

Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) Project FAQ

1. What is the goal of the Measures of Effective Teaching project?

Great teaching is multi-dimensional. It therefore should be viewed through multiple measures, none of which are sufficient to stand alone. Teachers should know what expectations are for good teaching and what they can do to improve their practice. The project will study multiple measures of teacher effectiveness, including video-taped classroom observations, student surveys and other test and non-test based data and compare them to nationally recognized teaching standards. This data will help the profession determine ways in which effective teaching can be measured fairly and consistently.

2. How is this work being funded?

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation will fund the cost of the project. There will be no additional costs to cities or school districts. The foundation will also provide funding for NYC DOE-based project staff who will support schools and teachers participating in the project and coordinate all project activities.

3. What is the position of the UFT?

The UFT fully supports this project and encourages eligible teachers to participate.

4. How long will this project last?

The research will occur during the next two school years (2009-2010 and 2010-2011).

5. Will all schools/teachers be eligible to participate?

No. Due to research constraints, such as the need to make comparisons across cities, not all NYC DOE schools or teachers will be eligible to participate. To be eligible, schools and teachers must:

- Teach one or more of the following subjects: Math in grades 4 through 8; English Language Arts in grades 4 through 8; Algebra, Living Environment, or English 9 ;
- For each grade/ subject area combination, at least three (3) teachers must participate;
- At least six (6) teachers at a school must agree to participate;
- The principal must agree to participate.

6. Will teachers with co-teaching situations be able to participate?

In most cases, the research study cannot incorporate team teaching, including CTT (Collaborative Team Teaching).

7. Will teachers who loop be able to participate?

In most cases, the research study cannot incorporate looping.

8. Will teachers who teach in District 75 or District 79 schools be eligible to participate?

No. Since the study will take place in several cities, and these teaching arrangements are unique to NYC, the research study unfortunately cannot accommodate teachers in District 75 or District 79 schools.

9. How many teachers will participate?

Approximately 3,700 teachers in up to six urban school districts will participate in this project. One thousand teachers from NYC will be able to participate.

10. How will teachers be selected for the project?

Only eligible teachers who volunteer and sign a consent form can participate in the project. The school must also choose to participate. If researchers select the school, all eligible teachers who volunteered will be included in the study.

11. Can a teacher participate even if his or her principal does not “opt in”?

No. The principal must “opt in” for a school to participate.

12. Can a teacher or school “opt out” of the project at any time if they no longer wish to participate?

While we encourage teachers and schools to participate for the entire two years, participation is voluntary, and teachers/schools are free to opt out at any time.

13. Can teachers in other subject areas or grades participate in the study?

No. Due to the design and nature of the research study, only Math and English Language Arts teachers in grades 4 through 8 and secondary school teachers of Living environment, Algebra and English 9 are eligible.

Note: If a teacher changes the school, grade or subject they teach in the 2010-11 school year, they may not be able to participate in the second year of the study.

14. Can elementary school teachers who teach both math and ELA opt in for one subject?

Yes. Elementary school teachers who teach both math and ELA may opt in for one subject, but may do so only if the other teachers on the grade do likewise. Nevertheless, we strongly encourage teachers to participate in both subjects. If they participate in the project in both subjects, they will have to administer two supplemental student assessments and will have to participate in assessments of their ability to diagnose and address common student misperceptions in both subjects. They will have between four and eight lessons videotaped. However, there will only be one student survey and one teacher survey.

15. Will schools and/or teachers be compensated for participating?

Yes. Schools and teachers participating in the project will be compensated for their time.

Participating teachers will receive a \$1500 stipend. They will receive \$500 at the beginning of the project, \$500 at the beginning of the second year and \$500 at the end of the project. Schools enrolled in the project will receive \$1500 each.

16. What kind of data will be collected through the project?

The project will collect a variety of data:

- Videotaped classroom observation;
- Teacher reflections on their videotaped lessons;
- Teacher surveys of the school environment;
- Supplemental student assessment;
- Student feedback; and
- Teachers' ability to recognize and diagnose student misperceptions.

17. Please tell me more about the following data:

- ***Videotaped Classroom Observation:*** (Independent Researchers: Teachscape) Each year independent researchers will videotape four classroom lessons in each grade/subject combination in which teachers are participating. The researchers will use several different standards of teaching to evaluate the video: Danielson's Frameworks for Teaching; the CLASS measure from the University of Virginia; the Quality of Mathematical Instruction rubric from the University of Michigan/Harvard; the PLATO rubric from Stanford University; and a new rubric for assessing science instruction developed by Ray Pecheone at Stanford.
- ***Teachers' reflections on their videotaped lessons:*** Teachers will provide audio commentary, self-reflections and any relevant supporting materials to provide context about the videotaped lesson.
- ***Teacher surveys of the school environment:*** Teachers will complete a survey about the working conditions in their schools and the instructional support they receive.
- ***Supplemental student assessment:*** Teachers will administer performance-based assessments in both years of the project to students in their classes within the last 30 days of the school year. The assessments will be no longer than 60 minutes at the elementary/middle school level and no more than 90 minutes at the high school level. Many state tests assess a wide range of content but dedicate relatively few items to each individual content area. The supplemental assessment administered through the project will delve more deeply into student knowledge by focusing on the most important content areas for a given course of study. Use of this additional test will allow researchers to assess whether students who perform well on the broader assessment also can perform well on the conceptually deeper assessment.
- ***Student Feedback:*** (Independent Researchers: Ron Ferguson (Harvard) and Cambridge Education Associates) The researchers will provide all students in participating teachers' classrooms with a student survey. Researchers will adapt the Tripod Survey, which they have administered in a number of school districts throughout the country. These surveys measure student perceptions of their relationship with their teachers, the classroom environment, and their teachers' ability to engage them in the material.

- ***Teachers' Ability to Recognize and Diagnose Student Misperceptions:*** (Independent Researchers: Educational Testing Service) In Year 2 of the project (2010-2011), researchers will assess participating teachers' ability to recognize and diagnose common student misperceptions in their grade level and subject. The University of Michigan's Mathematical Knowledge for Teaching ("MKT") rubric has been developed for this purpose in mathematics. ETS will be developing other assessments for ELA.

18. How are classes for video selected?

Any teacher who opts into the study will be videotaped four times during each of the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years: twice on focal topics, i.e., core areas of a specific subject, such as a math lesson on fractions, and twice randomly. All participating teachers will receive at least 48 hours notice of any videotaping. They will be able to reschedule if there is a conflict such as a class trip or special school program that day.

19. Will any other data be used?

Yes. The research team will be looking at historical achievement and administrative data for the past two school years (2007-2008 and 2008-2009). Researchers may ask some teachers to validate the accuracy of this data.

20. What will be done with the data collected through the project?

The data will be analyzed to strengthen current measures of teaching effectiveness and provide information that can help educators improve student achievement. The researchers plan to issue their findings in late in 2011.

21. Will anyone from the NYC DOE, such as principals, be able to see the data for an individual teacher?

No. Researchers may not share data on individual teachers with principals or other school or NYC DOE personnel. If it is determined that aggregated data would prove helpful to the NYC DOE, and if such data can be provided without identifying individual teachers, then the aggregated data may be provided at the request of the NYC DOE.

The results of supplemental assessments will also be aggregated and never show identifiable teacher data.

22. Will teachers be able to see their own data?

Participating teachers will, of course, have access to the raw video of their classroom observation sessions. Teachers will be able to view their own video on a secure site within a day or two of the data collection and can use the video for professional development purposes.

Teachers also will receive the supplemental assessment results for the students in their class. The research team will provide NYC DOE with the results of supplemental assessments at the individual student level in the summer immediately following the administration of the assessments.

Teachers will not receive student survey results from their classrooms.

23. Can teachers, schools and NYC DOE see the validated rubrics, student survey forms and training materials for videotape reviewers?

At the end of Year 2 of the project (summer/fall 2011), the research team will provide to the NYC DOE the tools used as part of the project. As to the student survey form in particular, the researchers cannot share the final survey at this time. Researchers will provide sample items and make the entire survey available as soon as practicable.

24. What is the research timeline for the study?

Fall 2009

- First videotaped lessons

Winter/ Spring 2010

- Subsequent videotaped lessons
- Student perceptions surveys administered
- Additional student assessments administered

Fall 2010

- First videotaped lessons for year 2
- Teacher instruction environment survey (Nov '10)
- Student perceptions survey administered

Winter / Spring 2011

- Subsequent videotaped lessons
- Teacher Assessment: Diagnosing and prescribing for student misperceptions assessment (Jan-March '11)
- Student perceptions survey administered
- Additional student assessments administered

25. How long will the supplemental assessments take, and when will they be administered to students?

The supplemental assessments will be given in the last 30 days of each school year and will be no longer than 60 minutes at the elementary/middle school level and no more than 90 minutes at the high school level. Students in the upper grades could have one, two or three supplemental assessments depending on whether their ELA/English, math, and/or living environment teachers are participating in the project. Elementary students with teachers participating in both math and ELA courses will likely have two hours of supplemental assessment (60 minutes each for ELA and math).

26. How much additional time is likely to be required of teachers?

The research team has designed the data collection to minimize the burden on participating teachers and students.

Researchers estimate that participating teachers will spend no more than 12 additional hours on project activities over the course of a school year. Project activities also will have limited impact on student instructional time. The research team estimates that elementary students in participating teachers' classrooms will spend no more than three (3) additional hours per year on project activities, and high school students will spend no more than five (5) additional hours per year on project activities, including all assessment and survey activities.

27. How will students be assigned to ensure valid and reliable research findings?

In order to ensure that the project's results are not compromised by the composition of the classes to which participating teachers are assigned, only teachers who can teach any class in their given grade/subject combination are eligible to participate in the project.

In Year 2 of the project (2010-2011), schools will draw up classroom rosters and course schedules for students as usual. Within those classroom sets for which there is more than one appropriate teacher match, however, teachers will be assigned to classrooms via lottery. This process will accomplish the research goals of the project and enable the validation of the data while at the same time ensuring that only appropriately certified teachers are assigned to any given class and that principals have input into the decisions that impact students.

There may be a limited amount of subsequent switching as students sort out their schedules.

28. Will students and their families have to consent to participation in the project?

Students and their families will be given the opportunity to "opt out" of participation.

Should parents decide that they do not want their children to be included in the project's data collection activities, researchers will not collect surveys from those students and will take steps to ensure that those students do not appear in or are not identifiable in the videotaped classroom observations. The NYC DOE and/or schools will provide information about the project and the means of opting out to students and their parents. Principals will work in coordination with teachers and parent leadership to ensure that parents and students understand that the school is participating in the study and why additional assessments are being administered to students.

29. Can a school substitute end-of-course assessments for this project's supplemental assessments?

No. The project requires that the supplemental assessments be identical in all research sites.

30. How does this project affect a schools' work with current research partners (i.e. university evaluators already doing research work)?

All schools are free to continue existing research with local university partners. Schools should be aware that this research requires some additional work. Schools should feel free to discuss the MET work with university partners. The MET study will not provide any information to other researchers.