

1. Impact on P-12 Learning and Development: Case Studies of First Year Teachers

The state of Maryland does not provide direct teacher impact data to colleges and universities. Therefore, McDaniel College has chosen to provide a case study on a graduate one year out from graduation. This case study highlights a graduate in their first year of teaching and focuses on The Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching, specifically Domain Three, Instruction. Within this domain, data was collected on standards 3b Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques, 3c Engaging Students in Learning and 3d Using Assessment in Instruction. The Danielson Framework is used for this study as it is a nationally recognized and validated tool. Of particular note is that the Danielson Framework is designed to promote teacher professional growth across a continuum founded on the concept that all teachers should be continuing to grow and develop. The study looks at the efficacy of the teachers by using the supervisor rubric scores for the teacher as well as the qualitative evidence from the comments by the observer. In order for the teacher to remain anonymous, the term, "The Teacher" has been substituted for the teacher's name in the feedback provided by the supervisors.

This first-year teacher was in the 2021-22 completor cohort from McDaniel College and holds a B.A. in Elementary Education. The teacher was hired by a medium/small school district in Maryland and teaches 4th grade STEM at a Title I school. The student population consists of students within a wide range of socioeconomic statuses. The teacher reported that the fourth grade math data ranked second in the county for the January benchmark assessment, so there is evidence of strong instruction on this grade level team.

For the purpose of this case study, the teacher provided two observations and one evaluation. Two observations were completed in October 2022 and December 2022, both of which focused on Domains 1-3 of the Danielson Framework. An evaluation was completed in April of 2023 which focused on all four areas of the Framework. As the focus areas for this study are 3b, 3c and 3d, only the feedback related to these areas is noted. The initial observation in October for this teacher was rated Distinguished in 3B, Distinguished in 3C and Proficient in 3D. The following comments are from the observing supervisor:

- "The Teacher communicated expectations for learning, directions and procedures, and explanations of content using age-appropriate language and vocabulary.
- The Teacher posed quality questions and allowed sufficient time for students to respond. Students generated quality questions and initiated discussions and ideas that extended the learning for all.
- The teacher seized opportunities to enhance her student's learning by building on their questions, responses, and misconceptions."

The overall rating for this observation was Distinguished. The feedback demonstrated that this first-year teacher is finding great success in the classroom.

The second observation of this teacher occurred in December of 2022. The teacher was rated Proficient in 3B, Distinguished in 3C, and Proficient in 3D. A different supervisor observed the teacher for this observation. The supervisor provided the following comments related to the above areas of the Domain 3:

- “Sharing the learning objective before the lesson and unpacking the verbiage helps students to focus in on the task at hand.
- Revisiting the objective after the lesson helps students monitor their own learning.
- Allowing for fidget time before beginning instruction is developmentally appropriate given that they have had such limited use of manipulatives in the past.
- Clear classroom expectations have been established
- Consider additional informal assessments during whole group instruction, even if it's just for targeted students, as another way to form your small groups”

The overall rating for this observation was Proficient. While the first observation was Distinguished and the second Proficient, this first- year teacher is clearly demonstrating success in the identified areas of Domain 3.

The teacher’s evaluation from April 2023 again indicated that this teacher is successful in those same identified components. The teacher’s overall evaluation rating was Effective, and the teacher was rated Proficient in 3B, Distinguished in 3C, and Proficient in 3D. The team of supervisors came together and provided the following comments for the teacher:

- “The Teacher’s students, throughout the lesson, are highly intellectually engaged in significant learning and contribute to the activities, student groupings, and selection of materials.
- The Teacher is able to adapt as needed to the needs of individuals, and the structure and pacing allow for student reflection and closure.
- We are proud to have the Teacher as a part of the teaching staff. We look forward to watching her continued growth in her craft.”

Both the comments and the ratings indicate the impact of the teacher on the students. As John Hattie’s research demonstrates, teacher efficacy is essential for student achievement. Considering the nature and the challenges faced by first year teachers in an uncertain environment, the teacher’s proficiency in a few short months demonstrates that the teacher has the foundational teaching skills to be effective. The ratings and comments also demonstrate the teacher’s ability to receive feedback and make adjustments to instruction to positively impact student achievement. Teacher efficacy for students with high needs is of paramount importance. This first-year teacher is, as noted in the ratings, making a meaningful impact on student learning and achievement.