

IMPLEMENTING THE U.S. STRATEGIES OF FORMATIVE AND SUMMATIVE EVALUATION FOR TEACHER PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT IN UKRAINE

Keywords: formative evaluation/assessment, summative evaluation, teacher performance, student achievement.

The impetus for developing a thoughtful approach to teacher performance assessment in Ukraine comes from the multiple successful practices implemented in competitive education systems (particularly, those leading in PISA rankings, such as Canada, Finland, New Zealand, Switzerland etc.) to facilitate teacher development through the coherent use of formative assessment and summative evaluation. Although the U.S. doesn't lead in the latest 2015 global PISA list on student performance, it's still above the OECD average [6] and therefore the U.S. practices may justly be taken into consideration. Measuring teacher performance by PISA results can be validated by research findings [1, p.16], [4] proving that students' academic achievement is directly related to the quality of instruction and suggesting that it should be crucial for teacher evaluation procedures. Currently, 17 U.S. states require student achievement as "preponderant" criterion for rating teacher performance; in 18 states it is considered "significant" [2, p.6]. While there is a large body of evidence that formative assessment of students improves their achievement, less attention is paid to formative assessment as a tool of monitoring teachers' performance and facilitating their professional development.

Research suggests that most teachers do not enter the profession as highly effective professionals and even for those having strong academic backgrounds it typically takes several years to acquire the skills necessary for effective instruction. Mentoring, which has been a major component of novice teacher induction programs in the USA, Canada, New Zealand, the UK etc. for several decades, still remains a powerful tool for improving teacher performance. While formative assessment is one of the core elements of mentoring and induction programs, summative evaluation is often purposely avoided to facilitate a trustful and amiable mentor-protégé partnership. However, once districts have provided teachers with comprehensive professional development and support programs, they need to identify underperforming teachers. For this reason researchers suggest that a sensible amount of summative evaluation is still necessary, especially for alternatively certified teachers. In the USA ineffective teachers are eligible for dismissal in slightly less than half of states (24 states), giving way to improvement plans used to help ineffective teachers in 29 states [2, p.5].

According to the literature [5], [3, p.3], the basic purposes of teacher evaluation are: a) improving instruction by fostering self-development and peer assistance; b) rating teacher development activities; c) validating staff selection procedure; d) providing a communication link between the school system and teachers; e) influencing personnel decisions such as retention, transfer, tenure, promotion, and dismissal; f) supporting marginal teachers with structured assistance. The following types of evaluation for professional development are generally distinguished in literature: formative and summative. Summative evaluation, which has historically been the responsibility of school administration, occurs at the completion of the professional development program and is used to determine its future vector. In other words, summative evaluation is a tool used to make personnel decisions, while formative evaluation is a tool used to improve instruction by finding and strengthening weak areas and facilitating professional development aligned with performance-based teaching standards. Formative evaluation, which is more accurately termed "formative assessment", is an ongoing process of data collection and analysis aligned with teacher professional development program. Integration of teacher evaluation into staff development programs is a way of enhancing teacher performance through monitoring which provides information for determining the extent of knowledge and skills gained, assessing the degree of maintenance of the acquired skills and knowledge, determining the current performance rating ("Exemplary", "Effective / Skillful", "Marginal", "Ineffective") and helping to learn staff development needs.

Formative assessment is mainly associated with mentoring programs for beginning teachers. However, formative assessment is not delivered through mentoring practice alone. After the induction is over and mentoring support is no longer provided, teachers are expected to keep progressing on their own, passing through different stages of their professional development. In a fostering academic environment successful transition through these stages is enhanced with ongoing formative assessment practices, such as peer assistance and review (PAR; also, "peer evaluation", "peer review" – a well-established method of supporting teachers through their observation of each other's classes, discussion of practical aspects, reflection, review of lesson plans, tests, assignments, and classroom records), which examines a wide range of teaching activities. Two types of participants typically receive PAR support: a) novice teachers or those new to the district; b) more experienced or veteran teachers who need some intervention related to instruction, especially those who have been poorly evaluated by the principal. PAR coaches also provide formal personnel evaluations after which teachers either successfully exit the program or are released from teaching duties in the district.

Other evaluation and assessment practices include: competency testing (such as the National Teachers Examination etc. used for initial certification and hiring decisions), videotaping, student achievement (standardized student achievement examinations which rank students' scores according to national norms for the particular category), portfolios, judgment-based teacher evaluations, horizontal coaching, teacher interview (one-to-one conference held by administrators to hire new teachers), classroom observation (usually performed by school administrators for beginning teachers and less frequently for experienced teachers; includes pre-observation/orientation, observation and post-observation conference), student ratings, portfolio assessment, faculty self-evaluation (self-identification of weak areas performed by teachers by means of logs, self-observation and reflection etc.). Observation remains the most widely used evaluation method, which has been lately criticized as having such drawbacks as inadequate training of evaluators and lack of expertise in specialized subject-matter areas, teacher resistance and tension, role conflict experienced by principals trying to be both evaluators and instructional leaders. According to NCTQ, 27

states require annual evaluations for teachers. In 2015 43 states required that student achievement be considered in teacher evaluations [2, p. 3–7], which contributes to purposeful evaluation procedure measuring teaching outcomes, rather than teacher’s behavior. Seven states (FL, HI, IN, LA, MI, NV and UT) directly tie teacher compensation to teacher evaluations, i.e. they require that districts build performance into teachers’ salary schedules [2, p.6].

The use of the teacher performance scores, formal and informal data obtained during formative and summative evaluation procedures should not be limited to accountability purposes. According to the U.S. National Education Association, assessment of teacher practice, along with teacher training and licensure, new teacher support and job-embedded professional development, are the four components of a comprehensive teacher growth and development system designed to meet the concept of lifelong learning [5]. Since each evaluation method has its advantages and disadvantages, policymakers should diversify the tools used to rate teacher performance in order to include both tangible and intangible teaching aspects.

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