

*The "Policy Validity" of Value-added as a Teacher Quality measure*  
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In order to improve the quality of the nation's teachers, the public education system has long relied on requirements and rewards for formal teacher education, experience, and other traits—the "credentials strategy." However, policymakers and some prominent educators are increasingly embracing a radical overhaul—an "accountability strategy"—that largely ignores these traits and instead rewards teachers' measured contributions to student results. In this chapter, I review evidence about the statistical validity of a variety of teacher quality measures. I also argue that this alone is not enough to determine how and when teacher quality measures should be used. Instead, I outline the criterion of "policy validity," which is determined by statistical validity as well as the specific functions that the teacher quality measures serve in the education system and the costs of producing both the measures and the underlying teacher qualities they represent. Based on this framework and the most recent value-added-based research, I find that neither the traditional credentials strategy nor a simple value-added-based accountability strategy is likely to best address the teacher quality problem. Instead, as in the private sector, a valid policy approach requires using multiple strategies and measures that provide signals of teacher effectiveness and formative and summative assessments that facilitate and encourage improvement. Specifically, the evidence suggests that teachers be rewarded not for their graduate degrees, but for a combination of experience, certain types of professional development, and teacher and school performance. More generally, improving the quality of teachers will require a comprehensive strategy that few current or proposed policies provide.