



Teacher Evaluation: What's Fair? What's Effective?

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What Mind-Sets Drive Teacher Effectiveness?

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Education needs a fresh mental model of what constitutes high-quality teachers—not based on test scores, competencies, external criteria, or supervisory judgments. We propose that there are certain dispositions or drives that encourage growth that must be liberated and enhanced. We call them "states of mind" (Costa and Garmston, 2002). These dispositions are invisible in that they represent the internal thinking processes of the teacher and are best demonstrated by their effects.

This view of high-quality teaching requires evaluators to look beyond classroom performance to see the manifestations of effort focused around these five qualities. Like gravitational or electromagnetic fields, these states of mind cannot be observed directly; they are known from their effects. The ball falls from our hand; we label gravity as a cause. Likewise, we label invisible causes in classrooms. We celebrate teacher efficacy when the teacher inspires her students to grow and learn as a result of their hard work together. The invisible force is a growth mind-set. We contrast this with another less effective teacher who complains that the students are not well prepared because the teacher the year before did not prepare them. Although she may not say it directly to the students, it is highly likely the students will sense the frustration. This fixed mind-set blames external forces and limits the teacher's efficacy and ability to interact in proactive ways with children. (Dweck, 2006).

These dispositions direct the teacher behaviors that affect student learning. We categorize and define the five states of mind and believe them to be the generators of effective thought and action.

Five States of Mind

1. The drive for efficacy: Humans search for identity, competence, learning, self-empowerment, mastery, and control.
2. The drive for consciousness: Humans uniquely strive to monitor and reflect on their own and others' thoughts and actions.
3. The drive for flexibility: Humans survive by developing repertoires of response patterns that allow them to create, adapt, and change.
4. The drive for craftsmanship: Humans yearn to become clearer, more elegant, precise, congruent, and integrated.
5. The drive for interdependence: Humans grow in relationship to others and are social beings in need of reciprocity and community.

These states of mind create a growth mind-set that is a potent force for fostering collective excellence and influencing, motivating, and inspiring our intellectual capacities. Teachers who are highly reflective and able to think in this way ask questions that increase their capacity to respond and build on success. We suggest that when confronted with problematic situations, teachers should habitually and consciously employ these five states of mind by asking these questions:

- What is the most efficacious action I can take right now; how can I learn from this? What are my resources and how can I draw on my past successes with problems like this? What do I already know about the problem? What resources do I have available or need to generate?
- What am I conscious of and what do I *not* know? What questions do I need to ask? What strategies are in my mind now? What am I aware of in terms of my own beliefs, values, and goals with this problem? Of what feelings or emotions am I aware that might be blocking or enhancing my progress?
- How can I approach this problem flexibly? How might I look at the situation from a fresh perspective? How can I draw upon my repertoire of problem-solving strategies? How can I look at this problem from another's viewpoint?
- What is the most craftsman-like thing I can do? How might I analyze this problem into its component parts and develop a strategy for understanding and accomplishing each step? How can I illuminate the solutions to make them

clearer and more precise? Do I need to check out my data sources?

- How does this problem affect others and our interdependence? How can we solve it together, and what can I learn from others that would help me become a better problem solver? To whom do I need to turn for assistance?

Teaching for learning requires adaptive mind-sets, flexibility, and persistence to puzzle through the day-to-day challenges. Subsequently, we have come to believe that when focusing on teaching and learning, the dispositions of the teacher's mind are more predictive than discrete behaviors. We believe that we need to move away from the old inspector model of teacher evaluation and embrace more teacher–researcher collaborations that work together to identify critical issues and develop a more finely tuned understanding of how teacher efficacy, consciousness, and the other states of mind influence and contribute to excellence in the classroom.

We want a wiser profession, one that is not only technically accurate, but also inspired, sensitive, and proactive. We want a profession that ensures teachers will respond to the world of the ever-changing, unimagined challenges of future generations. This requires a reworking of our entire system and places a premium on creating professional arenas of reflection and growth.

References

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