



Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching

Charlotte Danielson is a practicing educator who has also designed materials and training programs related to teacher quality for national groups such as the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Educational Testing Service, and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. In 1996, she wrote *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching*. This book is a research-based examination of teachers' practices and responsibilities presented in the form of a "road map" to help novices understand their work, guide individual improvement among experienced professionals and encourage professional conversations among teachers. Danielson imagined that the *Framework* would be used as a basis for encouraging "structured dialogue about teaching."

Danielson's *Framework* forms the basis of the PDE teacher evaluation forms 426, 427 and 428, as well as the new performance evaluation system being piloted by Pittsburgh Public Schools. PDE has stated its interest in using the Pittsburgh model as a basis for any redesign of teacher evaluation; consequently, her model is likely to continue to be the basis of any new teacher evaluation system devised to meet the requirements of Race to the Top, should Pennsylvania receive a federal Race to the Top grant.

Danielson's Vision of Professional Evidence

Framework encourages teachers to develop comprehensive portfolios of professional work. These portfolios can be used to document specific components of the framework for evaluation purposes, to support mentoring and coaching, or to stimulate self-reflection and professional conversation. Danielson recommends that the teaching portfolio be constructed to contain several examples of professional practice:

- A three-week unit plan
- Instructional plan for at least one lesson
- Samples of assessment procedures
- Evidence of knowledge of students and resources
- Videotape of a class
- Artifacts of in-class assignments and homework
- Samples of student work
- Teacher reflections
- Logs of family contact, participation in school and district projects, professional contributions, and professional development.
- A research log that demonstrates a teacher's structured approach to asking and answering questions.

Portfolio evidence should be considered alongside observations and evidence of student learning in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of teacher professional work.

Using the Framework for Supervision and Evaluation

Danielson believes that traditional systems of teacher evaluation are inherently flawed and articulates reasons for her belief.

- They examine a small number of observable behaviors rather than a deep, rich professional judgment.
- They are not based upon shared ideas about good teaching and employ no common language to direct professional conversations about practice.
- They lack precision, which has led to almost all teachers being “outstanding,” to poor teachers being transferred from school to school, and to a general distrust among teachers of the evaluation system.
- They are hierarchical and one-way, consisting of administrator feedback based on an observation.
- They do not differentiate between novice teachers and experienced teachers.
- They accommodate limited expertise on the part of the principal, particularly about a teacher’s discipline, current pedagogical practices, and specific characteristics of the classroom population.

According to Danielson, this traditional model of teacher evaluation leads to passivity, protection, and lack of professional inquiry among teachers. In order to build an evaluation system that reflects a professional view of teaching rather than the system described above, Danielson suggests that evaluation systems need to incorporate several lessons:

1. Evaluation needs to be directly linked to the mission of the school district.
2. Evaluation and professional development should be linked with continuous processes that lead to ongoing professional growth.
3. Evaluation systems should emphasize multiple curriculum-based, formative and summative measures of student outcomes, particularly to inform professional conversations and coaching. **Danielson opposes evaluating teachers according to standardized test scores.**
4. Schools and school districts need adequate resources to allow new systems to succeed.

Building a Three-Tiered System of Evaluation

Danielson asserts that an effective teacher evaluation system is more than a set of forms. It needs to be comprised of a clear definition of each domain of teaching, including clear and public decisions about what is acceptable performance, techniques and procedures that are capable of assessing all aspects of teaching, and trained evaluators who can make fair and consistent judgments based on evidence. Teachers and administrators need to be trained in evaluation, and they also need to work together to develop a shared understanding of what appropriate practice looks like at different stages of a teacher’s career.

To differentiate career stages, Danielson says that evaluation systems need to be designed with different expectations for beginning teachers, experienced teachers, and teachers needing intensive supports.

- The **beginning teacher track** should include induction, mentoring, and other kinds of support along with multiple sources of evidence including structured classroom observations, teaching documents and artifacts, portfolios, and journal entries.

- **Evaluation for experienced teachers** focuses on collaboration, self-assessment, individual goal-setting. Growth, supervision and evaluation of experienced teachers should be regulated primarily **by the teacher** and should focus on helping teachers think about instructional practice rather than completing a checklist of behaviors. With data from multiple sources in-hand, teachers and administrators should “engage in meaningful conversation.” The culmination of evaluation should be a constructive professional development plan, based on joint goals for individual teacher learning. Teachers may take several years to complete the goals of the professional development plan, and may be accountable for demonstrating progress toward the goals.
- Teachers who are not able to thrive within the regular system of evaluation and professional development should be placed in a **targeted assistance track**. The targeted assistance track must provide teachers with clear descriptions of what needs to improve, clear criteria for success, specific interventions that will be used to support changes in practice, and a description of how behavior change will be documented. Teachers who are unable to meet clear goals despite targeted assistance may be subject to discipline.