



(How) Can All Children Get Great Teaching?

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November 15, 2012

University of Michigan-Dearborn School of Education

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

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Kristof, NYT, September 13, 2012

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/13/opinion/kristof-students-over-unions.html?ref=opinion

"The most important civil rights battleground today is education, and, likewise, the most crucial struggle against poverty is the one fought in schools."

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Overview of today's argument

1. Reframing the problem of "teacher quality" and educational inequity
2. Policy strategies for improving teacher quality
3. What it would take to build a practice-based professional system of training for teaching practice

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View video of classroom lesson

Videoclip from classroom lesson

What feedback would you give this teacher about the teaching you observe here?

Although you would like to have more information, would you rate the teaching here as "highly effective," "effective," "ineffective," "highly ineffective"?

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Our problem

1. Evidence of teaching effects has spurred increased interest in importance of *teaching*.
2. Broad skepticism exists about the efficacy of teacher education and professional development.
3. Education professionals are often not effective advocates for teacher education.
4. The result: A predominant focus on recruitment, outcomes, and sorting — instead of training. This does not augur well for redressing educational inequity and uneven quality.

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What great teachers often say about teaching

"Teaching has always come naturally to me."

"I have learned what I do from experience; I like to pass on what I know to student teachers."

"I can't explain what I do. Teaching is really an art and you have to follow your intuition a lot."

"I like what she does, but it wouldn't work for me. I have developed my way of doing things that works for me and my style."

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What's wrong with this?

1. Undermines the idea that teaching is a profession that can be developed through careful unpacking of the practice and a common technical language
2. Perpetuates the belief that teaching is individual
3. Reinforces the predominance of "style" over skill

If teaching is individual and must be figured out by each person on the job, then there is little hope of ensuring that all young people receive skillful instruction.

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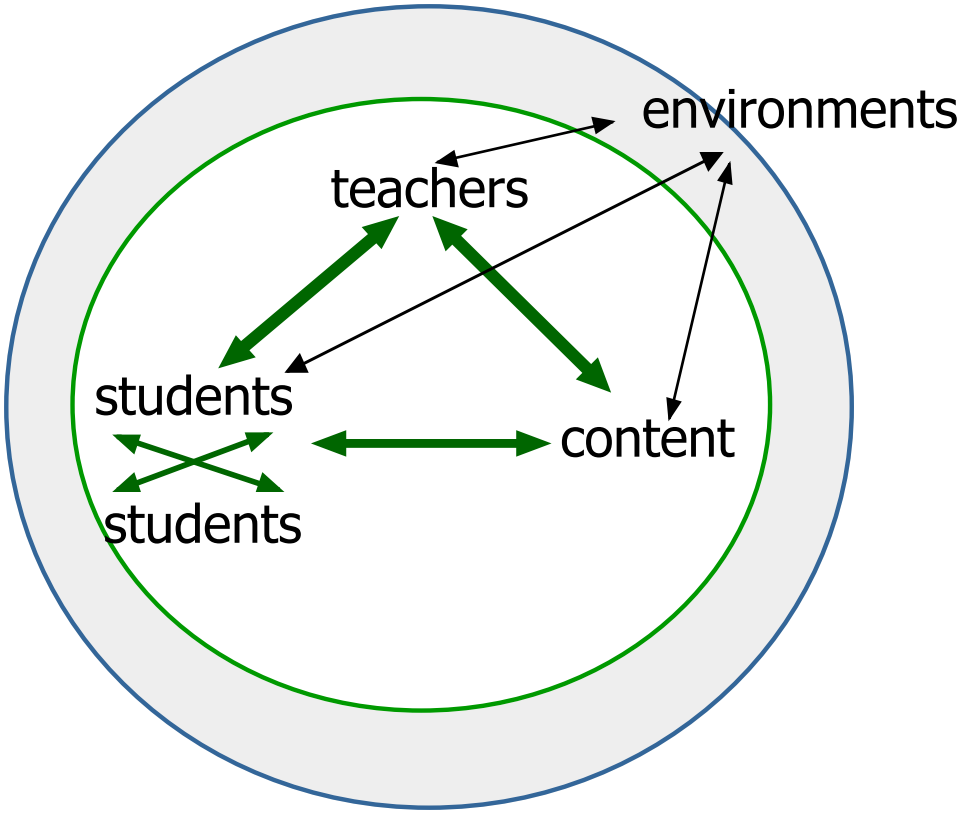
Two schools of thought, or bets

1. **Focus on teachers**
   - recruitment, selection
   - evaluation — rewards and sanctions
2. **Focus on teaching**
   - training
   - assessment
   - curriculum

What are the reasons to bet more on one or the other?

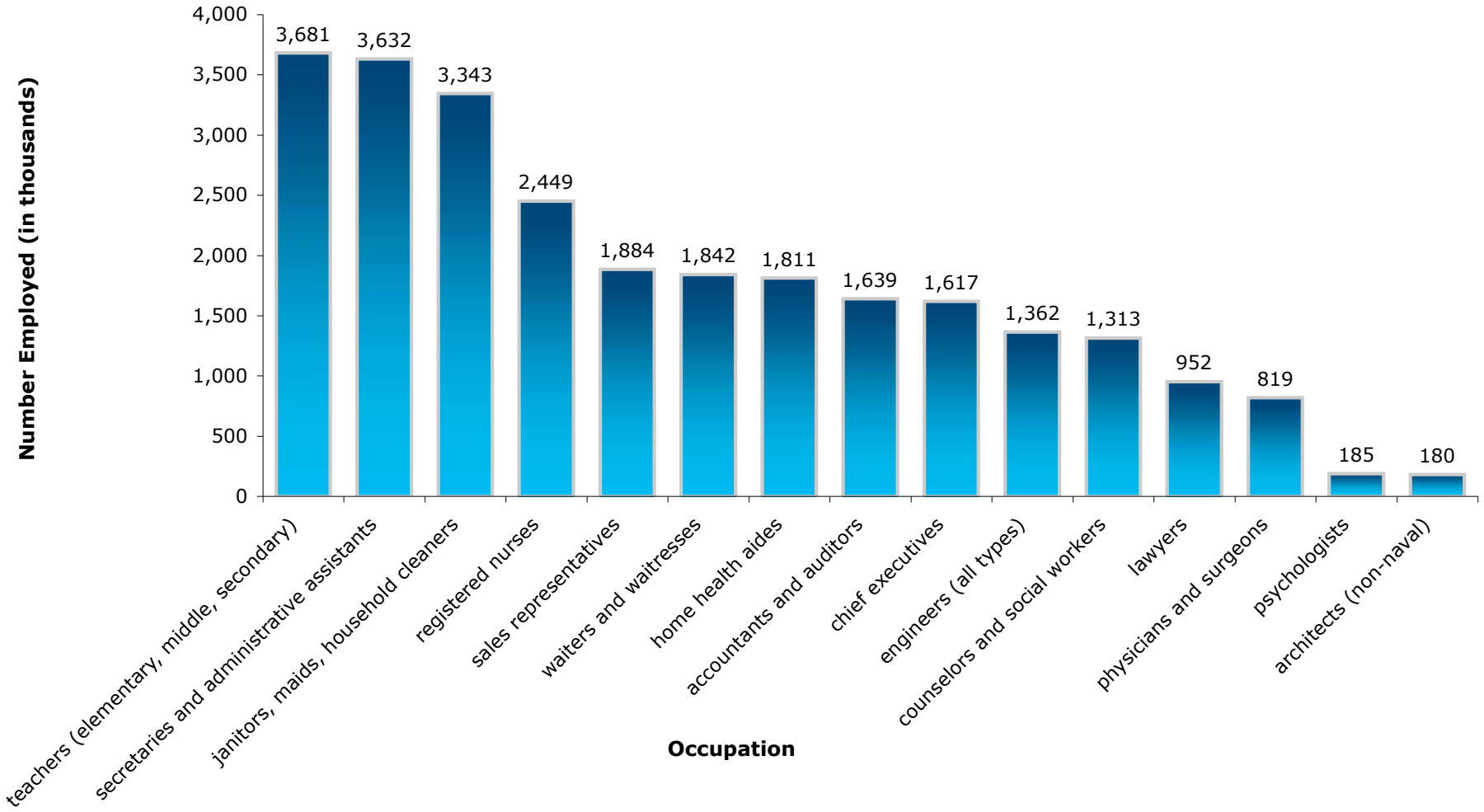
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How does teacher quality affect students' opportunity to learn and learning?



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The realities of scale



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More realities of scale

>50,000,000 school children

15,000 school districts

Hundreds of different curricula in each subject

Hundreds of different tests

Over 2,400 programs to prepare teachers

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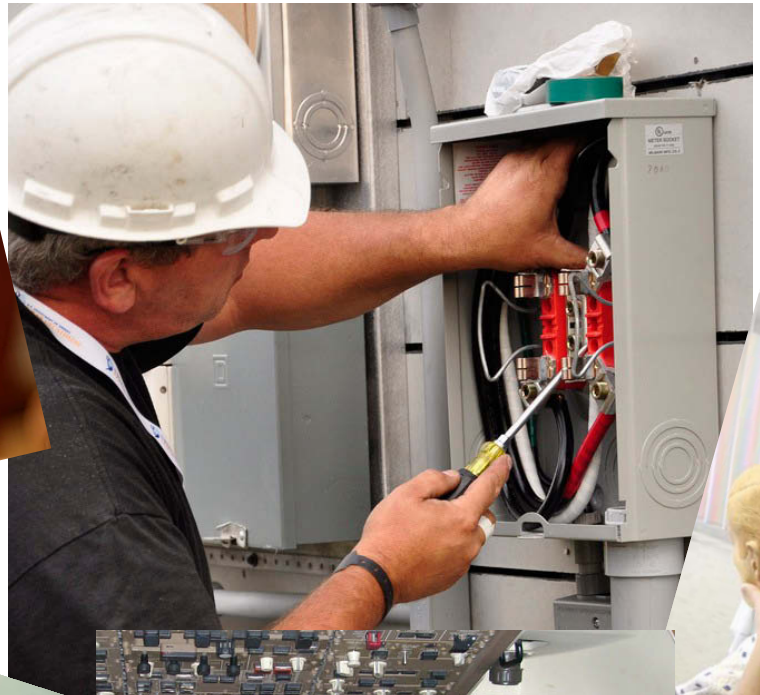
Why the problem is one of professional training

The scale of the need

Teaching is unnatural, intricate, and deliberate work

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Features of strong training for responsible practice

1. Clear **specification of skills, capabilities, and qualities of performance** necessary for independent practice
2. Detailed **developmental clinical training**, progressing from observing to simulations to supervised apprenticeship to supervised independent practice
3. **Performance assessment** of individual competence before allowing independent practice

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No professionally grounded system for teachers' training

1. No common curriculum for the professional training of teachers for new or practicing teachers — i.e., specific practices and skills that are professionally agreed upon
2. Over 2,000 independent providers of initial teacher training, and a vast array of professional development providers
3. No common standard of performance for entry to independent practice with (on) young people

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Important moment of opportunity for building a true system of professional training for teaching practice



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What do these entail? How do they compare with modal practice?

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3. **Performance assessment** of individual competence before allowing independent practice

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Crucial next steps for the profession

1. *Build on basic agreements about domains of teaching and evidence about content knowledge for teaching:* Identify **key practices of teaching** and **high-leverage content** essential for responsible beginning practice
2. *Build on commitment to clinical preparation:* Develop **specific approaches to training** beginners to carry out those practices, along a **continuum of contexts** for learning and practicing practice
3. *Build on commitment to performance assessment:* Develop **performance assessments of specific practices and content** and make them required for entry

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Teachers should use data to inform instruction.

Teachers should use a variety of instructional strategies to engage all students.

Teachers should know their subjects deeply.

Teachers should care about all students and create a positive culture in the classroom.

Teachers should hold high expectations for all students.

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Three challenges to specifying a common, detailed professional core

① Broad faith in teaching as "natural"

② Underdeveloped professional language

③ Particularity of teaching practice

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Teaching integer addition



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Teaching probability



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Some common instructional practices

1. Managing whole group discourse equitably and in support of all students' learning
   - Allocating turns to speak
   - Supporting practices of listening and speaking
   - Using public writing surfaces
2. Designing and posing questions for specific instructional purposes
3. Establishing norms and routines for classroom discourse and work that are central to content
4. Making content (e.g., specific problems, ideas, processes) explicit through explanation, modeling, representations, and examples
5. Recognizing particular common patterns of student thinking and development in a specific domain
6. Implementing organizational routines, procedures, and strategies to support a respectful and equitable learning environment

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Crucial next steps for the profession

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Clinical training is more than field experience

Shifting the conversation from how much to what and how

1. Focus on the curriculum for teaching practice
   - What skills, techniques, capabilities
   - Ways of representing, decomposing, and approximating practice (Grossman and McDonald)
   - Pedagogies for teaching those: analyzing, modeling, rehearsing, coaching, etc.
2. Settings appropriate to the learning goals, including video and cases, simulations, labs, real students and classrooms

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Practicing defibrillation



Practicing a guided reading lesson



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Building new assessments of teaching practice

- Designed for licensure and advanced certification
- Improvement-oriented: Useful also for diagnosis and continuous improvement of teaching
- Linked to teaching specific academic content (the Common Core State Standards)
- Based on actual performance of teaching
- Conducted in a variety of settings for practice, depending on what is being assessed
- Rooted in deliberate evidence base for the substance and validity of the assessment

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ASSESSMENT OF TEACHING PRACTICE

Diagnosis: Eliciting and interpreting children's thinking

1. Analyze students' work on fraction tasks
2. Prepare for an interaction with a standardized student about one piece of student work
3. Probe the standardized student's thinking to understand the steps she took as well as why she performed the particular steps
4. Respond to questions about the diagnosis

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$$9\frac{2}{10}$$

$$-\ 6\frac{7}{10}$$

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Does this student understand?

$$\begin{array}{r} 9\frac{2}{10} \\ -\ 6\frac{7}{10} \\ \hline 2\frac{5}{10} \end{array}$$

POSSIBILITIES?

1. The student does understand the underlying concepts.
2. The student subtracted "up" and made a basic calculational error.
3. The student overgeneralized from base 10 whole number subtraction.

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Teacher intern #1



$$\begin{array}{r} 8\,\not{9}\,{}^{1}2/10 \\ -\ 6\ 7/10 \\ \hline 2\ 5/10 \end{array}$$

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Teacher intern #2



$$9\frac{2}{10} - 6\frac{7}{10} = 2\frac{5}{10}$$

$$2\frac{2}{5} - 1\frac{3}{5} = ___$$

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Toward a professional system of training for teaching practice

What do we need to make the practice of teaching broadly learnable in ways that are reliable, equitable, and responsible?

What challenges will we face?

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Common resources for building professional practice

1. Develop a common technical and professional language for critical elements of the work (e.g., questions)
2. Build broadly shared and accessible collections from practice (student thinking, classroom episodes, "textbook cases," unpacking of common core content) from a wide and representative set of contexts and communities
3. Develop ways to work on practice collectively that help to define what is common, what is contextual, what is personal/stylistic

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It won't be easy.

1. The scale of the enterprise is vast and the U.S. has weak educational infrastructure.
2. It will take a movement to build a rigorous system of professional training for the responsibility of teaching our nation's youth, in order to achieve fairness in common access to skilled teaching.
3. It focuses on **teaching**, not **teachers.** It focuses on building capacity, not finding talent and firing.
4. It is not the "American way" — it is detailed (even prescriptive), not individually discretionary, common.

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How does teacher evaluation fit in this picture?

Theory of action

Teacher quality would be improved if we held schools accountable for their impact on students' learning.

TYPICAL APPROACH

Principal observation one or two times a year, with or without comments

Pay increases automatic based on years of experience, not tied to evaluation (above)

NEW POLICY APPROACH

Principal (or other trained person) observes each teacher systematically using an observation checklist, approx. three times a year; plus "walk-throughs"

Student growth (50% of evaluation)

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Teacher evaluation: Why, and why not?

Fair approach to estimating quality

Accountability can produce:

- Incentives for improvement
- Fair approach for identifying and weeding out bad schools and teachers

Difficulty in measuring growth reliably

- Instability of VAM scores
- Invalidity of tests
- Significant measurement error

High stakes outcome measures often lead to distorted practice

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Teacher evaluation in Michigan

Required components in law (passed by legislature in June 2011):

A common teacher evaluation system that includes:

A common observation rubric or tool for supervisors' (usually the school principal) evaluative observations

A growth model for associating students' growth with their teachers (by 2016, must count for 50% of the teacher evaluation

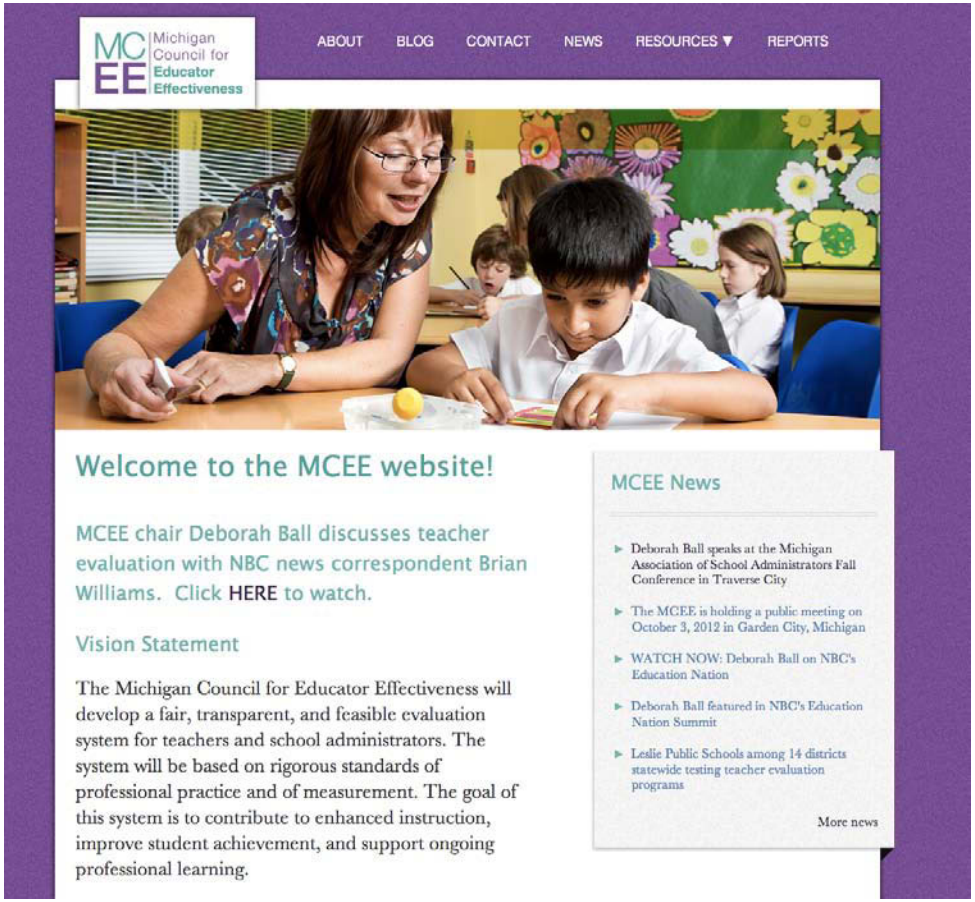
A system for categorizing teachers into four quartiles of performance based on their evaluations

Criteria and a review process for districts requesting waivers from the common system and using their own instead

http://www.mcede.org/

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Michigan Council for Educator Effectiveness (MCEE) mcede.org



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MCEE Charge

The MCEE will submit to the State Board of Education, the Governor, and the state legislature a report that identifies and recommends all of the following:

1. A student growth and assessment tool.
2. A state evaluation tool for teachers.
3. A state evaluation tool for school administrators.
4. Changes to the requirements for a professional teaching certificate.
5. A process for evaluating and approving local evaluation tools for teachers and administrators that are consistent with the state evaluation tool for teachers and administrators and the act.

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MCEE Vision

The Michigan Council for Educator Effectiveness will develop a fair, transparent, and feasible evaluation system for teachers and school administrators. The system will be based on rigorous standards of professional practice and of measurement. The goal of this system is to contribute to enhanced instruction, improve student achievement, and support ongoing professional learning.

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Why evaluation matters…

The evidence that skillful teaching has significant impact on students' learning

The need for a more systematic way to support improvement of teaching and learning

Widespread public interest in and concern about K-12 education

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Pilot districts and teacher observation tools

5 Dimensions of Teaching and Learning

Clare Public Schools

Leslie Public Schools

Marshall Public Schools

Mt. Morris Consolidated Schools

Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching

Garden City Public Schools

Montrose Community Schools

Port Huron Area School District

Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model

Big Rapids Public Schools

Farmington Public Schools

North Branch Area Schools

The Thoughtful Classroom

Cassopolis Public Schools

Gibraltar School District

Harper Creek Community Schools

Lincoln Consolidated Schools

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The challenges

1. Choosing tools that are valid, fair, and feasible
   - Measure the things we actually care about
   - Measure things that are appropriate to try to account for
   - Measure these things validly and reliably
   - Affordable and doable
2. Building a system that focuses on improving practice
   - Provides useful feedback
   - Is linked to effective learning opportunities

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What *is* TeachingWorks?

- A national organization housed at the University of Michigan School of Education
- Based on work done at the University of Michigan in our own programs and also in partnership with other programs and organizations
- Focused on ensuring that every child gets skillful teaching every single year by building strong professional infrastructure for the training, development, and assessment of teaching practice

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Four main arenas of work

① Supporting the development of a common curriculum for teaching
② Building resources for teaching practice, and performance assessments of specific high-leverage practices that appraise a teacher's readiness for independent practice
③ Providing training for those who work with teachers
④ Advancing the case for the importance of effective professional training

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THANK YOU!

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Slides will be available on my website
("Google" Deborah Ball)

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