



EVALUATING EVALUATIONS

Revisiting the Widget Effect: Teacher Evaluation Reforms and the Distribution of Teacher Effectiveness

Brown University, 2016

In 2009, a study by TNTF (The New Teacher Project) documented the discrepancy between formal teacher evaluation and perceptions of actual teacher effectiveness, showing that administrators rate more teachers above proficient whom they actually believe should be rated below. This discrepancy, named the “widget effect,” is revisited in this working paper, which examines 19 states that have adopted major reforms to their teacher evaluation systems. The report finds that the widget effect has improved only slightly: In a majority of these states, for example, less than 3% of teachers are rated below proficient. The authors find that a lack of professional development support is a key reason why some principals don’t feel it is fair to evaluate their teachers stringently.

http://scholar.harvard.edu/files/mkraft/files/kraft_gilmour_2016_revisiting_the_widget_effect_wp.pdf

FEEDBACK TOOLS

The Examining Evaluator Feedback Survey

Institute of Education Sciences, November 2015

This survey was designed to help administrators gather information from teachers about their perceptions of evaluator feedback and teachers’ self-reported responses to that feedback. District and state administrators can use this survey to collect information on teacher perceptions of five key characteristics of evaluator feedback: usefulness, accuracy, credibility, access to resources, and responsiveness. Administrators can also use the information to better understand teacher perceptions of new evaluator feedback procedures. This report contains the Examining Evaluator Feedback Survey itself, along with information about how it was developed, how it can be used, and its reliability and validity.

www.ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/central/pdf/REL_2016100.pdf

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING SUCCESS

Impact of the National Writing Project’s College-Ready Writers Program on Teachers and Students

SRI International, 2015

In 2012, the National Writing Project (NWP) won an Investing in Innovation grant to provide professional development for secondary teachers in high-poverty rural school districts in 10 states (Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, New York, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Tennessee). NWP designed a professional development program to improve teachers’ ability to teach to college- and career-ready

writing standards, with a specific emphasis on improving students’ skills in writing arguments based on nonfiction texts. In this evaluation, SRI International found that NWP’s College-Ready Writers Program had had a positive, statistically significant effect on four attributes of student argument writing — content, structure, stance, and conventions. In particular, students demonstrated greater proficiency in the quality of reasoning and use of evidence in their writing.

www.sri.com/sites/default/files/publications/sri-crw-p-research-brief_nov-2015-final.pdf

FROM IMPROVEMENT TO LEARNING

Beyond Ratings: Re-Envisioning State Teacher Evaluation Systems as Tools for Professional Growth

New America, March 2016

By conducting in-depth interviews with state education agency leaders in 30 states and the District of Columbia, the authors found that states have prioritized implementing teacher evaluation systems and are largely not using them to promote ongoing teacher learning and growth. The report looks at this as one example of how the evaluations, despite dismissing very few teachers, have bred distrust among some educators. “While most educators believe in the goals of new



college- and career-ready standards," it says, "they do not want to be set up to fail. For educators to succeed, they want and need targeted support."

Despite recognition of this by local agencies, the authors say that the dominant narrative around evaluation has been about whether teachers are being fairly rated as "ineffective" or "in need of improvement" rather than the ongoing development of all teachers. This is unfortunate, the authors say, because although these teacher evaluation systems are still relatively young, some evidence exists that investing in better systems for both accountability and development could help all teachers (and their students) improve.

www.newamerica.org/education-policy/beyond-ratings-2

DEEPER LEARNING

Teacher Leadership & Deeper Learning for All Students

Center for Teaching Quality, 2016

The author examines current reforms' limitations as an introduction to exploring the promise of deeper learning — for both students and teachers. By exploring how teachers learn to lead as well as the conditions necessary for their expertise to spread, this paper identifies three promising shifts: "next-generation accountability approaches that tap (and make more visible) teacher expertise; increasing awareness of how top-performing nations invest in teacher leaders (as well as of how leadership is flattening in the private sector); and online networks that make it easier than ever for teachers to learn from and collaborate with one another." One predicted innovation: the use of microcredentials in the digital professional learning environment.

www.scribd.com/doc/303397058/CTQCollab-DeeperLearning



COMMON CORE SUPPORT

What Supports Do Teachers Need to Help Students Meet Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy?

RAND Corporation, 2016

This report provides U.S. educators' perspectives on their readiness and needs for support to help students meet state standards. Findings are drawn from surveys of the American Teacher and School Leader panels, national samples of K-12 teachers and school leaders. It found that the majority of K-12 teachers may need additional support to address state English language arts and literacy standards. It highlighted that, among other findings, English language arts teachers in Common Core states reported less familiarity with their state literacy standards than their counterparts in non-Common Core states, and that the majority of non-English language arts teachers expected to address literacy standards "felt not at all or only slightly prepared to do so, were not familiar enough with the standards to use them in lesson planning, and had a high need for professional development related to the standards."

www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR1300/RR1374/RAND_RR1374.pdf

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