

Six Critical Guidelines for Evaluators: Aligning Standards with Instruction and Student Evidence Using the Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model

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www.marzanocenter.com/Teacher-Evaluation/aligning-standards-white-paper/

Teachers across the U.S. are being asked to adopt, implement, and achieve success with new rigorous state standards. While research has shown that schools believe they are ready to make the shift to rigor, observations of current classroom practice indicate otherwise. Observers must now focus on inspecting classroom implementation of new academic standards, and on helping teachers

identify and plan for the level of instruction necessary for students to demonstrate evidence of progress toward those standards.

It is crucial that educators implementing the Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model leverage the instructional model built into the framework and the observational protocol to ensure that teachers are supported in making critical instructional shifts. Learning Sciences Marzano Center has issued six critical guidelines for district leaders, principals, and all staff who observe or support teachers for successful implementation of the Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model in the standards-based classroom.

TWO PRINCIPLES FOR CLASSROOM RIGOR

Rigor is Achieved by Careful Scaffolding of Information and Tasks

Simply providing students with rigorous tasks will not necessarily enhance the rigor of their thinking. Research has shown that “enhanced discovery learning,” for example, is superior to other forms of instruction, involving some direct instruction of critical content, teacher directed discussions about the validity of information and tentative conclusions, and a well conceived progression of information and tasks designed by the teacher.

Teacher Actions in the Classroom Have a Direct Relationship with Students’ Depth of Learning

While teacher knowledge of content is important, teacher actions in the form of instructional strategies at a detailed level has a much larger impact on student learning. Hattie’s research, for example, indicated that training teachers to effectively use research-based instructional strategies yielded an effect size associated with a 31 percentile point gain in student achievement.

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Our national research center offers the following six critical guidelines for district personnel and evaluators as they observe and coach effective classroom instruction.* Observers should:

1. Identify and leverage the model of instruction within the Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model

The Marzano Teacher Evaluation Framework embodies a robust model of instruction. The teacher actions and evidences in the element Providing Rigorous Learning Goals and Performance Scales are the first step in establishing standards-aligned instruction and communicating standards-aligned expectations for student learning.

To provide rigorous learning goals and performance scales, teachers follow a process for creating learning targets and scales that includes the following steps: (1) unpack one or more related standards to identify learning targets, (2) use a taxonomy to identify levels of cognitive complexity required by the learning targets; and (3) organize learning targets into a scale that describes levels of performance to attainment of the standard.

2. Identify visible scaffolding to standards within a lesson and across related lessons

The process of aligning lessons to learning targets—quickly scaffolding to rigorous content

and strategies while using student evidence to track student progress—allows teachers to be more efficient and effective during their class time. An observer should carefully note the teacher actions and evidences in the elements of Design Questions 1–4 to give specific feedback and help teachers grow in this critical

Instruction must always align to the taxonomy level of the learning target(s) being addressed in the lesson.

area of scaffolding to standards.

3. Conduct standards-based observations to inspect and support standards implementation and achievement

Conducting a standards-based teacher observation simply means making standards implementation and evidence in student work the primary focus of the classroom visit. By making this shift in emphasis, the observation process may become more meaningful for teacher growth and student

achievement. Preparation and communication is critical so that teachers are clearly aware of the observation focus and expectations. A move in this direction will help teachers understand that the Marzano framework is not just an evaluation system but a professional growth system that they can and should use for ongoing pedagogical improvement.

4. Develop accurate scoring practices and provide actionable and specific feedback to teachers

Meaningful and focused feedback begins with accurate scoring of observed teaching practices. Observer feedback must shift from descriptions of teacher actions to specific and actionable next steps for moving up to the next level of the scale (or “feeding forward”). Feeding forward helps teachers self-identify what was effective and worth building on in the lesson and what was missing or could have been more effective to put in place for the next lesson, with a particular focus on standards implementation.

5. Adopt key evaluation system recommendations to emphasize the implementation and achievement of new standards while maintaining validity and reliability for high-stakes teacher evaluation. Districts should:

- Communicate with district stakeholders the need to leverage the evaluation system to support teachers’ implementation of new standards and their students’ achievement of those standards

- Ensure that teachers understand the model of instruction at the heart of the Marzano Teacher Evaluation Framework
- Train and calibrate observers to the standards-based observation process outlined in this paper
- Train and calibrate observers to provide effective teacher feedback for the standards-based observation
- Provide greater weight to recommended elements necessary for implementation of the standards and to those elements having greater predictive value

6. Leverage Learning Sciences Marzano Center research, training, principal coaching, and supports

Learning Sciences offers a full slate of resources to support leaders and teachers in making the necessary instructional shifts to more rigorous instruction and higher student achievement on the new academic standards, including professional development days, cutting-edge technology for monitoring, data collection, and self assessment, and books including the series on the Marzano Essential Strategies.

*Note: The forgoing is a summary only. Please see the full report on our detailed recommendations at www.marzano-center.com/Teacher-Evaluation/aligning-standards-white-paper/

Ensure That Teachers Receive the Support They Need for Rigorous Instruction

The guidelines summarized here are critical for evaluators in districts implementing the Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model as a growth model for teachers in a standards-based classroom. The instructional model embedded in the Marzano framework makes it uniquely suited as a system for both accurate and fair teacher evaluation, as well as for ongoing development of teacher pedagogy aligned to standards. Research projects such as the one conducted in Pinellas County, Florida have yielded encouraging findings in both teacher growth and increased student achievement when the model is implemented according to the recommendations outlined here Learning Sciences International offers a full complement of services and supports to help districts transition to standards-based classrooms in a high-stakes evaluation environment.

Download the [FULL MONOGRAPH](#) by Robert J. Marzano and Michael D. Toth for detailed recommendations on implementing the Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model to support the shift to rigorous teaching and alignment to new standards.

What Educators are Saying About Learning Sciences Professional Development for the Standards-based Classroom:

“[After this training] I will make adaptations when the desired result is not evident. I will go back and re-teach or allow the students to teach each other as a way to deepen their own knowledge. I will continue to be more aware of where every student is and what needs to be done to teach them all effectively.”

“The training provided good examples and deepened my understanding of creating complex tasks.”

“I am now ensuring that I am making changes to my lesson plans based on the monitored results I am seeing.”

“The training I received was priceless as far as my teaching career is concerned. I will be forever grateful as will my students this year and in the years to come.”

