

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

Making Meaningful Use of Teacher Effectiveness Data

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This is Bianca. Bianca teaches in a typical school and does a great job.

And this is Venus, Bianca's principal.

Every year, thousands of teachers across the country just like Bianca are evaluated on how well they're doing. Traditionally, the majority of these evaluations were perfunctory, checklist-based reviews where almost all teachers were rated satisfactory.

But since 2009, in response to changes in federal and state policy, nearly two-thirds of states have sought to measure teacher effectiveness in more sophisticated ways, viewing teachers like Bianca as professionals who learn and grow throughout their careers, and principals like Venus as instructional leaders.

These new approaches usually require more frequent evaluations of teachers and the use of multiple measures. Although the measures may vary from district to district, the end goals are the same—improving teaching and, most importantly, student learning.

So what do these systems look like and how can they work?

A sustained evaluation approach aimed at continuous improvement takes time, and relies on a sequence of interrelated activities, which can be grouped into three key areas: measuring teacher effectiveness, data access and review, and using data for improvement.

Step 1. The first step, measuring teacher effectiveness, usually involves collecting some combination of classroom observations, measures of teacher contributions to student learning, and feedback from students or parents.

We know from research that each of these measures has its own set of potential benefits and concerns, including bias. Although complex, it's important to fully understand these issues, in order to be able to draw appropriate conclusions for an evaluation.

Step 2. Once data are available, districts and schools have to manage the new information, ensuring effective storage of the data as well as efficient and appropriate access and review, by teachers like Bianca, and by school and district leaders like Venus.

Unfortunately, quite often, the different types of data on teacher effectiveness are scattered, and may get delivered in formats that are hard to interpret, or at a time of the year that makes planning difficult.

Knowledgeable, trained educators need to be able to access and review the right amount of the right type of data, at the right time.

Step 3. Next, teachers and school and district leaders are able to use the information for improvement.

This can be done in several ways. Principals can provide more informed and detailed feedback to teachers about their potential growth, and they can work together to define and target specific next steps. This should be an ongoing process, so that improvement is sustained and meaningful.

School and district leaders can also use the information strategically, to assign teachers to schools and classrooms—and to leadership roles—where they will be most effective.

And they can, in cases where teachers are struggling, provide them with timely interventions, and make necessary staffing decisions.

Effective teacher evaluation systems can work only with appropriate guidance, sustained and meaningful professional development, and structured time for reflection and collaborative learning with peers, and that's true for both teachers and principals.

To learn more, visit <https://relwest.wested.org> for a detailed logic model on teacher evaluation approaches, a list of resources, and other research on measuring teacher effectiveness.