The Will/Skill Matrix

High Will **Low Skill**	**High Will** **High Skill**
Low Will **Low Skill**	**Low Will** **High Skill**

Will (vertical axis)

Skill (horizontal axis)
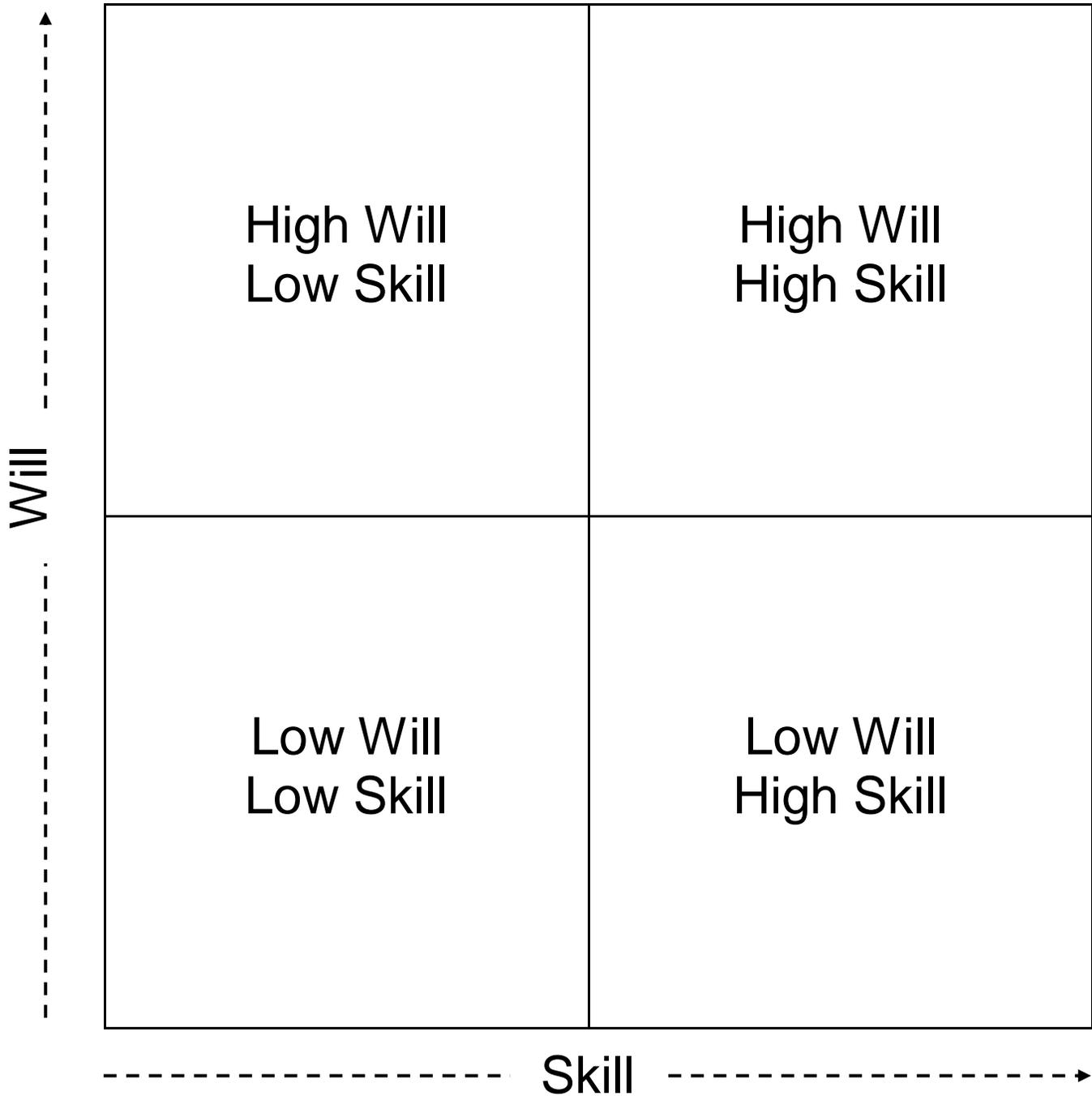
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Understanding Teacher Skill and Teacher Will

CONSIDER	KEY QUESTION	INDICATORS OF HIGH SKILL	INDICATORS OF HIGH WILL
Observational Data	*What does the teacher's instructional practice look like?*	● Posts objectives and essential questions. ● Uses classroom management strategies that are effective and consistent. ● Uses instructional strategies effectively.	● Interacts well with students (responding to questions, supporting a range of learners, using motivational strategies, and encouraging student engagement.)
Feedback	*How does the teacher respond to feedback?*	● Implements suggestions or otherwise acts on feedback.	● Engages in reflective conversations about feedback.
Teacher artifacts	*What instructional materials has the teacher produced, and how do they align with the standards, the curriculum, and the learning needs of students?*	● Designs lesson plans, assessments, and assignments that align with standards, are appropriate for students' ability levels, and reflect sound pedagogy.	● Communicates with parents and comments on student papers and products. ● Sets and follows classroom rules, policies, and procedures that support student progress.
Classroom formative assessment tools and data	*How does the teacher create/use formative assessment?*	● Uses student data/results to improve instruction and practice. ● Aligns assessments with instructional goals and unit objectives.	● Adjusts instruction based on assessment data. ● Follows up with individual students regarding their performance and supports students accordingly.
Classroom summative assessment	*How many of the teacher's students have mastered the standards?*	● Analyzes data/ results and targets areas for improvement (students and instructional practice).	● Takes ownership of data/results and uses them to improve instruction.
Informal conversations	*How does the teacher view his/her practice?*	● Understands where students are and what they need to do to move forward. ● Has a good sense of pedagogy; instruction is driven by overarching, instructionally sound principles.	● Takes ownership of student progress. ● Shows enthusiasm for new ideas. ● Likes/enjoys students and families.
Participation on teams and committees	*How does the teacher interact with colleagues?*	● Makes valuable contributions; shares resources.	● Seeks input from colleagues and is appreciative of support and feedback. ● Shares ideas and the work of the team.

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Professional Growth Needs by Skill-Level

Skill Level	Primary Characteristics	Professional Growth Need	Useful Feedback Structure
Novice	• Has minimal exposure/experience/ expertise.	Needs to **acquire** concrete understanding of what it takes to be a good teacher.	**Diagnostic Feedback:** *Understand what is/isn't working and why.* Root Cause → Why → Impact → Reflection → Follow-up
Apprentice	• Is building expertise but still needs supervision. • Can perform some more routine tasks independently.	Needs to internalize the standards and principles of effective teaching in order to become an independent problem solver, develop "teacher sense", and **apply** principles to practice.	**Prescriptive Feedback:** *Apply strategies effectively to address root cause for why something is/isn't working; learn how to make choices regarding their practice.* Root Cause → Why → Option A → Option B → Choice Question → Follow-up
Practitioner	• Makes accurate and reliable judgements and monitors the effect these judgements have on students. • Shows both skill and economy in teaching practice. • Can teach others.	Needs help **integrating/ assimilating** skills and principles to develop a seamless practice and adaptive expertise.	**Descriptive Feedback:** *Hold a mirror to teachers so they can assimilate various aspects of their practice in order to sharpen their effectiveness.* Root Cause → Why → Evidence → Reflective Questions → Follow-up
Master Teacher	• Can deal with unusual and tough cases. • Exemplifies best practices, standards, regulations, or ideals. • Practice is seamless.	Needs help **maintaining** mindful practice and continue to **adapt** skills and principles to new, novel, or unpredictable situations. .	**Micro Feedback:** *Help teachers understand why their practice is effective so that they can mindfully adapt their practice to make it even more effective.* Summary → Root Cause → Why → Stretch (Optional)

Identifying the Primary Will Driver/Strategies To Address Will

If Teachers...	They Need...	Give Them...
- Complain they are no longer able to be creative as a teacher - Resist structure - Want to do things their own way - Passively or aggressively resist new initiatives that prescribe how to teach - Find ways to exert control over their environment - Thrive best when left alone - Are good at figuring out how to make things work for them and their students - Have their own unique teaching style and strategies - Complain that they no longer have any free time to plan as they please - Resent that they have to follow a prescribed curriculum and pacing guide - Prefer to simply "close their door and teach - Often come up with innovative ways of teaching - Do not take suggestions or recommendations well and resist prescriptive feedback	**Autonomy**	- Several suggestions or recommendations from which they can choose - Choices about time, task, technique, team, and territory - Descriptive rather than prescriptive feedback in noncontrolling language that implies that they always have a choice.
- Seek novelty and challenge - Constantly tweak their practice - Seek feedback and act on it - Try new techniques, strategies, and resources - Ask for support to attend conferences, workshops, and online courses - Get frustrated when something isn't working how they'd hoped - Ask for permission to try something new or seek funding for some innovative idea - Complain that something is not innovative - Become enamored with the latest technology or technique and attempt to incorporate it in their classrooms - Resist doing things the same way year after year - Complain of being bored	**Mastery**	- Deliberate practice with clear goals and immediate feedback - Novelty - Challenge - Frequent growth-oriented feedback
- Need to understand and embrace the vision and mission in order to be motivated - Need to understand the reason behind an initiative before moving forward - Talk about what's best for children - Have lofty ideals - Have very high expectations for students - Seek to inspire students and be inspired - Justify what they are doing by connecting it to a higher purpose - Get frustrated by discussions of minutia and prefer big-picture conversations - Have clear reasons for why they do what they do	**Purpose**	- Opportunities to set their own professional learning goals - Reasons behind new initiatives, requests, and suggestions - Opportunities to participate in teacher inquiry - A clear vision for the organization and a understanding of their own role in it - Nested praise

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- Focus on forging relationships - Seek approval from the school administration or colleagues - Forge relationships with students before focusing on teaching - Work well on teams - Need social interaction - Share what they are doing in the classroom and additional resources with others - Seek feedback, interaction, and engagement - Able to reach the most difficult students and earn their trust - Tend to justify instructional decisions based on "who" rather than "what" or "why" - May themselves be socially awkward	**Belonging**	- Nonevaluative, casual conversation about teaching - Access to you and others who can help them - Opportunities to work with others - Strategies for forging positive relationships with colleagues and students

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Case Study Analysis

Teacher	Skill Strengths/Needs	Will Strengths/Needs	Coaching Next Steps
Case Study Teacher #1			
Case Study Teacher #2			

Case Study Teacher #1 Vignette

Last week, the teachers attended a workshop on math error analysis as a strategy for helping students clarify their thinking. They all agree to try the new strategy in their classes this week. During your observational rounds, you visit the classroom of Mr. Carter. The students are doing test corrections. At first, you are hopeful to see the strategy being used. Then, you realize the students are correcting true/false responses. Instead of analyzing errors, they are simply changing their incorrect "true" answers to "false" and vice versa. They are not even re-reading the test items.

Later, when you ask Mr. Carter about this activity, he smiles enthusiastically and says, "Aren't you proud of me for trying the new strategy?"

You ask, "What was your purpose in using this strategy for this assignment?"

Mr. Carter looks confused. "My purpose?"

You nod. "Yes, what were you trying to accomplish?"

He looks perplexed. "I just wanted to try a new strategy that we learned about."

You press a bit, "Which of the reasons for using error analysis you learned about in the workshop made sense for your lesson?"

He looks sheepish. "I don't remember those reasons. I just wanted the students not to make the same error next time."

Case Study Teacher #2 Vignette

You hear noise coming from Ms. Jones' room and duck into to see what is going on. Students are openly talking with friends or are fiddling with items. At the front of the room, Ms. Jones is reading the PowerPoint slides. She doesn't notice you because her back is to the class while she is reading each point of each slide until a student gets her attention.

"Oh hello," she smiles and stands up from her seat. "We're just going over some notes." She asks the students to take out some paper to make sure they are, "getting these notes down", even as she assures then that all the slides will be posted to the class website by the end of the day. A few comply, while others roll their eyes and continued their conversations.

Later, you return to speak to Ms. Jones. "So, there are several things I think you need to work on."

"Really, this class usually goes well. You just saw us on an off day. But, OK, sure," she says and smiles a little too brightly. You talk about the off task students and suggest a strategy.

"I've tried that and it didn't work for me," she says without writing anything down. You offer another strategy and she vaguely agrees to try it.

The next time you return, there has been no change. When you broach the subject again, Ms. Jones says, "Well, I tried your idea, but the students didn't go for it."

Will/Skill Verb Matrix

High Will

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Low Will

Low Skill ············▶ High Skill

GUIDE Reduce risks, obstacles, constraints Provide tools, training, guidance, coaching, feedback up front Relax control as progress is shown	**DELEGATE** Provide freedom in job methodology Communicate trust and recognition Develop stretch goals. broaden responsibilities, treat as "partner"
DIRECT Provide clear briefing, identify motives, develop vision of success Structure "quick wins," train/coach patiently, supervise with frequent feedback and clear expectations	**EXCITE** Identify reason for low will Develop intrinsic motivation, incentives, value alignment Monitor and provide recognition to reinforce positive behaviors