



Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) Project

In fall 2009, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation launched the Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) project to test new approaches to measuring effective teaching. The goal of the MET project is to improve the quality of information about teaching effectiveness available to education professionals within states and districts — information that will help them build fair and reliable systems for measuring teacher effectiveness that can be used for a variety of purposes, including feedback, development, and continuous improvement.

The project includes nearly 3000 teachers who volunteered to help identify a better approach to teacher development and evaluation, located in six predominantly urban school districts across the country: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, Dallas Independent School District, Denver Public Schools, Hillsborough County Public Schools (including Tampa, Florida), Memphis City Schools, and the New York City Department of Education.

As part of the project, multiple data sources are being collected and analyzed over two school years, including student achievement gains on state assessments and supplemental assessments designed to assess higher-order conceptual understanding; classroom observations and teacher reflections on their practice; assessments of teachers' pedagogical content knowledge; student perceptions of the classroom instructional environment; and teachers' perceptions of working conditions and instructional support at their schools.

To limit the need for extensive additional testing, the MET project started with grades and subjects where most states currently test students. Included are those teaching mathematics or English language arts in grades 4 through 8. In addition, three courses are added that serve as gateways for high school students, where some states are using end-of-course tests: Algebra I, grade 9 English, and biology.



The following data are being collected in participants' classrooms:

Measure 1: Student achievement gains on different assessments

Measure 2: Classroom observations and teacher reflections

Measure 3: Teachers' pedagogical content knowledge

Measure 4: Student perceptions of the classroom instructional environment

Measure 5: Teachers' perceptions of working conditions and instructional support at their schools

SUMMARY OF THE EARLY FINDINGS

- In every grade and subject, a teacher's past track record of value-added is among the strongest predictors of their students' achievement gains in other classes and academic years. A teacher's value-added fluctuates from year-to-year and from class-to-class, as succeeding cohorts of students move through their classrooms. However, that volatility is not so large as to undercut the usefulness of value-added as an indicator (imperfect, but still informative) of future performance.
- Teachers with high value-added on state tests tend to promote deeper conceptual understanding as well.
- Teachers have larger effects on math achievement than on achievement in reading or English Language Arts, at least as measured on state assessments.
- Student perceptions of a given teacher's strengths and weaknesses are consistent across the different groups of students they teach. Moreover, students seem to know effective teaching when they experience it: student perceptions in one class are related to the achievement gains in other classes taught by the same teacher. Most important are students' perception of a teacher's ability to control a classroom and to challenge students with rigorous work.



THE MET PROJECT IS BASED ON THREE PREMISES:

- Whenever feasible, a teacher's evaluation should include his or her students' achievement gains.
- Any additional components of the evaluation (e.g., classroom observations, student feedback) should be demonstrably related to student achievement gains.
- The measure should include feedback on specific aspects of a teacher's practice to support teacher growth and development.

