

Reviewing Teacher Effectiveness in Improving Student Learning

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Abstract: This mini research is dealing with the review of teacher effectiveness in improving student learning. A qualitative research method using the technique of library research was applied in analyzing the data in this research. There are four aspects of teacher effectiveness reviewed by the researchers: firstly, the nature of the teacher's effectiveness; secondly, teacher effectiveness based on the teacher's performance; thirdly, teacher effectiveness based on the student's achievement; and fourthly, the benefits of teacher effectiveness for improving student learning. The results from four aspects that are reviewed give a comprehensive definition of effective teachers and specific methods on how to evaluate teacher effectiveness based on teacher performance, such as supervisors' ratings, students' evaluations of teachers, peer-reviewed assessments, and self-evaluation. In addition, the review also evaluated teacher effectiveness based on students' achievement, in which value-added models were exemplified in the measurement of effectiveness. Last, beyond teachers' contribution to student achievement, this library research also includes how effective teachers impact student learning, which obviously contributes to important outcomes for students as benefits for learning improvement.

Keywords: teacher effectiveness, value-added models, teacher performance, student learning improvement

INTRODUCTION

An effective teacher is a teacher who is responsible for the classes he manages in addition to the success of the classes he teaches. The growing understanding today is that qualified and effective teachers are teachers who are able to improve student performance, so that the impact of effective teachers will determine the development of student interests and have an impact on student achievement. However, "highly qualified" teaching does not necessarily indicate "highly effective" teaching in terms of promoting student learning.

The conception of teacher effectiveness and its definition are sometimes controversial and complex. Teacher effectiveness is defined to determine how it is measured to shape education policy. In the most specific definition, for example, teacher effectiveness refers to

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a teacher's capacity to improve student learning. Goe et al. (2008) define five factors of teacher effectiveness, which include the following:

- An effective teacher is one who helps students learn and has high expectations for all of his students. Teacher effectiveness can be measured through value-added or other test-based growth measures, in addition to alternative measures.
- Effective teachers have a positive social attitude toward students in addition to contributing to academic results. Social attitudes that teachers can show to their students, such as regular attendance in class, on-time carrying out assignments to the next class, attempting for student graduation on-time, self-efficacy, and behaving cooperatively with students.
- Effective teachers are those who are able to plan and structure learning opportunities of interest to students by using diverse resources to formatively monitor student progress. In addition, these resources are also used to tailor instruction as needed and to evaluate learning.
- Effective teachers are teachers who contribute to developing schools and classrooms that aim to appreciate diversity.
- Effective teachers are teachers who are able to collaborate with other teachers, educational administrators, parents, and professional educators to ensure student success, especially the success of students with special needs and students who are at high risk of failure.

To achieve all of these parameters of teacher effectiveness, as elaborated by Goe et al. (2008), there might be several methods on how to evaluate teacher effectiveness based on the teacher's performance and on student achievement. Some previous studies, e.g., Barden (2014), Darling-Hammond (2012), Goe et al. (2008), Waring (2015), and Little et al. (2009), were used to be reviewed in this research. Those studies are related to the way of evaluating teacher effectiveness based on the teacher's performance and students' achievement and the benefits of effective teachers for improving student learning. Those literature reviews represent fruitful understanding and analysis of teacher effectiveness that want to be explored by this research.

The objectives of this mini-research are to review: (1) the nature of a teacher's effectiveness; (2) the way of evaluating teacher effectiveness based on the teacher's performance; (3) the way of evaluating teacher effectiveness based on the student's achievement; and (4) the benefits of evaluating teacher effectiveness for improving student learning. The results of this research will be of great benefit to two parties, at least. First, for the school principal, the result of this research will provide the school principal with information on how to evaluate an effective teacher in their school. Second, for the education policy makers, the result will give information about the obstacles hindering teacher effectiveness, and those can be used as references to issue the new education policy.

METHOD

The method used in this study was library research (Zed, 2008). Through library research, according to him, researchers limit their activities only to review literature references to

answer problems. In this regard, the researchers write a summary of some journal articles that describe the past and current state of information on the topic they focused on. The following is the literature review framework used in this library research.

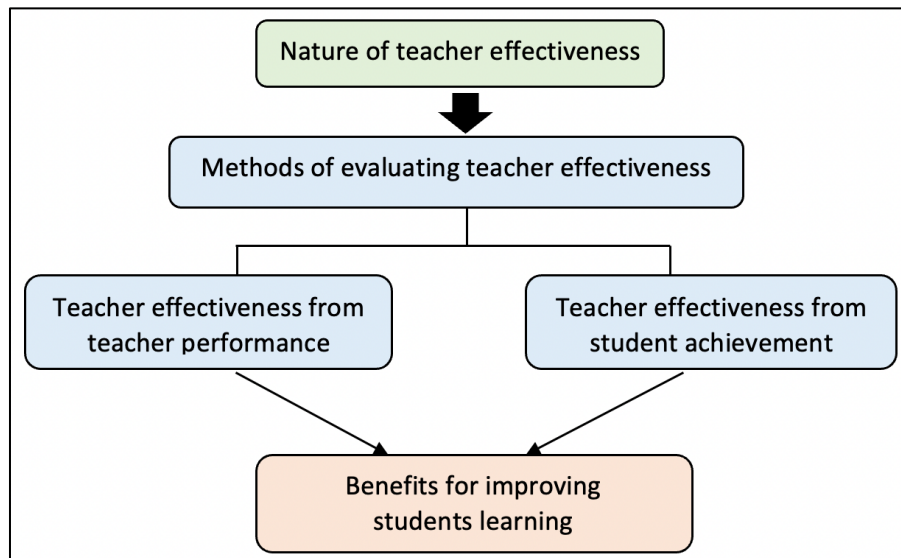


Figure 1. Literature review framework of this research

Regarding the topics reviewed, the writers used a theoretical foundation for this library research, which is taken from several pieces of literature investigating teacher effectiveness in terms of the nature of teacher effectiveness and methods of evaluating it. Then, methods of evaluating teacher effectiveness are focused on two perspectives: from the perspective of teacher performance and from the perspective of student achievement. Then, both evaluations of teacher effectiveness seek their benefits for improving students learning.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This library research aims at reviewing several issues related to teacher effectiveness by compiling three headings: the nature of a teacher's effectiveness and its benefit for improving student learning; the methods of evaluating teacher effectiveness based on the teacher's performance; and the methods of evaluating teacher effectiveness based on the student's achievement.

A. The nature of teacher's effectiveness

Clarifying the definition of teacher effectiveness is crucial for two primary reasons. First, what is measured reflects what is valued, and what is measured is also valued. Definitions identify and shape the variables that must be measured. If, for instance, policy discussions concern teacher-student interactions, the attention moves to the classroom and the documentation of effective teacher-student interactions. Moreover, distinct definitions result in different policy solutions. When discussing teacher quality, the topic of conversation is likely to revolve around improving teachers' results on tests of knowledge or on indicators of such knowledge, such as certification. When discussing classroom procedures, the focus is on particular teaching methods or practices.

Another definition of teacher effectiveness comes from Ko et al. (2014). According to these scholars, teacher effectiveness generally focuses only on student learning outcomes, teacher behavior itself, and the learning process in the classroom that promotes better student outcomes. In addition, Ko et al. (2014) characterize effective teachers as **capable people** who understand instructional objectives and know more about curriculum content and strategies for teaching their students. In addition, an effective teacher is a teacher who is able to adapt learning instructions to the students' needs and is able to anticipate misunderstandings of knowledge that arise among students. The most important thing for an effective teacher is that he is able to teach students meta-cognitive strategies and give them the opportunity to master what he teaches. So, he can monitor student understanding by offering appropriate feedback on a regular basis and take responsibility for student learning outcomes.

The evaluation of a teacher can be approached from three distinct but linked perspectives: input, process, and output measurement. Inputs are a teacher's background, beliefs, expectations, experience, pedagogical and subject matter expertise, certification and licensure, and educational attainment. In contrast, processes refer to the interaction between teachers and students that occurs in a classroom. It may also encompass a teacher's professional actions within the school and community. Outputs are the results of classroom activities, such as the effect on student achievement, graduation rates, student behavior, engagement, attitudes, and social-emotional well-being. Other outcomes may include contributing to the school or community by assuming school leadership roles, educating other teachers, or developing relationships with parents. Still, for this study's synthesis, student outcomes are the focal point. Output can be referred to as teacher effectiveness when referring to the impact on student accomplishment.

Increasingly, policy discussions define teacher effectiveness as the capacity to achieve greater-than-anticipated increases on standardized tests. Therefore, this paper is keen to highlight teacher effectiveness from the perspective of teacher performance and student achievement. The perspective last mentioned is closely related to the evaluation of what students achieved as the effect of teacher performance in the classroom.

B. Evaluating teacher effectiveness based on the teacher's performance

Teacher performance evaluation is a formal process in order to review and assess teacher performance and effectiveness in the classroom used by the school. According to Sawchuk (2015), this evaluation of teacher performance is used as feedback in order to guide the professional development of teachers. True teacher evaluation is an accurate assessment of teaching effectiveness, coaching, and support for teachers, followed by feedback so that teachers have opportunities for their professional development.

In terms of teaching, according to Wiener & Jacobs (2011), an important component of performance management is the evaluation system itself because the thing that drives another aspect of performance management is evaluation, which can provide information when performance management focuses on teacher evaluation. However, there is still no consensus on the best management system for teacher performance. Therefore, the definition

of teacher effectiveness is a complex thing that is a combination of several things, such as a set of knowledge, skills, abilities, traits, behaviours, and outcomes.

Teacher evaluations used to determine teacher pay tend to have mixed results when they are associated with improved teacher performance and teacher professional development (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Yuan et al., 2021). In some cases, for example, initially, teacher salaries for performance improvement programs are designed to result in wage compensation structures not being as good as expected, resulting in a lack of collaboration among teachers. In this situation, teachers work with inappropriate incentives to educate large numbers of students in order to meet the productivity requirements of their profession (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Springer & Gardner, 2010).

Why does teacher effectiveness depend on teacher performance? In general, teacher performance evaluation aims to monitor and evaluate teacher activities in the classroom. Regarding the purpose of evaluation, questions such as how to evaluate and who should evaluate are a greater concern over methodological issues in education (Nhundu, 1999). Regarding the issue of evaluation objectives, the data obtained from teacher performance evaluations can be used to make decisions about permanent and non-permanent teachers. Decisions about permanent teachers are used for the promotion or advancement of educational institutions, while decisions about non-permanent teachers are used for the renewal, separation, or permanence of the institution. Teacher performance evaluations can also provide information about the strengths and weaknesses of a teacher so that the basis for improvement for teachers and schools in general can be based on the results of this evaluation. Then, the results are used as policy for the recruitment of new teachers and the professional development of existing teachers. This is why the state of education in a particular learning institution can be described clearly and objectively through data generated from teacher evaluations. Thus, the extent to which educational institutions meet the challenge of their standards of excellence will be assessed through this evaluation (Tan, 1998).

What is the most effective way to evaluate teacher performance? The effectiveness of teacher performance can be evaluated in several ways through certain methods. According to David & Macayanan (2010), for instance, there are four most common methods for evaluating teacher effectiveness: (1) supervisors' rating; (2) students' evaluation of teachers; (3) peer-reviewed evaluation; and (4) self-evaluation.

(1) Supervisors' rating

The traditional method used to evaluate teachers is to evaluate teacher performance through school administrators or supervisors. The supervisor visits the teacher in the classroom and observes the teacher during teaching, where this evaluation activity is usually known as class observation. This class observation requires reflection more than once because it aims for formative evaluation. Bichi (2017) states that the assessment of the superintendent must be carried out by the school administrator, and the assessment instrument must be well designed. Therefore, supervisors are teachers who are trained and experienced, so they can

observe the class well and review class documents owned by other teachers, such as teacher portfolios and student work.

According to Goe et al. (2008), if the supervisor's assessment is taken from the teacher's portfolio, the results of a comprehensive evaluation can be produced through measuring aspects of teaching, although they are difficult to observe in the classroom. In addition, this supervisory assessment is also a great evaluation tool to reflect on improving teacher performance. However, Goe et al. (2008) are a little skeptical about this supervisory assessment because the method used is time-consuming on the part of the teacher and the evaluator, and in addition, the evaluator must have sufficient knowledge about the content of the portfolio. This is to confirm the opinion of Little et al. (2009), which state that in portfolio assessments, supervisors find it difficult to verify consistent and reliable assessments of what has been done by evaluators because it is unclear whether the material in the portfolio represents accurate teacher practice or not. Therefore, the developed portfolio should be given to teachers if the assessed portfolio is used for school improvement.

(2) Students' evaluation of teachers

According to Ocave & Abulon (2006), students' evaluation is the most widely used evaluation form to evaluate teacher effectiveness in the classroom. When it comes to students' evaluation of teachers, students should be in an objective position to evaluate their teachers' performance, with no subjectivity over their evaluations (David & Macayanan, 2010). The most frequently used instruments to evaluate teacher performance are grading scales or checklists. This instrument is given by the supervisor when visiting a classroom in one particular subject, and students directly to assess and evaluate the performance of the teacher they want to evaluate. This method of teacher evaluation, taken briefly from the student's side, according to Goe et al. (2008), is the 'student survey'. Goe et al. (2008) added that the student survey is used as part of teacher evaluation, which can provide information through student assessment of teaching practices perceived by students.

Assessment methods provided like this can help teachers improve their practice performance because what they have done is already connected to student perceptions, in addition to providing formative information to the teacher himself. However, Goe et al. (2008) criticized the method of evaluating teachers from the students' side because the results could not be used as a valid evaluation reference. This is because the student's evaluation has not yet been validated into a summative assessment, so it should not be used as the primary assessment result in teacher evaluation. In addition, the students' evaluation of teachers also still does not contain information from teaching aspects such as teacher content knowledge, curriculum fulfillment, and professional activities. Therefore, this student-oriented assessment should not be a stand-alone evaluation measurement because students are usually not qualified to assess teachers based on curriculum, classroom management, content knowledge, or other areas related to effective teaching.

(3) Peer-reviewed evaluation

Peer-reviewed evaluation is an evaluation method that evaluates teacher performance through peers or colleagues. Scholars believe that in evaluating peers, especially peers in the same field, it should ideally be done by knowledgeable and trained peers (Kohut et al., 2007).

In general, peer evaluations are carried out by colleagues who are senior and have the same knowledge or expertise related to the subject taught by the teacher to be assessed. Goldstein (2007) terms peer-reviewed evaluation as peer assistance and review (PAR). In this evaluation system, according to Goldstein, evaluation and support are provided by highly trained mentor teachers to other teachers who need them. This PAR is actually aimed only at teachers who have poor performance ratings.

This evaluation through PAR actually only focuses on instructional performance problems. This PAR evaluation, according to Goldstein (2007), differs from teacher evaluation in general since it requires not only more time, but it must also be transparent and involve teachers' unions to provide a level of assessment accountability. This assessment system through PAR focuses only on helping teachers who have underperformed in terms of behavior due to their professional development evaluation needs. Professional development supported by this evaluation includes matching evaluators to performance standards that are used by teachers (Goldstein, 2007). Thus, the results of PAR are used to make personnel decisions such as granting tenure and termination.

Although the evaluation system used with PAR will result in high-risk decisions, it is also effective in helping teachers improve their performance. According to Darling-Hammond (2013), "historically, about two-thirds of veteran performance evaluated using this PAR has improved substantially and successful completion of the program, and about a third in each case resigned or were dismissed." In this regard, "the PAR program focuses on the structural barriers to the teacher evaluation system that enable master teachers to attain results that principals cannot normally achieve" (Goldstein, 2007).

(4) Self-evaluation

Self-evaluation is an alternative approach to evaluating teacher performance. Through this approach, teachers can assess and evaluate themselves based on a well-defined set of competencies or characteristics. Goe et al. (2008) define self-evaluation as an activity carried out by teachers in reporting what they do in the classroom. These evaluations can be assessed through surveys, instructional logs, and interviews. Self-evaluation can range from the focus being evaluated to the level of detail of the measurement. What does self-evaluation contribute to teacher effectiveness? Again, Goe et al. (2008) detail some of the reasons for this. First, unobservable factors influencing teaching, such as knowledge, intentions, expectations, and beliefs, can be measured through self-evaluation. Second, the unique perspective of the teacher can result from self-evaluation. And third, self-evaluation is very cost-efficient when compared to gathering large amounts of information at once.

However, Goe et al. (2008) provide some considerations about self-evaluation, which they refer to as the "Teacher Self-Report Measure." Those considerations, such as: self-evaluation must have validity and reliability because it does not depend entirely on existing instruments; developing well-validated instruments will improve the accuracy of evaluation results; and the most important thing is that existing evaluation methods should not be used as a single evaluation model in teacher performance evaluation. Therefore, to minimize the potential for reporting bias, Little et al. (2009) recommend that the best self-evaluation

instrument is one in which the data collected comes from several sources and is longitudinally collected, and teachers' answers should be anonymous and kept confidential.

C. Teacher effectiveness based on the student's achievement

Teacher effectiveness can also be evaluated through students' achievement. One of the most common uses of teacher effectiveness evaluations based on students' achievement is the so-called "value-added model" (Darling-Hammond, 2012; Little et al., 2009; Goe et al., 2008; Waring, 2015). According to Goldhaber & Anthony (2004), the value-added model (VAM) provides a summary of scores related to what factors contribute to student achievement growth. This kind of evaluation, according to Darling-Hammond (2012), is developed to measure the achievement of student test results from one year to the next. Such evaluation models are often recommended as a tool to achieve teaching goals. Teacher evaluation through VAM is based on the belief that teacher "effectiveness" is reflected in the achievement of teacher students as measured by this model. Again, teacher effectiveness measured using VAM is generally focused on outcomes from examining teachers' contributions to student achievement over the years. The result is a teacher's contribution to the growth of student achievement they teach in a given year, as measured through a set of sophisticated statistical models related to student-teacher data.

The strengths and weaknesses of value-added evaluation

The value-added evaluation model is inherently promising and is now increasingly used as an instrument to determine teacher effectiveness (when the term effectiveness is interpreted to contribute achievement to teachers). In accordance with Little et al. (2009), the value-added model has been recognized as having several advantages. It is considered very objective by some parties because this type of evaluation does not involve raters making subjective assessments. In addition, value-added evaluations directly examine how teachers contribute to student learning. Thus, this kind of evaluation of teacher effectiveness can illustrate the diversity among teachers in their contribution to student learning, instead of being very useful in identifying whether teacher competencies are on a continuum of below average and above average. However, the drawback of this type of evaluation is related to the method used, which most education professionals and teachers are less familiar with. Unlike classroom observation, where teachers really meet with their evaluators, which contrasts with value-added models where the evaluation is conducted remotely without facing the teachers.

Little et al. (2009) explicitly assert that how well teachers promote student achievement as measured through achievement on standardized tests can be directly assessed with this value-added model. On standardized tests, students' previous achievement can be used to predict their achievement for the next year related to a particular subject. This can be determined through the student achievement score, whether it has met, exceeded, or failed to achieve the predicted score, so that these results are the basis for the preparation of teacher effectiveness scores. Teachers will be judged as effective teachers when most students in a given classroom perform better than predicted on standardized achievement tests. However, teachers may be considered less effective when most students in a particular classroom fail

to meet the predicted scores. Therefore, in some evaluation models, previous student achievement scores are used as the basis for calculating the effectiveness of teacher performance. Meanwhile, in other models, the evaluation may include indicators of a student's gender, race, and socioeconomic background, including information about teacher experience.

Can the teacher's effect actually be measured from the evaluations obtained through this value-added model? This is the most important question about teacher effectiveness when the assessment is viewed from the point of view of value-added models. As stated by Warring (2015), test-based teacher evaluation systems are measured using student growth to evaluate teacher effectiveness. When the quality of education provided to students increases, it will certainly increase student achievement as well. In addition to being often used to describe a teacher's effectiveness on students' academic growth over the years, VAM is often used to measure how much a student has learned over time. Formerly, a student's academic performance measured through VAM, which serves as a basis for determining student academic growth, was not related to a student's socioeconomic status or other personal characteristics, as they can usually confuse such achievement-based measurements.

For all the advantages of VAM, Warring (2015) does not deny that VAM also has some limitations; one is that VAM offers less on how to redesign teacher training in order that teacher professional development targets can be achieved. In addition, VAM cannot determine what the specific practices of a teacher who is responsible for their success are, although VAM allows evaluators to identify what effective teachers should be.

D. The benefit of teacher effectiveness for improving student learning

Many studies have revealed that teacher effectiveness contributes to improving student learning. From the perspective of teacher performance, Little et al. (2009) assert that highly effective teaching must be performed by highly qualified teachers. This implies that those characteristics of teachers must have the necessary qualifications and certifications to improve student learning. Teacher performance, according to Barden (2014), is regarded as effective in improving student learning if standards-based teacher evaluation is linked to improved student achievement. Therefore, high quality standards are the basis for an effective performance management system for evaluating teacher effectiveness.

From the perspective of measuring student achievement using the value-added model, a study by Schacter et al. (2006) found that an increase in student achievement can result from the teaching strategies used by teachers when they encourage student creativity. The study illustrates that the high quality of observational data can provide useful information on teaching strategies that improve student outcomes when combined with a high-quality value-added model. In addition, this value-added measurement model may have great potential to improve teaching quality when combined with other types of measurement. However, it needs advanced research to understand how to sort out which practices or practice patterns lead to learning.

CONCLUSION

Based on the literature reviewed aforementioned, effective teachers are those who are able to understand the subject matter in depth and flexibly; connect students' previous knowledge and experience to what should be learned by students in the classroom; build support for students and effective scaffolding for learning; use teaching strategies that can help students connect, practice new skills, and implement what they've learned in the classroom; and monitor students to implement self-learning. In addition, effective teachers are teachers who assess student learning continuously and adapt teaching materials to student learning needs. The most important thing about what effective teachers do is that they are able to develop and manage collaborative classrooms effectively where all students feel involved in learning activities in the classroom.

A teacher's effectiveness should be measured and evaluated through their performance and their students' achievements. In terms of evaluating teacher effectiveness based on a teacher's performance, four most common methods of evaluation are frequently used to measure teacher effectiveness: (1) supervisors' rating; (2) students' evaluation of teachers; (3) peer-reviewed evaluation; and (4) self-evaluation. In terms of evaluating teacher effectiveness based on student achievement, the value-added model is indeed a controversial form of evaluation, but it holds great promise as a measurement method for determining teacher effectiveness (when a teacher's contribution to achievement is interpreted from the results of the effectiveness itself). However, most education professionals and teachers lack understanding of this method because the variation in value-added scores generated through this evaluation is sometimes inconsistent with what teachers do in the classroom.

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