

# **Advancing the Development of Future ‘Effective Teachers’ by Modeling Multi-Measure Evaluations in Clinical Experiences**

## **Section I: Content**

### **Statement of the issue**

The pressure to prepare classroom ready teachers continues to weigh heavily upon colleges of education. While the definition of “effective” is currently being hotly debated by those inside and outside the teaching profession, we believe that every child deserves an inspirational teacher who possesses the content and relationship building skills they need to help student achieve more in the classroom. This is our working definition of an “effective teacher” and the guiding goal of our work every day.

While previously “effective” future teachers have been measured by coursework and observations as they move through the teacher preparation program, we know that this is not the evaluation process our graduates will face upon entering the field. In order to assure that future teachers leaving our program are truly classroom ready, as a teachers college we have begun to emulate the evaluation process many districts currently employ in our own college of education. Because many districts now utilize multiple measures including parent, peer, student, self and climate surveys along with principal or administrator observations, our college is following suit.

Each teacher candidate in our program undergoes three performance assessments each semester of their year-long student internship and year-long co-teaching experience. These are based on observation of a lesson that is scored by a trained evaluator using a rubric that includes 8 indicators. For each performance assessment a pre-observation conference, observation, and post-observation conference is included and they are designed to mimic the evaluation structure used by many in-service districts.

In addition to the year-long internship, year-long teaching residency, pre-conference, observation, and post-conference; our program has moved to now utilize student surveys as yet another data point to model the multi-measure evaluation plans our graduates will face once they enter the classroom. In addition, future work in the program will revolve around the addition of a teacher candidate self-assessment as well to add just another point of data in the never-ending pursuit of assuring the development of “effective” teachers ready to inspire their students.

### **Literature review**

The question of how effectiveness is measured has become increasingly important in the wake of the White House’s plans to grade teacher preparation programs in order to assure “all children in America with the opportunity to get a world-class education,” (The White House, 2014). Although the details of this plan have yet to be released, evaluating the “effectiveness” of teacher preparation program graduates is at the core. If colleges of education and districts do not begin to define what “effective” teachers are capable of and determine a reliable way of measuring it, someone else will and there will be no guarantee they have a complete understanding of the field of education or the demands teachers face on a daily basis that may impede their ability to offer all students a “world-class education.”

A changing tide towards multiple evaluative measures means that now school districts are regularly turning to the addition of a student voice survey as one component of their teacher evaluations. Because students are the main consumer of teacher service and undeniably have the most contact with them, (Goe, Bell, & Little, Approaches to Evaluating Teacher Effectiveness: A Research Synthesis, 2008) a handful of teacher preparation programs are also adding them into their curriculum for teacher candidates. The benefits of adding a student

survey into the teacher candidate curriculum include: 1) when students feel their voice is included in the classroom, it can increase their motivation and persistence (Martin, 2006), 2) student motivation is not only linked to students' interest and enjoyment of school and academic study it is also linked to their level of academic achievement (Martin, 2006) and 3) teachers who have the knowledge and skills to develop positive relationships with their students and who are accepting of their students can facilitate positive engagement in class and greater student motivation (Martin, 2006). Student voice surveys can provide teachers with the relevant information they need to be able to accept and act on student needs. A natural byproduct of this is a more motivated classroom.

In addition to using the results to motivate classrooms, the incorporation of student surveys into colleges of education meets new accrediting standards put forth by the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation. In fall 2013, new standards require that teacher preparation programs measure the effectiveness of their graduates through multiple methods including student surveys. In fact, Standard 4.2 states: "the provider demonstrates, through structured and validated observation instruments and student surveys, that completers effectively apply the professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions that the preparation experiences were designed to achieve," (CAEP, 2013).

Beyond the benefits of utilizing student surveys, research shows they offer a valuable and valid perspective. Recent research by Ferguson (2010) studied student surveys with in-service teachers and found "student responses are reliable, valid and stable over time at the classroom level" and "are a high-potential mechanism for incorporating students' voices in massive numbers into school, district, state and national efforts to improve teaching and learning in elementary, middle and high schools." Additionally, a task force of education leaders and measurement experts convened by the American Psychological Association also cited the benefits of asking students about the performance of their teachers. They found that student surveys are "internally consistent and stable, are more highly correlated with student achievement than teacher self-ratings and ratings by principals, and distinguish between more- and less-effective teachers identified using other metrics," (Worrell, Brabeck, Dwyer, Geisinger, Marx, Noell, & Pianta, 2014).

Although many states and their school districts have begun to use student surveys as one measure of evaluating the effectiveness of in-service teachers, this is not yet the norm in teacher preparation programs. Institutions have been left to their own devices to determine how to prepare "effective" future teachers and to measure their abilities in valid, efficient and reliable ways. While accrediting bodies like CAEP have mandated multiple methods, including student surveys, most programs are on their own to innovate ways to incorporate them into their programs in cost-effective ways. This program recognizes the potential to use student surveys to 1) prepare teacher candidates for the realities of how they will be evaluated, 2) help them reflect and improve upon their own practice, and 3) help teacher preparation programs reflect and improve upon their own preparation practices. We know that better prepared teachers are more "effective", have the ability to help students achieve more and are more likely to stay in the field. Student surveys help prepare "effective" teachers by providing them with the opportunity to use data about their performance to engage in cycles of critical self-reflection. This is how we are innovating to prepare "effective" future teachers in our teacher preparation program.

### **Contribution, Strand III – Programs and Practices: Making Hard Choices Through Critical Reflection, Review, and Innovation**

This paper address the Strand III question of how one teacher preparation program is working to prepare teacher candidates to meet the definition of an 'effective teacher' by innovatively modeling the evaluation practices they are likely to encounter upon successfully exiting the program. Specifically, it adds to the current discussion of how to move the teacher

preparation field forward in using student surveys as one of the data sources in this multi-measure plan to prepare professional educators.

## **Relevance**

This proposal serves to further the discussion around 'effective teaching' and the policy of using multiple measures to evaluate such teaching. The discussion provides an opportunity to critically examine the role student surveys may play in these evaluation plans. This is a timely discussion as programs prepare to demonstrate, under extreme scrutiny, they are exiting 'effective teachers' from their programs. Additionally, this paper supports the sharing and replication of exemplary practice, as it will detail for participants how one institution is utilizing student surveys in a teacher preparation program's evaluation of teacher candidates.

## **Implication for Action**

The potential for this work to change the ways in which pre-service teachers are prepared to be 'effective' is clear. By improving the accountability measures for teacher preparation programs to incorporate a multi-measure evaluation of teacher candidates that includes student surveys, there is a potential to not only produce better prepared teachers, but more 'effective' teachers who may stay in the profession longer and help students achieve more. It also adds to the existing literature on student surveys for teacher evaluation, addressing a gap in the literature around how student surveys can be used in the pre-service environment. For teacher preparation programs, this work can inform changes in how teacher candidates are evaluated, and how teacher candidates are prepared for the types of evaluation they will face as in-service teachers. The end results of this may result in changes to teacher program evaluation policy and more reflective (and hopefully better prepared) beginning teachers.

## **Section II: Outcomes and Methods**

### **Learner/participant outcomes**

Engaging in discussion around this topic will provide participants an opportunity to examine how their program defines 'effective teachers' and the potential role that student surveys could play in a multi-measure evaluation of teacher candidates. Participants will share ideas around teacher candidate evaluation methods, the use of student surveys at the pre-service level, and the possibilities student surveys may offer in their own programs.

### **Methods**

This session will be discussion based and open to participant engagement throughout. Questions will be posed to engage participants in conversation during the session with a goal of refining our own current thinking and supporting new understanding among attendees.

## References

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