

# **Evaluating Teaching**

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## Evaluating Teaching

In this volume are two 1998 case studies of elementary school teachers working at professional development with the Chicago Teachers Academy for Mathematics and Science. The purpose of our CIRCE evaluation work was to examine the processes and quality of their teaching in order to inform those giving assistance to Chicago Elementary Schools. Our continuing purpose over several years had been to evaluate in-service training provided by the Academy. So the study of these two teachers was undertaken in essence to help us understand the quality of the work of the Academy. The cases were reported to the Academy staff in 1999.

In these two instances we were struck again by how integrated teacher evaluation is into schooling. Sometimes we get distracted by formal assessments of students, formal reviews of teachers, and the formal evaluation of professional development services, but within the personal experience of the classroom, most of the measure of educational quality is informal. The teacher sizes up the children and the children size up the teacher. There is not much surprise from day to day, but with quality perpetually sensed. Quality is capable of being seen differently. Similarly an unending assessment occurs between teacher and principal and between teacher and Academy. It is informal evaluation, including self-evaluation, that shapes the quality of classroom practice.

In the first case study, the reader will observe a relatively inexperienced sixth grade teacher, Kimberly Grogan, in a Hispanic neighborhood school. She is strong in language arts but not so strong in mathematics and science. She has evaluated herself sensitively, sized up well the opportunities available from the Teachers Academy and committed herself to its programming. She also is engaged in the assistance services of the Lakeside Educational Arts Project, LEAP, an agency integrating the arts into the pedagogy of general education. Grogan demonstrates that at least for some teachers, affiliating with multiple curricular reform approaches is neither conflictual nor draining. Grogan participates fully in the leadership training of the Academy, happily pursuing her principal's aim for teachers to take major school-wide instructional leadership responsibility. Grogan is intrigued by the swirl of ideas emanating from the Academy and devoted to improving an already fresh and vigorous classroom and school.