

## Value-Added Models to Impact Teacher Effectiveness

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### **Abstract**

The push to change teacher evaluation systems to include statistical measures of teachers' effect on student learning presents a driving force for many school districts and states. In 2005, 13 states were able to link teachers to their students' performance data; currently, 35 states are able to make this connection, and the number is expected to grow. The Obama administration introduced its' Race to the Top (RTTT) grant program in an effort to address student achievement by linking student performance to teacher evaluations. In response, 17 states reportedly changed their evaluation system to improve their chances of receiving RTTT funds. California, however, was not one of the states to be eligible to receive these funds and many of the state's school districts have rejected value added as a single measure of teacher effectiveness. The problem is, however, that the current system of teacher evaluation is lacking and schools have not come up with a solution that is acceptable to all parties involved. This paper will discuss the research addressing value-added models as a means of improving teacher effectiveness in combination with the use of statistical data to assess student achievement. The purpose of this disclosure was to determine if perceptions would change if there was an increase in awareness on the topic of value added models and if this knowledge would increase the options for student improvement, teacher effectiveness, and teacher evaluations.

As states and districts look toward finding a solution to this problem, research suggest that by linking student and teacher performance, the best tools available may reside in value-added models. The literature addressing value-added models classifies them as a type of growth model – measuring how much a particular student has learned from one point in time to another. Many factors contribute to a student's learning, but value-added growth models, according to research, can measure the impact of one factor ( in this case, a teacher) on the change in a student's performance.

To test this hypothesis, twenty teachers from varying levels (elementary, middle, and high school) and ten administrators were invited to participate in a four week forum, one evening a week, for approximately two hours each. The initial meeting was to inform them of the project and the process. A number of articles on value-added models had been assembled for the meeting. They were all given the same article to read for the following week's meeting. When they came together for the discussions, the primary focus was to fully comprehend the researcher's study and discover possible ways to implement at least one strategy uncovered in the literature. Teachers were free to strategize among themselves as well as with the administrators. At the end of four weeks, there were some amazing outcomes.