

Should teachers be evaluated by their students and the students' parents?

Assessment is an essential component of education. It is a usual practice in schools for teachers to give regular tests or other forms of evaluations, such as projects, quizzes, and interviews, in order to see how their students are performing academically. Recently, some have voiced the argument that teachers too should be evaluated by students and parents. **Even though this may seem to be a good idea at the first glance, in fact there are potential caveats to be borne in mind: students and parents may lack the skills to make a fair evaluation and it may damage the teacher's authority.**

The most important drawback of the evaluation of teachers by students and parents is that it would probably not be a fair and valid evaluation. Generally, students tend to focus on a teacher's personality and their interaction with the teacher, rather than their qualities as an educator. For example, students may give favorable evaluations for a teacher only because the teacher is always nice and tolerant towards them even if they do not learn much in that teacher's class. On the other hand, a teacher who is more authoritative in the class may be given relatively lower grades irrespective of how knowledgeable s/he is. Similarly, parents learn about teachers mostly through their children's reports, so it is highly unlikely that they can make a fair evaluation of a teacher. In addition, students and parents are only rarely knowledgeable enough to judge the expertise of the teachers in their field and in pedagogy.

Secondly, if students and parents evaluated teachers, this would degrade the teacher's authority in class. Teacher authority has been regarded as a critical aspect of education, and it is related to how teachers are viewed by students. In an environment where being evaluated negatively by students may lead to negative consequences for teachers, such as losing their job, it would be difficult to maintain authority over students. For example, if a student does not actively participate in classes or does not do the assignments regularly, probably s/he will not be able to learn much and will get low grades. This student may evaluate the teacher negatively only because s/he got low grades. In this case, teachers may not be able to use their authority to push students to do their homework or to give low grades, because they may not risk being evaluated negatively by students and their parents.

To conclude, even though some argue that giving students and parents the opportunity to evaluate teachers may produce better academic results, this is not likely to happen. **Such a change would be more negative than positive because, more often than not, the evaluations would be unfair, and it would harm the teacher's authority over students.**