



THE CAT IN THE HAT Dr. Seuss

Dr. Seuss's ABC

Green Eggs and Ham Dr. Seuss

The FOOT BOOK Dr. Seuss

SOME THINGS JUST CAN'T BE MEASURED

or can they?

College of Education professor researching a better way to evaluate teachers

In a 2004 article in Nursing Education Perspectives, editor Joyce J. Fitzpatrick wrote, "Teaching is an art. Consequently, it should be judged as other art forms are – for the passion and beauty of the performance and the meaningfulness of the message conveyed." Jon Brasfield, Ph.D., UF assistant professor of education, is working on ways to measure teacher effectiveness that won't ignore the "passion and beauty" of a great teacher.

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“In talking with hundreds of teachers, I’ve learned that they feel the state doesn’t accurately capture what they do,” said Brasfield. “They’re evaluated by busy principals and on the basis of test scores and student achievement. It’s not that those things aren’t valuable, but they aren’t the only measures of good teaching.”
Joining the University of Findlay in 2015, Brasfield has that rare combination of being adept with numbers and having a

keen understanding of and curiosity about people. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology/Anthropology from Centre College in Danville, Kentucky, and a Master of Arts in Counseling from Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, North Carolina. He did a stint as a high school guidance counselor but a fascination with research drew him back to school.

“I found as a counselor, I was doing more scheduling and auditing transcripts than actual counseling,” Brasfield added. “I have always liked research, especially quantitative research, so I started working on my Ph.D., focusing on teacher effectiveness measures.”

It was while pursuing his doctorate that Brasfield accepted a position as a STAR3 Grant Evaluation Specialist for Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools. Over a three-year period, he acted as the lead evaluator for a \$19 million teacher incentive grant. He collected and analyzed data from 16 program schools and created teacher observation protocols. During this time, he discovered something significant about the teacher evaluation process.

“Teacher evaluation has been added to all of the other duties of a school principal,” said Brasfield. “It’s something that they just don’t have time to do effectively.”

When the Winston-Salem school group brought in unbiased, third party evaluators, the change was immediate. The evaluators were able to follow a protocol, but also had the time to observe the process of teaching itself.

When it comes to teaching, Brasfield knows the lay of the land. An instructor in Findlay’s doctor of education (Ed.D.) program, he guides online students in their pursuit of a completed dissertation. Becoming known as the “go to” guy for quantitative research, he teaches classes in literature review, educational research and measurement, research design and statistical analysis.

Brasfield has co-authored an article for Teacher Education Yearbook XXV, with John Gillham, Ph.D., director of the doctor of education program, and Nicole Williams, Ph.D., assistant professor of education, and has teamed up for conference presentations on Ohio’s teacher evaluations with Williams and Kathleen Crates, Ph.D.

Other presentation topics have included teachers’ perceptions of administrators’ abilities to evaluate teachers and the procedures and pitfalls in implementing a teacher observation program.

Students in the four-year-old Ed.D. Program select a dissertation chair and committee. Brasfield is chairing and serving on committees for several students who plan to complete their doctorates in 2017 or 2018. He admits that the prospect of conducting extensive quantitative research can be daunting to these students, many of whom are full-time teachers and are new to research methodologies.

Brasfield has also worked with Findlay City Schools where his son is in the 4th grade and wife, Amanda, is a school librarian. He helped guide the Strategic Planning Committee in 2014-15; has been a provider of professional development, and volunteers in the Gifted Student Enrichment Program.

“My wife and I are both working in education and our son is an elementary school student,” Brasfield commented. “It just fuels my passion for educational research.”



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