning in the visual arts. This type of approach is an asset to the collective purpose of creating students who learn about the world around them through critical thinking and unique problem-solving and who are able to apply it to the task at hand.

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VITA

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My undergraduate studies in art education at Purdue University provided me with a strong foundation of instructional understanding which emphasized the value of the arts and its educational role at all levels. Multiple leadership roles as a public school teacher enabled me to support and mentor other art teachers with the common belief that art education should serve as a resource and opportunity for enrichment to the general classroom curriculum.

In addition to receiving a Bachelor's Degree in Art Education, a Master's Degree in Interdisciplinary Arts from Virginia Commonwealth University, and serving as an elementary art teacher for Fairfax County Public Schools for seven years, a Master's Degree in Art Education from Purdue University has expanded my pedagogical beliefs and instructional practices. I have learned new ways to positively and effectively influence students to have a vested interest in the importance of art instruction in elementary school and beyond

I would like to have an even greater impact on the methods and context in which art is taught at the elementary school level. To achieve this, I plan on advancing to a Doctoral Degree in Art Education from Purdue University.