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ABSTRACT

Operating within a milieu of social, political, and economic change, educators are under increasing pressure to provide information about their instructional efforts. As instructors are called upon to do different types of teaching and to conduct their teaching differently, evaluation procedures must also address these changes. Self-appraisal offers significant opportunity to address environmental changes in post-secondary institutes. Teaching dossiers (also called portfolios or folios) are a method of self-evaluation which offer a mechanism for educators to move beyond static conceptions of effective teaching to reflective and reliable models of performance evaluation. (Contains 20 references and a table listing types of performance evaluation. Appendixes present figures illustrating aspects of multi-faceted performance evaluation and multi-faceted teaching dossier.) (Author/RS)

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# Multi-faceted Performance Evaluation: The Role of Teaching Dossiers

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## **Abstract**

Operating within a milieu of social, political, and economic change, educators are under increasing pressure to provide information about their instructional efforts. As instructors are called upon to do different types of teaching and to conduct their teaching differently, evaluation procedures must also address these changes.

Self-appraisal offers significant opportunity to address environmental changes in post-secondary institutes. Teaching dossiers are a method of self-evaluation which offer a mechanism for educators to move beyond static conceptions of effective teaching to reflective and reliable models of performance evaluation.

## Multi-faceted Performance Evaluation: The Role of Teaching Dossiers

Provincial funding cuts to post-secondary institutions are leading to overcrowded classes at the University of Alberta... Some courses are only offered every second year because there are not enough professors to teach them. The quality of instruction is decreasing in some fields because of old lab equipment or lack of supervisors for graduate students ... those professors left are scrambling to teach more classes a week that are larger in size because there's no money to replace colleagues who have left. (Moysa, 1996)

Media articles such as the excerpt above reflect the impact of political and economic decisions on the role of instructors within post-secondary environments. In addition to financial pressures, universities are also faced with an unprecedented diversity of students whose different cultural and academic backgrounds, needs, and aspirations call for continual improvements in teaching methods (Greene, 1994).

Operating within this milieu, instructors are under increasing pressure to provide information about their instructional efforts. Outside forces are demanding that educators be more responsive to the changing teaching environment and institutes to rethink the monitoring and measuring of instructional performance within dynamic environments. As instructors are called upon to do different types of teaching and to conduct their teaching differently, evaluation criteria and procedures must establish timely, accurate, and usable systems of performance assessment in post-secondary environments.

The purpose of this paper is two-fold. First, it describes performance evaluation within education environments, focusing on those at post-secondary levels. It attempts to identify important issues and problems that need to be addressed in order to meet rapidly changing needs and expectations of instructors, administrators, students, and other stakeholders. From this exploration, a key principle is developed which suggests that instructional effectiveness can best be evaluated if it is assessed from a variety of

perspectives relating to purpose, criteria, source, and method, and if it has regard for particular contexts. The paper then focuses on self-evaluation as method of assessing instructor performance and, within that context, presents the argument that teaching dossiers meet personal and institutional needs for rich evaluative data relating to instructional performance in dynamic teaching and learning environments.

A multi-faceted approach to evaluation serves as the conceptual framework for this paper. The operating principles of the framework are based on assumptions of previous researchers (Braskamp, Brandenburg, and Ory, 1984; Genova, Madoff, Chin & Thomas, 1976) who suggested that effective evaluation is multi-purpose, multi-sourced, multi-method, and has regard for institutional context relating to particular needs and stages of development. A model has been developed (Appendix 1) which conceptualizes the complexity of this multi-faceted evaluation process.

### **Evaluation: A Multi-faceted Concept**

Stufflebeam and Webster (1988) defined evaluation as a conceptual activity in which

Evaluators and clients must conceptualize the evaluation questions, information needed to address them, appropriate values and criteria for examining and interpreting the information, ways to obtain and analyze the information, the structure of reports for communicating findings, and appropriate ways to use the findings. They must also conceptualize the ways in which evaluation fits into the structure of the school system and community: that is, how evaluation is to be governed, organized, administered, financed, controlled for bias, and employed within a political environment. And they need to develop a shared conception of what evaluation means, what it is used for, how it is effectively implemented, and how it is properly appraised. (p. 570)

This description provides an introduction to the complexity of evaluation as a multi-faceted activity which attends to environmental constructs.

While evaluation serves a variety of purposes including analyzing programs and

developing policy, a major purpose within organizations is that of appraising employees' work activity, more commonly referred to as performance evaluation. Within this context, evaluation has been defined more specifically as a process designed "to give employees feedback on performance, to identify the employees' developmental needs, to make promotion and reward decisions, to make demotion and termination decisions, and to develop information about the organization's selection and placement decisions" (Nelson & Quick, 1994, p. 183).

While performance evaluation can be understood as the gathering and measuring of work performance information as a basis for personal and/or institutional decisions (Braskamp & Ory, 1994; Nelson & Quick, 1994), it must be understood as an activity which affects not only individuals, but organizations as well. Braskamp and Ory (1994) employed a "sitting beside" (p. 13-14) metaphor to illustrate the fact that evaluation involves judgements and often comparisons either between people or against established standards within the organization. For example, an instructor evaluation which considers student outcomes considers not just an individual's teaching practices, but student results as compared with those of other instructors within the institute and with the goals of the institute.

Genova, Madoff, Chin, and Thomas (1976) elaborated on the significance of evaluation to both individuals and institutes:

Evaluating people is a serious business. At stake for the persons evaluated are self-esteem, job security, assignments and promotion, and future careers. For students, the quality and usefulness of their education depends in large part on the institution's capacity to identify and maintain staff excellence. For the institution itself, its very survival will more and more depend on its purposefulness and quality of instruction. (p. 2)

### **Performance Evaluation in Education: A Multi-faceted Model**

**Multiple purposes.** A review of literature addressing performance evaluation

in education suggests it serves a number of purposes within that context. Cullen (1995), in examining the evaluation of school superintendents, related specific types of evaluation to the purpose for which it is intended. Among the purposes she described are improving educational performance through instruction, improving communication and relations between various levels of administration, clarifying roles, improving planning, aiding in professional development and personnel decisions, serving as an accountability mechanism, and fulfilling legal requirements.

The Canadian Association for University Teachers (CAUT) (1991) outlined reasons for evaluating teaching as improving the quality of teaching, helping students make choices among courses, and including teaching effectiveness among the criteria for career advancement. Because CAUT viewed the improvement of instruction as most important to teaching, it suggested data must be collected frequently, results must be confidential to the institution, and assistance must be made available to instructors to enable them to modify teaching strategies.

Other researchers (Braskamp & Ory, 1994; Roe & McDonald, 1984) suggested that at post-secondary levels evaluation can be broadly classified as having dual roles relating to describing performance and to judging performance or, in other words, relating to individual improvement and to institutional accountability. Under these broad categories, a number of major features are itemized as teaching effectiveness, salary adjustment, promotion, tenure, curriculum development, and student information. These two roles or categories of evaluation have also been termed formative and summative evaluation which are explored in the following section.

**Formative and summative evaluations.** While research suggests there are many purposes and types of appraisal, performance evaluation is often grouped in two

broad categories of formative and summative evaluation. Formative is the term applied to evaluation that seeks to continue the development of or to improve the subject of evaluation. Its focus on development allows instructors who receive poor evaluations to improve their performance (Cullen, 1995; Stufflebeam & Webster, 1988). Roe and McDonald (1984) added further that because formative evaluation leads to suggestions for improvement, it is most often interim and not a final appraisal.

Summative evaluation, on the other hand, is used for formal decision making. Summative refers to evaluation that seeks to provide a statement or summation of performance used as input to salary, promotion, and tenure decisions (Cullen, 1995; Roe & McDonald, 1984; Stufflebeam & Webster, 1988). The distinctions between formative and summative evaluations as they relate to purposes outlined in the literature are presented below.

**Table 1. Types of Instructor Performance Evaluation**

<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Formative</u>	<u>Summative</u>
Measure educational performance		✓
Improve quality of instruction	✓	
Establish performance goals	✓	
Improve communication	✓	
Help students with course selection		✓
Improve relations	✓	
Inform expectations	✓	
Improve planning	✓	
Aid in professional development	✓	
Influence personnel decisions		✓
Serve as accountability mechanism		✓
Fulfill legal requirements		✓

While some researchers (Roe & McDonald, 1983) consider formative evaluation the more important at post-secondary levels, a consideration of the multiple purposes of

evaluation itemized in the table, along with the changing environments in dynamic institutes, suggests it is difficult to establish one as more critical than the other.

**Multiple evaluative criteria.** A number of performance criteria have been identified in evaluating educators. Johnson and Holdaway (1991), in their study of performance indicators of senior high school principals, identified 29 dimensions of effective performance from which "a pervasive attitude of 'humanitarian' concern for staff and students" (p. 60) emerged as most important among the criteria.

In another study of school principal performance, Heck and Marcoulides (1996) associated various evaluative criteria with a number of types of evaluation: (a) standards-based evaluation which considers local context, job assignments, or particular priorities; (b) duties-based or job description evaluation; (c) outcome-based evaluation based primarily on behaviour and organizational outcomes; and (d) role-based evaluation considering best practice or action in a role over time in roles of governance, climate and social relations, and monitoring school instruction.

In addition to performance effectiveness measures, other objects of evaluation have been identified as attitudes, cognitive processes, traits, and competence (Cullen, 1995; Glasman & Heck (1992) cited in Heck & Marcoulides, 1996). Braskamp, Brandenburg and Ory (1984) suggested that traits include not only instructor characteristics, but student and course characteristics as well. Other evaluative models support an even broader consideration of environmental traits to include culture, climate, or leadership (Heck & Marcoulides, 1996; Leithwood, 1994).

In addition to major purposes for which performance evaluations are designed, other less direct outcome issues guide the development of criteria for appraisal systems. Because performance evaluations are interactive processes which involve multiple and

complex channels and methods of communication and feedback, standards must be established to protect of rights of parties to the evaluation in terms of confidentiality and accountability. Standards must also address the utility of the evaluative process, that is whether it is informative, timely, and influential. The feasibility of the process relating to efficiency and political viability are also critical in developing criteria (Genova, Madoff, Chin & Thomas, 1976; Heck & Marcoulides, 1996).

Perhaps the most important criteria for performance evaluations relates to accuracy of results (Heck & Marcoulides, 1996). A number of measurement problems, however, often pose serious difficulties in this area. They include: (a) deficiency resulting from overlooking important aspects of actual performance; (b) unreliability resulting from poor quality performance measures or disagreement among evaluators; and (c) invalidity resulting from a poorly-defined expectation of job performance (Nelson & Quick, 1994). These deficiencies in accuracy can often be related to inappropriate or insufficient numbers or types of evaluative criteria.

In summary, based on a number of research approaches, it is clear that the criteria used to evaluate a number of performance measures are multiple and complex. They are not easily determined or explained by models which suggest straightforward relationships within a variety of education environments. Nor are they simple or static applications of those models within the context of dynamic teaching environments.

**Multiple sources of evaluative information.** Information about instructors can be collected from multiple sources including faculty and department administrators, teaching peers, students, alumni, outside assessors, and self (Braskamp, Brandenburg & Ory, 1984; Braskamp & Ory, 1994; Roe & McDonald, 1983). Further, most researchers agree information from multiple sources is more reliable than that from

any single source.

Evaluative information from multiple sources, however, requires a system of weighting or establishing the priority of sources. Just as various aspects of faculty work including research, professional service, citizenship, and teaching are weighted in the overall evaluation of faculty members, so are evaluative data from various sources as they relate to the teaching component (Genova, Madoff, Chin & Thomas, 1976). For example, faculty members may be evaluated based on a 40% research component, 10% professional service, 10% citizenship, with teaching accounting for 40% of the overall evaluation. Within teaching, however, information originating with a senior administrator may account for 25%, student evaluations 50%, and peer or self evaluations 25%.

While information from multiple stakeholder groups contributes to the reliability of evaluative data, evidence suggests many stakeholders may not possess the requisite skills, sensitivity, authority, and training to perform credible performance evaluations (Cullen, 1995). To address potential inadequacies in criteria development and personnel skills in the evaluation system, self-evaluation is earning credibility as an innovative and effective instrument in generating both formative and summative performance information which provides a much broader range of evidence for effective instructional performance (Canadian Association of University Teachers, 1991).

In summary, performance evidence provided by multiple sources enhances the fairness, usefulness, and credibility of the evaluation. In view of inadequacies within the evaluation system and among personnel involved, each source is not equally appropriate for all uses. However, multiple perspectives are deemed to support the overall value of assessment with each source providing a unique perspective.

**Multiple methods of evaluation.** The multiple perspectives approach to evaluation includes a variety of methods or techniques for collecting information which serves as indicators of performance in various areas. Several methods have been found to offer valuable information in appraising teaching. These include achievement tests, ratings and surveys, written essays or appraisal forms, interviews, personal observations, videotaping, and other specifically designed instruments tailored to particular circumstances. Other indicators of teaching eminence, quality, and impact include prizes, awards, honours and invited addresses, and information from personal journals and published materials (Bosetti, 1996; Braskamp, Brandenburg & Ory, 1984; Braskamp & Ory, 1994; Canadian Association of University Teachers, 1991; Cullen, 1995; Genova, Madoff, Chin & Thomas, 1976; Roe & McDonald, 1983; Day, Robberecht & Roed, 1996).

#### **Self-Evaluation in Education Environments**

Braskamp & Ory (1994) suggest that reflective self-evaluation is the method by which instructors improve their teaching.

Professors do not learn about how they function as professionals by first theorizing and then applying the theory to their work. Instead, they learn, understand, and change their work behavior by continuously examining, analyzing, hypothesizing, theorizing, and reflecting as they work. (p. 6)

By viewing professors as learners, and learners as constructors of their own action and environment, we can understand teaching as something not learned from theory and text alone, but something based on experience and reflection as well (Bosetti, 1996; Braskamp & Ory, 1994; Culbertson, 1988; Griffiths, 1988; Jones, 1994). Self-evaluation offers instructors an opportunity to examine, analyze, and reflect on teaching strategies which, in response to environmental change, must also be adjusted and adapted on an ongoing basis.

The necessity for ongoing reflective instructor evaluation means that assessment

traditionally performed by administrators is now frequently accompanied by self-evaluation. Self-evaluation allows instructors to better understand their world by reflecting on experiences, establishing goals and determining strategies for achieving these goals, monitoring their action, and continually re-evaluating and adjusting it. It is an on-going process which allows instructors to interpret unique challenges, develop innovative strategies, and record professional successes (Bosetti, 1996; Braskamp & Ory, 1994; Johnson & Holdaway, 1991).

Self-evaluation results have been criticized for a lack of objectivity in favour of the vested interests of the individual (Cullen, 1995; Genova, Madoff, Chin & Thomas, 1976).

Other research, however, suggests

faculty themselves are the most important assessment source because only they can provide descriptions of their work, the thinking behind it, and their own personal reporting, appraisals, interpretations, and goals. Self-assessment involves reflection and judgment. Only the professors themselves can make a case for their work. (Braskamp & Ory, 1994, p. 102)

Further, self-ratings are shown to have good relative agreement with other ratings in teaching performance as demonstrated by similar profiles of strengths and weaknesses in instructor self-assessment and student ratings (Braskamp & Ory, 1994).

Self-evaluations are increasingly used in performance evaluations, and some research suggests they result in more satisfying, constructive evaluations and less defensiveness concerning the evaluation process (DeGregorio & Fisher (1988) cited in Nelson & Quick, 1996). They not only benefit the individual being assessed, but self-evaluative data in the form of teaching records, portfolios, and dossiers also benefits the institute by promoting individual excellence and creative diversity (Bosetti, 1996; Braskamp & Ory, 1994; Canadian Association of University Teachers, 1991).

## **The Teaching Dossier: Multi-faceted Self-assessment Tool**

One method of self-evaluation is through a teaching dossier. The term dossier has been used interchangeably with a number of terms including portfolio, folio, and portrayal to represent a summary of an instructor's teaching activities. More specifically, a teaching dossier is a cumulative and coherent set of materials including work samples, reflective commentary, and selected short descriptions compiled by instructors to accurately convey the scope and quality of their teaching (Appendix 2) (Adamowicz, 1996; Barnett & Lee, 1994; Bosetti, 1996; Braskamp & Ory, 1994; Canadian Association of University Teachers, 1991; Day, Robberecht & Roed, 1996; Jones, 1994).

Teaching dossiers can be distinguished from *curricula vitarum* by understanding teaching as one of four major parts of an instructor's role. While *curriculum vitae* records document a whole spectrum of faculty accomplishments relating to research, professional service, and citizenship, teaching dossiers record accomplishments specifically related to that major complex activity (Braskamp & Ory, 1994; Canadian Association of University Teachers, 1991).

**Multiple purposes of dossiers.** Within the teaching component of faculty work there are two views of dossiers. While some researchers view them as a "posed photograph" representation of an instructor's best work or ideal performance, others utilize them as a 'candid snapshot' which reveals tough teaching challenges, issues, goals, and which reflects experimentation, failures, and successes (Adamowicz, 1996; Bosetti, 1996; Braskamp & Ory, 1994; Canadian Association of University Teachers, 1991).

As a result of the two perspectives of dossiers, views of their credibility are uneven (Bosetti, 1996; Braskamp & Ory, 1994). While some instructors regard them as accurate portrayals of teaching and learning (Barnett & Lee, 1994; Day, Robberecht & Roed, 1996; Jones, 1994), others believe they fail to capture individual approaches to

teaching and are too time-consuming to prepare (Adamowicz, 1996). For administrators, while some are uncomfortable making judgements of dossier quality, others find them more objective than evaluating teaching performance through the observation of a colleague (Braskamp & Ory, 1994). In summary, through a discussion of the two views of dossiers, an understanding of their value as formative and/or summative documents is seen as crucial to their credibility and acceptance in education environments.

**Multiple criteria within dossiers.** Teaching dossiers offer advantages in providing evaluative data to the instructors themselves, administrators involved in the evaluation process, and the institute as a whole. They contribute to an instructor's improved teaching by stimulating self-reflection, self-analysis, and self-development. They also help instructors review their teaching philosophy, goals, and strategies and facilitate an instructor's active role in the evaluative process by including criteria which they feel are important (Adamowicz, 1996; Bosetti, 1996; Canadian Association of University Teachers, 1991; Day, Robberecht & Roed, 1996).

Teaching dossiers also offer multiple advantages to evaluators and institutes. They offer richer, more authentic evidence of teaching effectiveness which reveals not only what occurred, but the rationale behind it as well. They provide evaluators an additional source of information, found often to coincide with student evaluations, upon which to consider the credibility of multiple sources. Within the institute, a teaching dossier promotes collaboration and attention to shared goals by encouraging a view of teaching as scholarly activity through theorizing and application of theory and personal philosophy, and reflection and rethinking the theory (Adamowicz, 1996; Braskamp & Ory, 1994; Canadian Association of University Teachers, 1991).

**Multiple methods of providing dossier information.** Just as a self-

evaluation can comprise one component of a multi-faceted evaluation process, so can dossiers include a variety of documents useful for evaluation and development. Although dossier formats differ with every application and, likely, every teacher, typical characteristics relate to personal commitment, problem solving, and reflection (Jones, 1994).

Teaching dossiers can include descriptions of the type of teaching, for example, whether the presentation assumes a lecture format, occurs in a laboratory, or is as a thesis advisor. They include a reflective statement of teaching and learning goals and how they are accomplished, descriptions of activities undertaken to improve teaching, and contributions to the institution or profession. Supporting documentation including course development and instructional materials, documentation of student outcomes, evaluations of teaching, and honours or recognitions is also a useful component of teaching dossiers (Adamowicz, 1996; Day, Robberecht & Roed; 1996; Bosetti, 1996; Braskamp & Ory, 1994; Canadian Association of University Teachers, 1991).

To summarize the multi-method approach to dossiers, the increasing use of such documentation as an evaluative tool in the education environment can be compared to the growing use of a variety of performance measures in student assessment (Braskamp & Ory, 1994). It can be argued that more collection of evidence for review and self-reflection is not just warranted, but requisite, in organizing instructors thinking about and achievements in teaching within dynamic environments. Because teaching dossiers can be used for many purposes, multiple sources and criteria of information are also crucial if the documents are to be accepted as credible.

### **Conclusions and Implications**

This approach to performance evaluation emphasizes the importance of multiple

perspectives in appraising instructors within post-secondary environments. Information collected from a number of sources and through a variety of methods, each reflecting a diversity of purposes and criteria, support fair and credible assessment of instructor performance. It is therefore important that appropriate approaches are selected which meet the needs of individual instructors, administrators and institutes, and that such approaches reflect the dynamic contexts in which they occur.

Although self-appraisal has been criticized as being biased, self-evaluation and reflection are important components of performance evaluation, both formative and summative, particularly when combined with other sources of evaluative data. Self-evaluation offers significant opportunity to address political, economic, and student changes which continue to transform today's post-secondary environments. Teaching dossiers offer a mechanism for educators to move beyond static conceptions of effective teaching in times of political, cultural, and economic change.

A number of implications must be considered if post-secondary institutes are to reap the benefits of evaluations programs which include dossiers. Professors must be encouraged to allocate the time and resources necessary to develop comprehensive and useful documentation. Evaluation systems must be established which assess the effectiveness of teaching dossiers, and administrators must be trained in their application. Finally, professors and institutes must be recognized for outstanding efforts to implement dossier programs which improve the evaluation of teaching in current dynamic environments.

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Multi-Faceted Evaluation Model

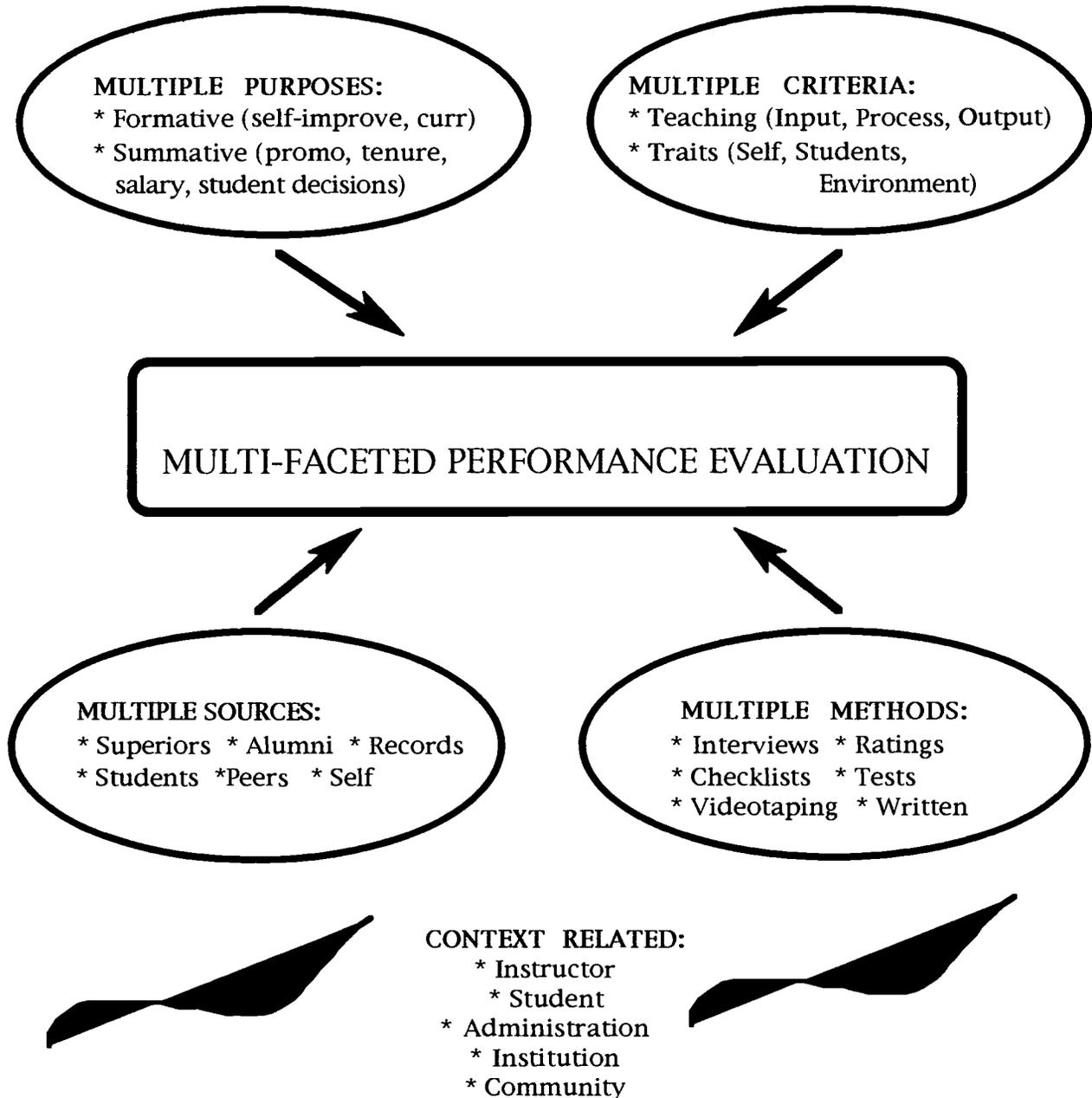


Figure 1: Multi-faceted approach to instructor evaluation based on analysis by Braskamp, Brandenburg, & Ory (1984) and Genova, Madoff, Chin & Thomas (1976)

Teaching Dossier  
as Multi-faceted Evaluation Instrument

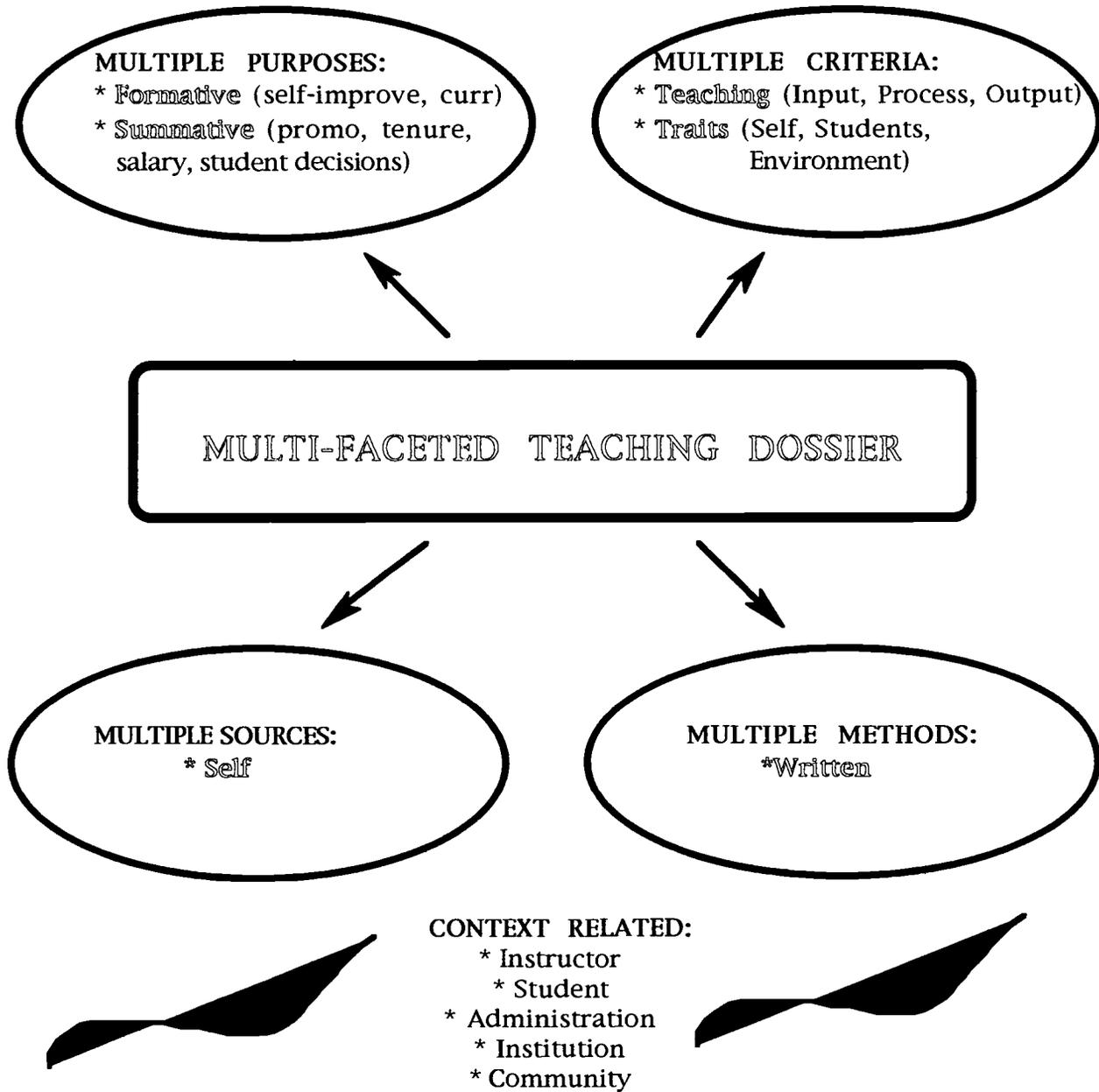


Figure 2: Teaching dossier as multi-faceted evaluative instrument based on Multi-faceted Evaluation Model (Appendix 1)

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