



2013 Danielson Framework for Teaching (FfT) with Early Learning Supports

Context

The [Center for the Study of Educational Policy](#) (CSEP) at Illinois State University is developing resources for supporting the use of the nationally validated teacher evaluation tool, ***The Danielson Framework for Teaching Evaluation Instrument*** (FfT) (which has been validated 4th grade and up) to evaluate the performance of PreK-3rd grade teachers. The project is a result of a new state statute - Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA) - that requires all P-12 teachers to be evaluated using new performance-based measures. With this new requirement, many districts indicated the intent to use the same professional practice-based evaluation instrument for early childhood teachers as was used for K-12 teachers. The Danielson FfT serves as the state default teacher evaluation instrument for professional practice and one of the most commonly used teacher evaluation instruments in Illinois and nationally.

The 2013 FfT is written as a generic, comprehensive, research-based evaluation instrument that provides a coherent tool to use to support all levels of teaching, including PreK-3rd Grade. In order to enhance the understanding and use of the 2013 FfT at early teaching levels by both teachers and evaluators, Danielson advocates for the development of early learning supports to enhance the use of the framework. This focus will provide the unique opportunity to engage in productive conversations about what are the commonalities of *Good Teaching for All Kids* as well as understanding of critical aspects of *Good Teaching for Early Learners*? [Dr. Pamela Rosa](#), a member of the Danielson Group and Senior Consultant at the Consortium for Educational Change (CEC), facilitated the development of the early learning resources under the guidance of Charlotte Danielson and staff in CSEP.

Project Overview

The 2013 Framework for Teaching (FfT) with Early Learning Supports, developed to support Danielson's 2013 Framework for Teaching Evaluation Instrument (with Danielson's permission and guidance), provides teacher evaluation and professional growth supports personalized for early learning teaching practices. The 2013 FfT with Early Learning Supports was developed through the shared efforts of early learning teachers, school and district administrators, and early learning policy and research groups to personalize Danielson's 2013 Framework for Teaching domains/components (Planning & Preparation, Classroom Environment, Instruction, and Professional Responsibilities) and aligned critical attributes (characteristics of components or the "look for and listen" practices of each component) to specific aspects of teaching that are "unique" to early learning practitioners based on the following teaching spans: Preschool - 3 & 4 year old; Kindergarten - First Grade; and Second and Third Grade.

Online, professional learning modules and aligned resources are being developed to support

evaluators and early learning teachers to understand and utilize the 2013 FfT structure and levels of performance in both teacher evaluation and professional growth. All professional learning modules will include the following:

- PowerPoint slides with facilitator notes;
- Participant Guidebook;
- Master scored early childhood (PreK-3rd grade) classroom observation videos with aligned data collection sheets that have been sorted to appropriate component(s) with formative ratings;
- Best practice protocols for observation-based data collection;
- Master scored pre-observation and post-observation conversation videos with aligned data collection sheets that have been sorted to appropriate component(s) with formative ratings;
- Best practice protocols for conversation-based data collection; and,
- Examples of proficient/distinguished early learning teaching practices and sample resources to guide and support early learning teaching practices and professional growth.

Phase One: Development

The 2013 FfT with Early Learning Supports was launched in the fall with early childhood stakeholders attending four meetings including:

- Aligning the Levels of Performance to the 22 Framework Components.
- Linking the Critical Attributes to define the “Look for and Listen for” priorities of each Component/Level of Performance.
- Drafting the Pre-3rd Grade examples in the components of Planning & Preparation, Classroom Environment, Instruction, and Professional Responsibilities.

[National Board Certified Teachers](#) were trained by Dr. Rosa in utilizing the features of Danielson’s FfT as a tool for examining and improving teaching practice. The training consisted of identifying the structure/priorities of the Danielson Framework Domains and Components when given professional practice examples. They used selected scripting for collecting data during a review of classroom observation and the FfT Components and Critical Attributes to determine levels of teaching and proficiency. Videos of early childhood classrooms (PreK-3rd grade) from the [NBPTS Video Observation Program](#) were used for practice in recognizing components and providing evidence through collecting, sorting and rating. The FfT’s plan, teach, reflect and apply professional improvement cycle was used to develop supports for Early Learning Cases of Teaching Practice. Through multiple meetings, the NBCT teachers developed examples of practice at each level for the three teaching spans: Preschool - 3 & 4 year old; Kindergarten - First Grade; and Second and Third Grade

A broader group of P-20 stakeholders (including early childhood, K-12, and higher education) was convened in Chicago in March 2013 to review, reflect, and comment on the 2013 Danielson FfT with Early Learning Supports. The group will be reconvened throughout spring 2013 for

further input. Broader outreach is also occurring with PreK-3 experts nationally to solicit feedback on the 2013 FfT with Early Learning Supports before it goes to pilot.

The final step with the development phase is to pilot the 2013 FfT with Early Learning Supports in seven selected schools throughout the region (Northern, Central, and Southern Illinois) in fall 2013. As part of the pilot, the selected principals and teachers will undergo a three-day training that will utilize three inter-connected modules:

Module 1: Understanding and using the 2013 Danielson FfT in the context of early learning (PreK-3rd grade)

- Present the need for developing the 2013 FfT Early Learning supports to enhance early learning teaching practice growth opportunities
- Identify the structure/priorities of the 2013 FfT Domains/Components and Critical Attributes
- Understand shifts in professional practice for different levels of performance and the link to the 2013 FfT Framework Components/Critical Attributes
- Explore and connect to Early Learning Grade Band examples at four different levels of practice (i.e., PreK, 1st, 2nd, 3rd)

Module 2: Applying the 2013 Danielson FfT instrument through observation-based evidence collection in early learning teaching settings

- Understand observation-based data collection within the Plan-Teach-Reflect-Apply (PTRA) Professional Improvement Cycle for supporting and improving teaching practice
- Develop/enhance observation process skills for collecting, sorting, and scoring evidence focused upon early learning Classroom Environment and Instruction
- Determine Master Scores for early learning Classroom Environment and Instruction teaching practices using 2013 FfT Components and Critical Attributes

Module 3: Applying the 2013 Danielson Framework for Teaching instrument through conversation-based evidence collection in early learning teaching settings

- Understand data collection and artifacts of practice and student learning within Professional Improvement Cycle
- Enhance skills for evidence focused upon early learning Planning and Preparation practices, review of Classroom Environment and Instruction, and Responsibilities
- Determine Master Ratings for Planning/Preparation and Responsibilities using FfT Components and Critical Attributes and protocols to confirm inter-rater reliability
- Extend knowledge of professional learning-focused coaching language, conversations, and protocols of practice to support planning and reflection conversations

Phase Two: Validation

Validation of Framework: Staff in CSEP are currently pursuing grant funding for a validation study of the 2013 Danielson Framework for Teaching for PreK-3rd grade teachers. Conducting a validation study of the Framework has two purposes:

1. To ensure that the framework provides accurate and reliable data that PreK-3rd grade teachers and their supervisors can use to identify strengths and weaknesses, and use that data to identify appropriate professional development mechanisms to promote teachers' growth.
2. To ensure that the data from the Framework's observations correlates with student growth data so that teachers who are observed to be "Unsatisfactory, Basic, Proficient, or Distinguished" have student growth that correlates with the observation ratings (e.g., a teacher rated at the Unsatisfactory level would have students whose learning achievement showed poor growth).

Beyond validating the Danielson FfT for PreK-3rd grade teachers, this proposed study will have the following benefits to the field:

- **Development of a PreK-3rd Student Survey:** At this time, no known student survey at the early childhood level (PreK-3 level) that provides feedback to teachers on how students perceive their teaching appears to exist. CSEP and study partners will develop a student interest survey for EC students. This will be a new instrument to add to a teacher's repertoire of feedback that can also serve the student growth data requirements of the Illinois performance evaluation system for teachers.
- **Identification of PreK-3rd Growth Measures:** This validation study may be able to identify appropriate student assessments that states and districts could use as a measure of teacher effectiveness. At this time, there is much confusion around the state as to what measures to use. Soon, we will have PARCC assessments, but these will not reach down to the PreK level (ages 3-5).
- **Validation as a Professional Growth Process:** At this time, there is little study of how teachers and principals use the Framework as a mechanism to grow teacher practice. This study may be able to lead to the development of best practices in using this framework in this way, in addition to models for teacher and principal training to facilitate their use of the framework as a mechanism of growth and not solely for accountability.

Validation of Training Modules: In addition to funding to validate the 2013 Danielson FfT for early childhood teachers, CSEP staff are pursuing additional grant funding for a proposed two-year project to validate the training and professional development modules for principals and teachers associated with the 2013 Danielson FfT. The goal of developing and validating both the Danielson Early Learning Framework and its associated professional development training is to not only ensure that the framework provides accurate and reliable data that PreK-3rd grade teachers and their supervisors can use to identify strengths and weaknesses, but also to use that data to identify appropriate professional development mechanisms to promote teachers' growth and principals' understanding of early childhood education (PreK-grade 3).

Any questions regarding the 2013 Danielson Framework for Teaching (FfT) with Early Learning Supports can be directed to Lisa Hood at lhood@ilstu.edu, Erika Hunt at elhunt@ilstu.edu, and Deb Kasperki at dkasper@ilstu.edu