



Educator Growth and Evaluation: Putting the “G” in TPEP!

The most significant outcome of Washington’s overhaul of its educator evaluation system is not that we have a new way of calculating educator quality; it is that now every district in the state has instructional and leadership frameworks with rubrics that describe the key practices for teachers and leaders at four developmental levels of performance. Using these frameworks to develop shared understandings of “what is” allows educators to envision “what’s next,” providing clear targets for growth.

Educators and supervisors who only bring these frameworks out when it’s time for formal evaluation are missing a huge opportunity.

We know from the work of Rick Stiggins, James Popham, Jan Chappuis, Dylan Wiliam, and many others that if learning is the goal, whether for students or adults, we need:

- clearly defined targets, and examples of strong and weak work;
- ongoing feedback and opportunities for self-assessment and goal-setting; and
- opportunities to expand learning to address the gap between “what is” and “what’s next”

We also know that the fastest way to move mindsets from an open, growth orientation to an ego-driven, fixed orientation is to start assigning numbers to practices. Here’s what Dylan Wiliam found when he compared what happened to learning when students received scores, comments, and scores plus comments on their work:

When learners received:	Their achievement, upon receiving it, showed:	And their attitude about their work was:
Scores	No gain	High scorers: Positive Low scorers: Negative
Comments	30% gain	High scorers: Positive Low scorers: Positive
Scores + comments	No gain	High scorers: Positive Low scorers: Negative

From *Embedded Formative Assessment*, Dylan Wiliam, 2011.



Teacher/Principal Evaluation Program

Even when we also provide feedback, the presence of a score involves the ego - and learning stops. With this research in mind, as well as reports from educators across the state, the TPEP Steering Committee recommended a rule change that took the attention off the score in the Focused evaluation, freeing it up to center on the learning.

The new rule directs evaluators to assign the most recent Comprehensive summative score to the Focused evaluation. This paves the way for teachers and principals to choose to work on their most challenging criterion without fear of beginning the path to nonrenewal. Should an evaluator have general concerns about an educator's practice, s/he can pull the educator back onto a Comprehensive evaluation (in writing by December 15 for that school year).

What are some things we're learning as this change is being implemented?

First, in districts and schools where a culture of growth exists, this procedural change allows educators to use the instructional and leadership frameworks to look deeply at practice and leverage progress to the next level. Teachers/principals who have expertise in a particular practice may lead colleagues who are developing their practice in professional inquiry, building leadership capacity and taking the pressure off the evaluator to be the expert on every topic.

Second, it's important for evaluators to remember that true growth in practice takes time. If a principal pulls a teacher who chose a truly challenging area back onto a Comprehensive evaluation in December because the teacher, while making efforts to improve in that area, hasn't yet shown a great deal of progress, we are not allowing the system to do its work. Some criteria challenge the skills of even the most outstanding teachers, and it can take some time to develop authentic expertise. A better option is to figure out what additional resources are needed to support the teacher's growth, and provide them.

Third, we are learning something interesting about the provision in the WAC that allows an evaluator to bump the assigned score from a three to a four if the evaluatee, after focusing on that criterion, demonstrates a distinguished level of performance. Districts and schools that have embraced the "feedback only – no scores!" mindset for the Focused evaluation find this provision now forces them to look at the score and can sabotage the conversation. The WAC language on this is permissive – a district isn't required to follow this provision – and some are choosing not to implement it for this reason.

As you consider your district's or school's use of instructional and leadership frameworks, does the emphasis seem to be on scoring and evaluation, or on feedback and growth? If it's the former, what are some steps school and district leaders might take to both model and support a growth-based stance?