

How to Create a University Teacher's Development Path by Their Evaluation Results- A Case Study of a First-class University in China

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Abstract

University teachers have been always expected to enhance their professional development throughout their whole careers. The existing research primarily focuses on teachers' beliefs, subject knowledge and skills, learning attitude and outcomes, as well as teacher collaboration. However, insufficient attention has been given to the application of teacher evaluations' results in teacher development. This article uses a case study to show the teacher development pathway through a 9-box grid generated from a combination of long- and short-term teacher evaluation results. With the 9 box grid, the university is able to anticipate its teacher development, as well as to sort out problems and conduct tailored training for teachers in different states, and to create a targeted reserve of high-potential talent. In terms of the teachers, the 9-box grid gives them a clear understanding of where they stand in the college and what direction they should take to improve and develop.

Keywords

Development Path, Professional Development, Teacher Evaluation, University Teachers

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1. Introduction

University faculties have been always expected to enhance their professional development throughout their whole careers given the social demands. De Vries, Jansen and Van de Grift (2013) explore the relationship between teacher's professional development and their beliefs about learning and teaching. Beliefs serve as a filter for determining the meaning of knowledge and experiences (Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992) and they direct thoughts and conducts (Borg, 2001). Verloop (2003) presents it's important to update teachers' knowledge and skills, and Kyndt, Gijbels, Grosemans and Donche (2016) conclude that teacher's attitudes toward learning, how they influence and their learning outcomes matter the most. Additionally, empirical research has been conducted to prove that teacher collaboration creates a powerful learning environment for teachers' professional development (Meirink, Meijer, & Verloop, 2007).

The existing research focuses on teachers' beliefs, subject knowledge and skills, learning attitude and outcomes, as well as teacher collaboration. However, the research on how teachers' evaluation system actually influences teacher development is limited. In this paper, a 9-box grid regarding a diversified evaluation system combining long and short term was established to indicate their development path.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Research on the Academic Value and Practical Value of the Evaluation System for University Teachers

From the perspective of pedagogy, the evaluation system of university teachers should adhere to the relative independence and academic autonomy of universities, while also fostering innovative knowledge production and recognizing the leading position of talents. However, there are differing views among researchers regarding this evaluation system. Some researchers believe that the increasingly fierce market competition and industrialized development may undermine teachers' working enthusiasm, while others contend that a highly competitive system, supplemented by appropriate incentives and penalties, can effectively stimulate the vitality of teaching and research. The theoretical orientation of university teachers' evaluation can be categorized into reward and punishment system evaluation theory as well as development evaluation theory. However, it is suggested that a combination of these two approaches is necessary to meet the requirements of the times and adapt to the changing roles of teachers. The current trend leans towards the

developmental teacher evaluation theory (Shi, 2014). Many researchers have studied the content of such evaluation systems and proposed models such as the evaluation PBDE model based on core values, system establishment and foundation (Jian, 2016). Additionally, some researchers have proposed that a reasonable and scientific evaluation index system for teacher development should consist of five parts: designing and formulating evaluation standards, determining evaluation objectives, selecting evaluation-related organizations, constructing an evaluation index system, and assigning evaluation weights(Ai, 2003).

The government and university allocate substantial resources to university teachers' professional development, however, there is few achievements on the effectiveness (Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss and Shapley, 2007). Individual teacher performance has always been assessed by utilizing relatively shallow, routine, and unstructured processes. Such "drive by" evaluations typically result in a simple classification of each teacher as satisfactory or not (Thomas and James, 2015), where few teachers are rated as satisfactory(Weisberg, Sexton, Mulhern and Keeling, 2009). Innovative and effective approaches for evaluating teachers should be implemented, however, decades of research have provided little evidence on teacher evaluation that can clearly imply teacher career development path and effectively enhance teacher professional development.

However, there are certain gaps and limitations in the existing research on the evaluation system of university teachers. The studies tend to be fragmented and lack systematic depth, often focusing on specific aspects of the system rather than providing comprehensive analyses. The practical value of these studies has not been fully demonstrated, as it has not been closely aligned with its application in teacher development.

2.2 Teacher evaluation in China

China's Ministry of Education has recently issued a guiding opinion aimed at deepening the reform of the appraisal and evaluation system for university teachers. This opinion explicitly emphasizes the importance of evaluating the performance of education and teaching, improving the evaluation orientation of scientific research, and placing emphasis on the assessment of social services. In the context of disciplinary assessment, some scholars have proposed a comprehensive evaluation system for university teachers based on four dimensions: education and teaching, scientific research, academic level and achievements, as well as the construction of disciplines and specialties (Wei, 2022). Furthermore, it is argued by certain scholars that the New Era Teacher Evaluation System should be a tiered and categorized evaluation system that encompasses teachers' character, teaching abilities, research contributions, social service involvement, and academic influence (Li and Jian, 2021). It is important to note that university teachers are no longer

considered a highly balanced, homogeneous group, and therefore, it is crucial to reflect different evaluation contents and assessment priorities in the development of evaluation indicators (Li 2019).

Some scholars investigated the characteristics of the teacher evaluation indicators in the USA, then conducted a quantitative study to determine the TEI recognition by teachers in China (Sun , 2010). Additionally, studies on the creation of a teacher assessment system or a developmental teacher evaluation model within the framework of the new curriculum reform were conducted (Tang, 2010). It is revealed that the criteria for teacher performance pay favoured administrators rather than teachers, which is a problem in teacher performance evaluation that was discovered by a Shanghai online survey (Lv, 2011).

However, insufficient attention has been given to the application of teacher evaluations' results in teacher development, with many studies relying heavily on foreign evaluation systems that may not be directly applicable in the Chinese context.

3. Institutional context: Z university's evaluation system and teachers' development

The case university, anonymized as Z university, is one of the first-class universities in China. This university emphasizes the evaluation of teachers as an important element of comprehensive higher education reform and strives to facilitate better teacher development. Z university's teacher evaluation system that combines long and short term, which will be described in more detail below, has created a diversified, differentiated, and refined teacher development reform scheme.

3.1 Long term evaluation system in Z university

Long-term evaluation in Z university adopts four years as an assessment cycle, respecting the law of research output from teachers, formulating "package" performance requirements in terms of teaching, scientific research and service, as well as establishing a diversified and differentiated teacher evaluation system that is oriented to actual contributions.

The long-term evaluation system divides teachers into high-level talent positions and basic talent positions, with different levels under each category, corresponding the teacher to the appropriate level based on their performance in terms of teaching, research, and academic services. Different levels have different assessment methods. High-level talent positions are set up to identify a group of teachers with high potential or who have made outstanding contributions in their research area, in order to fully boost the output of the iconic and representative teaching and research achievements.

The evaluation system establishes a fair, reasonable and peaceful competitive environment for the growth of teachers, and is oriented to enhance the teaching and research level of the university,

further refining the classification and management of faculty positions, so that all kinds of teachers can give full play to their potential and role.

3.2 Short term evaluation system in Z university

The short-term evaluation is based on the year-end Teacher Personal Development Report and the expert panel's comments, which combine the subjective and objective evaluation from six dimensions: education and teaching, talent cultivation, academic value, application value and social influence, departmental service and college service. The expert committee will rate each teacher's annual performance in these six dimensions and issue recommendations for their improvement.

Evaluation Dimension	Reference
Education and teaching	Curriculum design, classroom teaching, teaching reform, major development, teaching materials development, case development, etc.
Talent cultivation	Guidance to students in graduation project, guidance to students in innovation, entrepreneurship and various kinds of practice achievements, guidance to graduate students or young teachers in scientific research, etc.
Academic value	Advanced innovative achievements.
Application value and social influence	Significant socio-economic benefits and impacts of research findings, service in important academic institutions or academic journals worldwide, as well as hosting or organizing key international academic conferences, giving invited to deliver keynote presentations at important international conferences, etc.
Department service	Involvement in the department's numerous activities, and other contribution to the development of the department.
College service	Involvement in the college's numerous activities, undertaking public service work regarding discipline construction, major construction, platform construction, team construction, etc., and other contribution to the development of the college.

Table 1 Dimension for Short Term Evaluation Mechanism

Based on the results of the teacher's annual performance, a personal radar chart as Figure 1 will be issued for each teacher, the evaluation index are visualized, and the feedback system is sound. The rankings and expert comments will also be returned to teachers to help them identify where they stand at the college and how they can work on improving in these six dimensions, so as to fully stimulate the vitality and potential of teachers, especially young teachers.

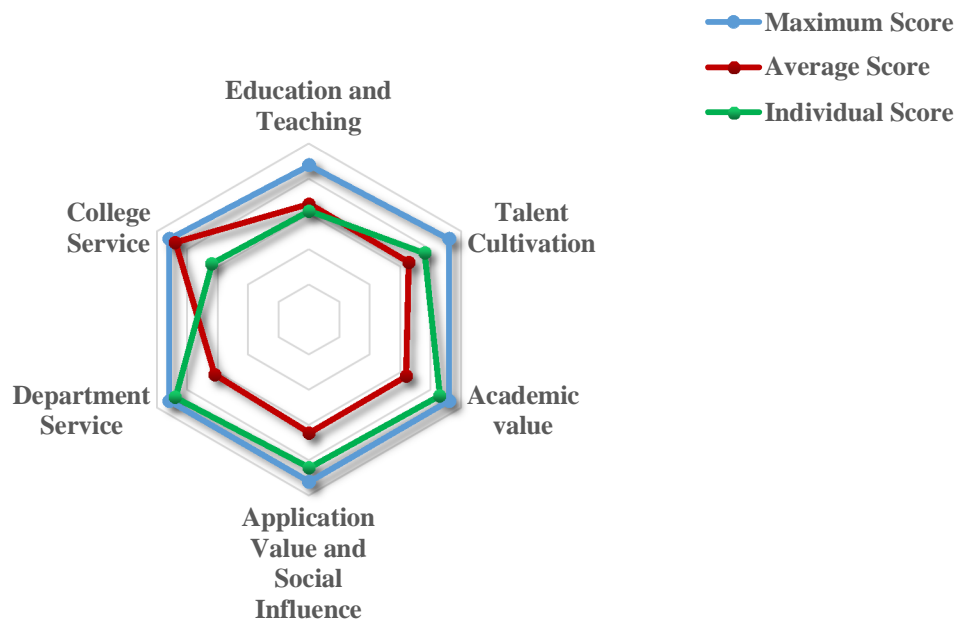


Figure 1 Personal Radar Chart for Professional Development

3.4 Data Analysis

In this paper, 59 teachers in Z university on basic talent positions from the same college were selected and divided into two groups as the professor group, and the associate professor group. Within each group, the teachers' evaluation results for the 2016-2019 appointment period are taken as the long-term evaluation results, and their Personal Development Report evaluation results at the end of 2020 are taken as the short-term evaluation results.

Then this paper will combine the long-term and short-term results into a 9 box grid to identify teachers' career development. Assistant professors have not been included because there are too many new faculty in this group and no long-term evaluation results are available.

Figure 2 below shows that all professors are in the upper or medium level of potential, which indicates this college is giving the right individuals title promotion and that they have considerable potential for future development. From the horizontal coordinate, the majority of them are clustered

at the middle level, which is consistent with the actual situation. While giving the higher level teachers more responsibilities and taking on more influential work, the college should give targeted attention and solutions to the problems of the lower level teachers.

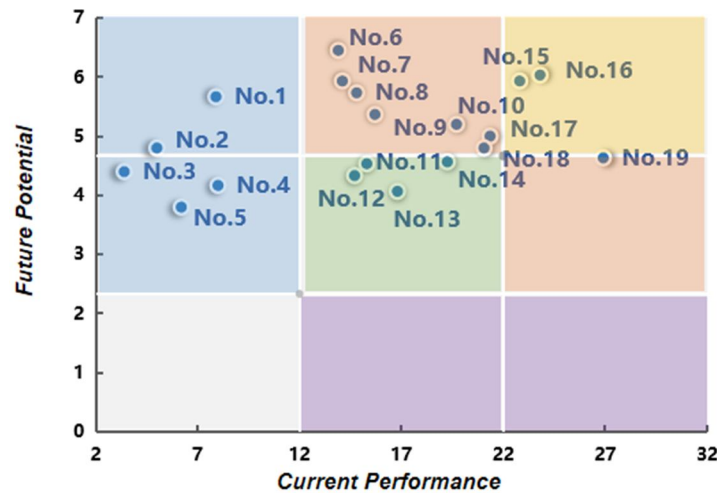


Figure 2 9 Box Grid for the Professor

Figure 3 demonstrates that the medium and the left of center are home to the majority of the associate professors. It is necessary for the college to investigate the causes of the them and offer focused solutions for early entry into the higher level. According to the prior analysis, the college ought to carry out corresponding development programs to other groups.

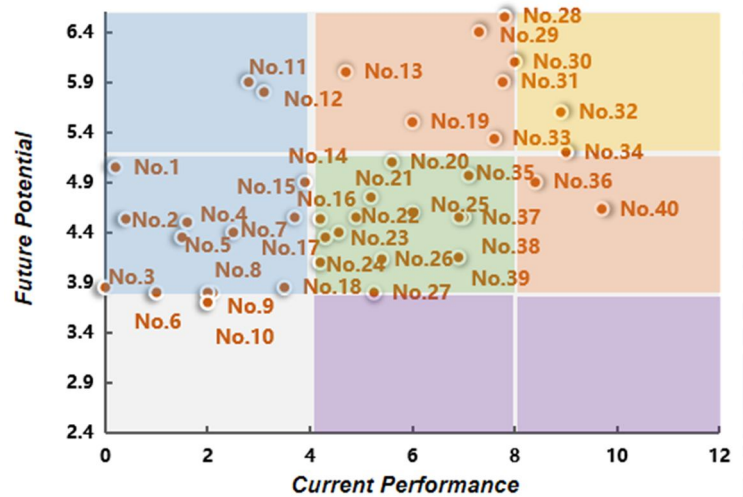


Figure 3 9 Box Grid for the Associate Professor

Figure 2 and Figure 3 can be utilized to anticipate teacher development and echelon building, as well as to sort out problems and conduct tailored training for teachers in different states, and to create a targeted reserve of high-potential talent.

4. Discussions

This case study indicates that the results of the long- and short-term evaluations can be utilized to develop a teacher's 9 Box Grid which is a well-known tool for talent management and succession planning. The 9 box grid shown as Figure 4 focuses on the "future potential and current performance" dimensions to conduct a teacher inventory and form a proprietary talent matrix. All the teachers can be matched into the right box based on their performance and potential, in order to identify bottlenecks in their career and professional development paths.

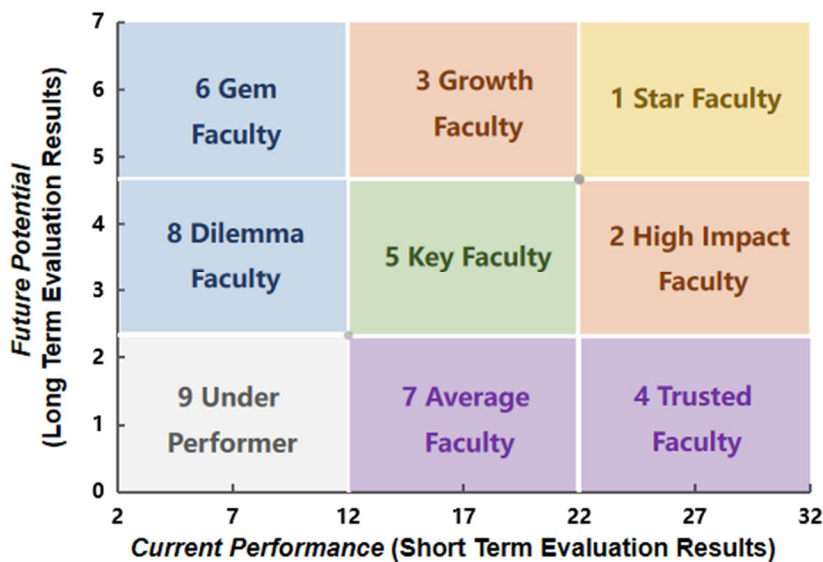


Figure 4 9 Box Grid for Teacher Professional Development

For the Star Faculty shown in box 1, the college should offer these teachers more responsibility and encourage them to work on high profile projects that push them outside their comfort zone and boost their impact in the area. Also, the college can train them to become mentors for young teachers so as to boost overall sustained high-quality research output. Retention is critical as these teachers are future leaders of the college.

For the High Impact Faculty, the college can manage performance evaluation system appropriately and offer plenty of expert reviews and feedback, so they know how they can improve towards the first echelon.

For the Growth Faculty, the college should focus on finding out what's preventing these teachers from achieving higher performance, such as do they have enough resources, training, or the right tools? Are there any policies that are blocking their progress? It is recommended to develop targeted solutions for performance shortcomings, and to enhance it by expanding job responsibilities towards the first echelon.

For the Trusted Faculty, the college is ought to investigate these teachers’ motivation so as to make it clear that what development opportunities they would pursue and design personalized scheme to motivate them towards the second echelon. Additionally, these teachers are suitable to be mentors and train others as they are equipped with exceptional skills and abundant knowledge.

For the Key Faculty, It is recommended to focus on longer-term development of these teachers, and on training at a slower pace. Mentoring is effective to make them enhance the core talent. The college should utilize performance incentives as the main, and potential enhancement as the complement.

For the Gem Faculty, they may lack experience or they may not be appropriate for the position they are in. The college should clarify expectations and develops personalized development plans for these teachers in order to facilitate them in their performance development.

For the Average Faculty, the college should focus on keeping them feeling rewarded for their work, and be aware that these teachers have risks in taking new responsibilities.

For the Dilemma Faculty, they may be a recent graduate who expects adapt quickly but has difficulties in teaching or conducting research dependently for the first time. The college should manage the training support to help them in their on-boarding and development.

For the Under Performer, the college should pay urgent attention and identifies the root of the problem, in order to escape over-investing in these teachers in the long term. Additionally, it will be worthwhile to make sure that these teachers are nor negatively influence anyone else.

Figure 5 shows the development path for teachers in Z university. The blue arrow represents the main development path, while the green arrow represents the secondary path.

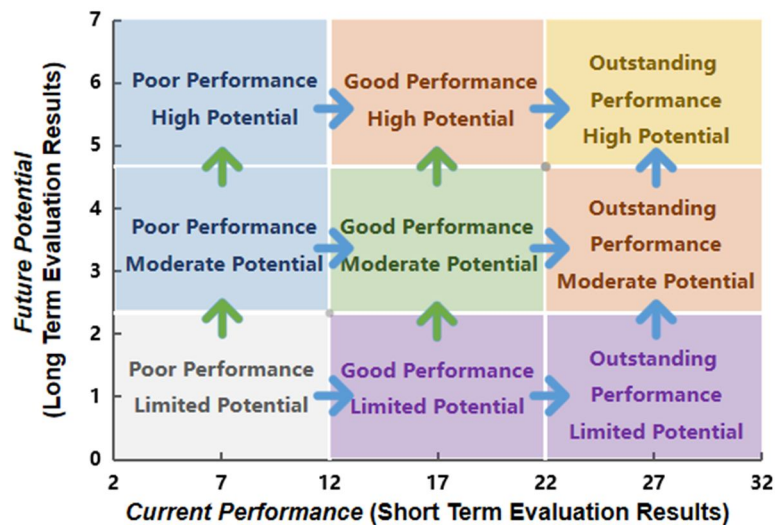


Figure 5 Teachers’ Professional Development Path

5. Implications

This case study shows the teacher development pathway through the 9-box grid generated from a combination of long- and short-term teacher evaluation results. Universities may apply this 9-box grid to analyze the condition of its faculty, develop a talent echelon structure, determine on the promotion focus to go along with the key competencies, as well as identify the training scheme in batches for consistency. In terms of the teachers, the 9 box grid gives them a clear understanding of where they stand in the college and what direction they should take to improve and develop, in order to facilitate them to better plan their careers.

In order to support the rapid growth of different types of teachers, this research will be improved in the future by concentrating on the study of the evaluation system integrating individual evaluation and team evaluation. In order to boost teachers' vitality, pleasure, and sense of accomplishment, the teacher career development system will be built through the transformation of evaluation subjects, evaluation techniques, and evaluation contents.

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