Developing a Passion for Professional Teaching: 
The Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model

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OUR MISSION

Learning Sciences Marzano Center promotes excellence in public education by providing and developing next-generation teacher and leadership evaluation tools and training. Built on a foundation of expert research into best practices under the direction of national researcher and author Dr. Robert Marzano, and staffed by a team of education experts, the Marzano Center identifies, develops, and disseminates cutting-edge resources in educational best practices. Our goal is to support teachers to be highly effective, lifelong learners, and in doing so, to significantly impact student growth and achievement over time.
Teaching is an enormously complex task. The skilled teacher uses an artful combination of practical experience, judgment, passion, teaching strategies, and the responsiveness to differing student learning needs. Even more, any committed teacher can become a better teacher over time with focused practice in research-based strategies.

One way that even experienced teachers can improve their instruction in the Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model is based on an extensive review of the literature; it is the only evaluation model to have been tested by action research studies in the field. No other model has been subjected to such a wide array of experimental/control and correlation studies. On average, as teachers improved at using the classroom strategies and behaviors in the Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model, typical student achievement increased by 16 percentile points.

Further, the model works in any professional development situation: self-development, peer-to-peer development, and whole-school development. In this brief paper, we’ll offer a big-picture understanding of the model design, with a focus on Lesson Segment 2, Addressing Content. Teachers may work independently or with their colleagues or PLCs to grow their classroom expertise through deliberate practice of the model’s strategies.

INTRODUCTION

The four domains of the Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model contain 60 elements, each of which builds on the others to support teacher growth, development, and performance. (See Figure 1).

- Domain 1 – Classroom Strategies and Behaviors
- Domain 2 – Planning and Preparing
- Domain 3 – Reflecting on Teaching
- Domain 4 – Collegiality and Professionalism

Unlike other evaluation models, the Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model shines the spotlight on Domain 1: Classroom Strategies and Behaviors. This domain contains not only the largest number of strategies, but also those that have been shown in causal studies to have the most direct effect on improving student performance.

Together, the four domains contain 60 elements that define a knowledge base for teaching and a framework for the systematic development of expertise.
Figure 1 - Four Domains of the Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model

Domain 1: Classroom Strategies and Behaviors (6 Elements)
- Routine Segments
- Content Segments
- The Spot Segments

Domain 2: Planning and Preparing (8 Elements)
- Lesson andUnits
- Instructional Strategies and Technology
- Special Needs of Students

Domain 3: Reflecting on Teaching (5 Elements)
- Evaluating Personal Growth Plan

Domain 4: Colleaguality and Professionalism (6 Elements)
- Promoting a Positive Environment (2 Elements)
- Promoting Exchange of Ideas (2 Elements)
- Promoting District and School Improvement (2 Elements)
Domain 1: Classroom Strategies and Behaviors
Domain 1 is based on the Art and Science of Teaching Framework and identifies the 41 elements or instructional categories that happen in the classroom. The 41 instructional categories are organized into 9 Design Questions (DQs) and further grouped into 3 Lesson Segments to define the Observation and Feedback Protocol.

Domain 2: Planning and Preparing
Planning and Preparing

- Planning and Preparing for Lessons and Units
  - 42. Effective Scaffolding of Information within Lessons
  - 43. Lessons within Units
  - 44. Attention to Established Content Standards

- Planning and Preparing for Use of Resources and Technology
  - 45. Use of Available Traditional Resources
  - 46. Use of Available Technology

- Planning and Preparing for the Needs of English Language Learners
  - 47. Needs of English Language Learners

- Planning and Preparing for the Needs of Students Receiving Special Education
  - 48. Needs of Students Receiving Special Education

- Planning and Preparing for the Needs of Students Who Lack Support for Schooling
  - 49. Needs of Students Who Lack Support for Schooling

Domain 3: Reflecting on Teaching
Reflecting on Teaching

- Evaluating Personal Performance
  - 50. Identifying Areas of Pedagogical Strength and Weakness
  - 51. Evaluating the Effectiveness of Individual Lessons and Units

- Developing and Implementing a Professional Growth Plan
  - 53. Developing a Written Growth and Development Plan
  - 54. Monitoring Progress Relative to the Professional Growth and Development Plan

Domain 4: Collegiality and Professionalism
Collegiality and Professionalism

- Promoting a Positive Environment
  - 55. Promoting Positive Interactions with Colleagues
  - 56. Promoting Positive Interactions about Students and Parents

- Promoting Exchange of Ideas and Strategies
  - 57. Seeking Mentorship for Areas of Need or Interest
  - 58. Mentoring Other Teachers and Sharing Ideas and Strategies

- Promoting District and School Development
  - 59. Adhering to District and School Rules and Procedures
  - 60. Participating in District and School Initiatives

Figure 2: Domain 1 Learning Map
For a more detailed explanation of the four domains in the Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model or the nine design questions and 41 strategies, visit:
MarzanoCenter.com/teacher-evaluation
A GROWTH MODEL BASED ON RESEARCH

The Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model was initially based on more than 5,000 studies spanning five decades. These studies have been chronicled and catalogued in books widely disseminated to teachers and principals in the United States; more than 2 million copies have been purchased by K-12 educators. They include What Works in Schools (Marzano, 2003); Classroom Instruction that Works (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001); Classroom Management that Works (Marzano, Pickering, & Marzano, 2003); Classroom Assessment and Grading that Work (Marzano, 2006); The Art and Science of Teaching (Marzano, 2007); and Effective Supervision: Supporting the Art and Science of Teaching (Marzano, Frontier, & Livingston, 2011). Thus, the Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model was developed from research on specific elements that correlate with increased student academic achievement. The model has also undergone continuous study in the field since it was first introduced.

TEACHER COLLABORATION AND INSTRUCTIONAL GROUP STUDY

As Roland Barth, a pioneer in professional development, writes about teacher collaboration:

. . . The relationships among adults in schools are the basis, the precondition, and *sine qua non* that allow, energize, and sustain all other attempts at school improvement. Unless adults talk with one another, observe one another, and help one another, very little will change. (1990, p. 32)

Teachers who focus their lens on the essential questions of teaching that influence student learning can develop their passion for achievement. There are nine design questions in Domain 1 of the Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model that ask these essential teaching questions (See Figure 2, page 5).

1. What will I do to establish and communicate learning goals, track student progress, and celebrate success?
2. What will I do to help students effectively interact with new knowledge?
3. What will I do to help students practice and deepen their understanding of new knowledge?
4. What will I do to help students generate and test hypotheses about new knowledge?
5. What will I do to engage students?
6. What will I do to establish or maintain classroom rules and procedures?
7. What will I do to recognize and acknowledge adherence and lack of adherence to classroom rules and procedures?
8. What will I do to establish and maintain effective relationships with students?
9. What will I do to communicate high expectations for all students?

*Sine qua non: Something absolutely indispensable or essential*
Each chapter of the _Art and Science of Teaching_ (the basis for the Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model) elaborates on these questions with detailed research. Further, the book is an excellent resource for professional learning communities (PLCs) characterized by a passion for improving instruction. It is also important to note that teachers who are in situations where PLCs are not possible can gain much from an individual study of the questions in the book. According to Dr. Robert J. Marzano, though, teachers should not focus on numerous design questions at one time. Instead it’s best to focus on one or two.

**How do PLCs Work?**

As Richard DuFour (2004) notes in “What is a Professional Learning Community,” professional learning communities are characterized by big ideas.

- Ensuring that Students Learn
- A Culture of Collaboration
- A Focus on Results
- Hard Work and Commitment

Let’s look at an example of how a group of teachers (or a teacher), passioned about professional teaching, could collectively work on a question they have about their instruction:

Say that students are having difficulties learning new information. Teachers would study Design Question 2 (“What will I do to help students effectively interact with new knowledge?”) in Chapter 2 of the _Art and Science of Teaching_, because students are having trouble **actively processing new content**. Teachers would then seek craft knowledge about how to improve this particular skill.

Much is known about Design Question 2, one of the more important design questions. Research tells us that students must actively process new information to retain it. They need to engage with other students, the teacher, and the content. Design Question 2 guides teachers to design instruction that encourages students to construct knowledge through their interactions, an important step up the ladder to self-directed learning.

This moves education away from the old model where teachers processed the information, shared it through lecture, and had students repeat it back on a test.
Design Question 2 is the first of three design questions within the Lesson Segment, Addressing Content. This content segment guides teachers to help students effectively process new knowledge:

- **Identifying Critical Information.** Through critical-input experiences (i.e. lecture, simulation, lab, demonstration, etc.) teachers let students know what information is important.

- **Organizing Students to Interact with New Knowledge.** We know students learn better in small groups. It’s important that students understand the group processes needed to ensure the groups run successfully.

- **Previewing New Content.** Teachers link new knowledge to previously learned knowledge through a preview activity. Commonly used preview strategies include KWLs and anticipation guides. Their purpose is to activate prior knowledge and give teachers an idea of what students know so they can chunk the information appropriately.

- **Chunking Content into “Digestible Bites.”** Teachers should give students the right amount and complexity of information. Students need bite-sized chunks of information so they’re not overwhelmed, but not so little that they lose interest. It’s like eating a good steak: You don’t put the whole thing in your mouth; you cut it up and eat it one bite at a time!

- **Processing of New Information.** Students use macro-strategies to analyze and synthesize each chunk of information so it connects with previous knowledge. Such knowledge will be stored in long-term memory. Macro-strategies are combinations of thinking skills such as questioning, clarifying, predicting, sequencing, and summarizing.

- **Elaborating on New Information.** Teachers ask questions that lead students to draw inferences from the newly processed information. Inferences are usually drawn from the students’ past experiences or text clues. This allows students to make more connections with the new information and strengthens their ability to recall and comprehend it.

- **Recording and Representing Knowledge.** In this kind of note taking, students use linguistic or nonlinguistic representations to depict their understanding of the new knowledge. By taking such notes later in the process, as opposed to the first time they hear the information, they are able to summarize and obtain a more accurate understanding of what they are learning.

- **Reflecting on Learning.** At the end of the process, students take time to think about and reflect on what they learned and/or the thinking process they used to learn it (metacognition).
A Powerful Progression of Introducing and Deepening Student Knowledge

The power of the Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model lies in showing teachers how to prepare a careful progression in introducing and deepening knowledge. As teachers introduce new concepts and help students interact with them, the classroom strategies are teacher-directed. But Design Question 2 helps teachers prepare students for the higher-order thinking skills they will use as lessons progress in complexity. As students progress to Marzano Design Question 3, Practicing and Deepening New Knowledge, and Marzano Design Question 4, Helping Students Generate and Test Hypotheses, they depend less and less on direct teacher instruction. They become users of knowledge on their way to becoming independent lifelong learners. In this way, the Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model helps teachers know the right strategies and the right time to use those strategies to prepare their students for complex thinking skills.

“\[The\ Marzano\ Teacher\ Evaluation\ Model\ has\ changed\ my\ practices\ this\ year.\ I’m\ always\ trying\ to\ figure\ out\ what\ I\ can\ do\ better.\ When\ the\ students\ don’t\ do\ well,\ you\ can’t\ look\ at\ them\ first.\ You\ have\ to\ look\ at\ yourself\ first.\ And\ Marzano\ says\ basically\ the\ same\ thing.\ Student\ performance\ is\ primarily\ about\ the\ teacher.\ You\ can\ put\ 15\ or\ 20\ or\ 30\ students\ in\ that\ classroom\ and\ it’s\ the\ teacher’s\ responsibility\ to\ be\ able\ to\ influence\ them\ and\ impact\ them\ with\ the\ rigorous\ curriculum\ and\ engage\ them.\ And\ Marzano\ does\ speak\ to\ that.\]”
--Joseph Bowen Teacher Cobb Middle School, Tallahassee, Florida

CHANGES IN TEACHER PRACTICE WITH THE MARZANO MODEL

The Marzano model . . . has been an eye opener because it has made me look at myself as a teacher and my planning practices . . .

I thought I planned well, but I was planning on what I was telling the children to learn and not what I wanted them to learn for themselves. So the Marzano model has really opened my eyes to planning and teaching practices.
--Chriencia Barzey, 2nd Grade Teacher
A.D. Henderson University School, Boca Raton, FL

HOW THE MODEL INFLUENCES STUDENT BEHAVIOR

I find that when the kids are all engaged, which they seem to be so much more, there are much fewer discipline problems. You don’t have much chatting or off task behaviors.
--Gina Bove, 5th Grade Teacher
A.D. Henderson University School, Boca Raton, FL

Further reading and information on how the Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model can help you improve your practice is available at MarzanoCenter.com.

Of particular interest for teachers looking for self-directed or group study is the Marzano Center blog at MarzanoCenter/Blog. Learning Sciences Marzano Center staff developers post two to three times a week on strategies to help teachers improve their practice.
Other Resources

1. Professional Development Books
   http://www.marzanocenter.com/Products-Services/Teacher-Evaluation-Books/

2. Marzano Center Resources
   http://www.marzanoevaluation.com/evaluation/free_resources/

3. Teacher Observation and Debriefing

4. Marzano Center Blog
   http://www.marzanocenter.com/Blog/

5. Marzano Center Twitter
   https://twitter.com/MarzanoCenter

6. The Art and Science of Teaching

   http://www.marzanocenter.com/Products-Services/item/handbook-for-the-art-and-science-of-teaching/

Videos

1. Dr. Robert J. Marzano on the Art and Science of Teaching
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YhB_R_FT9y42

2. Dr. Robert J. Marzano and Michael D. Toth
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PEg7M6mCE1E

3. Dr. Robert J. Marzano on Leadership
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QYUr7lor3qc

4. Dr. Robert J. Marzano on Designing and Assessing Educational Objectives
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y5R2puQK5fI

5. Dr. Robert J. Marzano on the Power of a Common Language
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yk-jUogjFMY

6. Dr. Robert J. Marzano Video Resources
   http://www.marzanoevaluation.com/evaluation/free_video_resources/

References


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