Danielson's Framework for Teaching for Classroom Observations

Overview of Classroom Observation Protocols

A teacher's classroom instructional practice is perhaps one of the most important[1] yet least understood factors contributing to teacher effectiveness. The method of video capture and review designed for the Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) project seeks to demystify effective teaching practices in the classroom and, in turn, provide insights into teacher evaluation and professional development.

The video footage recorded during the MET project is watched and coded by highly trained, independent raters. Many of the raters are current or former teachers, some with National Board Certification in subjects they are assigned to watch. These raters are managed and trained by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) to observe the videos and rate the teaching practice on a series of indicators ranging from the teacher's ability to establish a positive learning climate and manage the classroom to his or her ability to explain concepts and provide useful feedback to students. ETS is training approximately 500 experts to rate more than 23,000 hours of videotaped lessons using one or more of the following observation protocols:

1. The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) measure developed at the University of Virginia
2. The Framework for Teaching (FFT) developed by Charlotte Danielson
3. The Mathematical Quality of Instruction (MQI) developed at the University of Michigan and Harvard University
4. The Protocol for Language Arts Teaching Observation (PLATO) developed at Stanford University
5. The Quality Science Teaching (QST) developed at Stanford University

A subset of the videos is also rated using an observational protocol developed by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) and the National Math and Science Initiative (NMSI).

The scores on the observational protocols will be compared against value-added measures for both the statewide standardized assessment and on supplemental assessments. These analyses will establish how closely the observation scores (both overall and domain-level) correlate with improvements in student achievement. (See

[1] Steven G. Rivkin, Eric A. Hanushek, and John F. Kain, "Teachers, Schools, and Academic Achievement," *Econometrica,* Vol. 73, No. 2 (March 2005), pages 417–458. http://edpro.stanford.edu/Hanushek/admin/pages/files/uploads/teachers.econometrica.pdf

www.METproject.org for more information about this process.)

About the Danielson Framework for Teaching Method for Evaluating Classroom Observation

The Framework for Teaching (FFT) is a research-based protocol developed by renowned education expert Charlotte Danielson in 1996. It is one of two protocols used to evaluate both Math and English Language Arts (ELA) lessons across all of the grade levels included in the MET project (the other is the Classroom Assessment Scoring System [CLASS]).

The FFT is aligned with the Interstate New Teachers Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) standards, which represent the professional consensus of what a beginning teacher should know. The FFT divides the complex activity of teaching into 22 components (and 76 smaller elements) clustered into four domains of teaching responsibility:

- Planning and preparation (Domain 1),
- Classroom environment (Domain 2),
- Instruction (Domain 3), and
- Professional responsibilities (Domain 4).

FFT Domains, Components and Elements

Raters score teacher practice at the component level. For the MET project, only Domain 2 and Domain 3 of the FFT are used by raters to analyze video observations:

- **Classroom environment** (Domain 2) encompasses many aspects of the classroom atmosphere, from behavior management, to quality of classroom routines and procedures, to the classroom's overall culture and expectations and the rapport between the teacher and students and among students.

- **Instruction** (Domain 3) measures several dimensions of instructional quality including communication, discussion techniques, ability to engage students, use of assessment during instruction, and flexibility and responsiveness.

Below is a full list of the components that fall within each of these two domains as well as the elements that comprise each component.

Domain 2: Classroom Environment

2a: Creating an environment of respect and rapport

- Teacher interaction with students
- Student interactions with one another

2b: Establishing a culture for learning

- Importance of the content
- Expectations for learning and achievement
- Student pride in work

2c: Managing classroom procedures

- Management of instructional groups
- Management of transitions
- Management of materials and supplies

2d: Managing student behavior

- Expectations
- Monitoring of student behavior
- Response to student misbehavior

Domain 3: Instruction

3a: Communicating with students

- Expectations for learning
- Directions and procedures
- Explanations of content
- Use of oral and written language

3b: Using questioning and discussion techniques

- Quality of questions
- Discussion techniques
- Student participation

3c: Engaging students in learning

- Activities and assignments
- Grouping of students
- Instructional materials and resources
- Structure and pacing

3d: Using assessment in instruction

- Assessment criteria
- Monitoring of student learning
- Feedback to students
- Student self-assessment and monitoring of progress
- Lesson adjustment

Observation Process

Raters using the FFT typically follow a three-step process. First, while viewing the lesson, the rater records anything that will inform the rating using FFT. Second, the rater codes these observations as representing specific FFT domains and components. Third, the rater assesses the level of teaching performance demonstrated within the particular lesson segment for each component. Each observed lesson, therefore, is assigned a series of eight scores, one for each component, comprised of a combined score for each of the lesson segments and accounting for the teacher's performance on each of the elements within each component.

FFT Development and Results

FFT has been subjected to several validation studies over the course of its development and refinement, including an initial validation by ETS. Later studies—including one conducted by the Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE) and others assessing the application of the FFT for teacher evaluation in Cincinnati and Chicago—have identified small but consistently positive correlations between FFT ratings and student learning outcomes.

In addition, these studies identified weaknesses in observer training. Using these findings, the Danielson Group has strengthened the training protocol to require raters to provide a correct rationale for the score, not simply provide an accurate score. This drive toward greater understanding enhances inter-rater reliability and consistency, crucial elements in the validity and teachers' perception of the value of any assessment tool.

For More Information

For more information on the FFT, its history and its developers, please visit www.danielsongroup.org.

About the MET Project

A teacher has more impact on student learning than any other factor controlled by school systems, including class size, school size and the quality of after-school programs—or even which school a student is attending[2]—but currently, there is no agreement among education stakeholders about how to identify and measure effective teaching. In an effort to improve the quality of information about teaching effectiveness, in the fall of 2009, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation launched the two-year MET project to rigorously develop and test multiple measures of teacher effectiveness.

As part of the project, partners from more than a dozen reputable academic, non-profit and for-profit organizations are collecting and analyzing data collected during the 2009-10 and 2010-11 school years from over 3,000 teacher volunteers and their classrooms across Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, Dallas Independent School District,

[2] Steven G. Rivkin, Eric A. Hanushek, and John F. Kain, "Teachers, Schools, and Academic Achievement," *Econometrica,* Vol. 73, No. 2 (March 2005), pages 417–458. http://edpro.stanford.edu/Hanushek/admin/pages/files/uploads/teachers.econometrica.pdf

Denver Public Schools, Hillsborough County Public Schools, Memphis City Schools and the New York City Department of Education. Teachers and classrooms in Pittsburgh Public Schools are also participating in the project by helping researchers with early-stage development and testing of the effectiveness measures before they are tested in the other MET project districts.

The project's data is collected across five critical research areas:

1. Student achievement gains on state standardized assessments and supplemental assessments designed to measure higher-order conceptual thinking
2. Classroom observations and teacher reflections
3. Teachers' pedagogical content knowledge
4. Student perceptions of the classroom instructional environment
5. Teachers' perceptions of working conditions and instructional support at their schools

A close analysis of each of these will help establish which teaching practices, skills and knowledge positively impact student learning and represents a real opportunity for teachers to inform the national discussion on education reform.

The MET project seeks to develop an array of measures that will be viewed by teachers, unions, administrators and policymakers as reliable and credible indicators of effective teaching. By determining exactly what measures predict the biggest student achievement gains, the MET project will give teachers the feedback (including exemplary practices) they need to improve. In addition, a greater understanding about which teaching practices, skills and knowledge positively impact student learning will allow states and districts to develop teacher evaluation systems that will help strengthen all aspects of teaching—from recruitment through retention.

The MET project's final findings will be shared broadly at the project's conclusion in winter 2011-2012.

For more information about the MET project, please visit www.METproject.org or send an email to info@METproject.org.

Note: The inclusion of a given research protocol or tool in the MET project is not an endorsement by either the MET project or its partners of that protocol or tool. In many cases, the research instruments included in the MET project are still being tested and do not yet have verified results associated with them. Other protocols and tools similar or equivalent to those used in the MET project may exist.