Identifying and Overcoming Challenges in Designing Practical Measures of Changes in Teachers’ Practice

Carnegie Foundation Summit on Improvement in Education Sponsor-Hosted Lunch Session

April 5, 2018
Panelist Introductions

- **Amy Feygin**, Senior Researcher, American Institutes for Research (AIR)

- **Kelly Burgess**, Assistant Superintendent, Kannapolis City Schools

- **René Clayton**, Director, Middle School Curriculum and Instruction, School District of Osceola County

- **Kirk Walters** (moderator), Managing Researcher, AIR
Session Objectives

• After this session, participants will be able to:
  – Appreciate challenges related to designing practical measures focused on instructional improvement.
  – Understand potential approaches to measuring changes in instruction as well as the drawbacks and benefits of these approaches.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12:00–12:05</td>
<td>Welcome</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:05–12:10</td>
<td>Overview of Beyond Accountability project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:10–12:20</td>
<td>Spotlight: School District of Osceola County</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:20–12:30</td>
<td>Spotlight: Kannapolis City Schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:30–12:45</td>
<td>Moderated discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:45–1:00</td>
<td>Evaluations and closing</td>
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Overview of Beyond Accountability Project
Why This Project?

• During the past decade, states and districts have invested in developing systems to measure teacher performance.

• In the best of these systems:
  – Educators know the expected teaching standards and receive timely, relevant, and actionable data about their professional practices.
  – Districts align supports and resources for improvement.
  – Staff monitor data about how instructional practices are influencing student learning.

• Unfortunately, not all systems work this well:
  – Implementation often has focused on compliance rather than growth in teachers’ professional practice.
Beyond Accountability was initiated to address challenges related to how well teacher evaluation systems support improvements in teacher practice.

Summer 2016–Spring 2018

Four districts:
- Kannapolis City Schools (North Carolina)
- School District of Osceola County (Florida)
- Jackson-Madison County School System (Tennessee)
- Boone County Schools (Kentucky)
Evaluation system that improves teacher practice and instructional quality

High-quality data and feedback on instruction

Teacher engagement and trust

Aligned supports and professional development in schools and district

Evaluator training

Specificity of rubric

Frequency of observations

Communication process

Evaluation policy

Curriculum/instructional materials

Coaching or peer support

Formal professional development
Project Approach

• **Within-district work:**
  – Ongoing Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycles
  – Quarterly within-district meetings to share progress

• **Cross-district work:**
  – Community of practice
  – Three meetings during course of project
Project Goals

• For participating districts:
  – Instructional quality improves.
  – Teacher satisfaction with opportunities or mechanisms to improve their practice increases.
  – District capacity to engage in improvement efforts increases.

• For other districts and education community:
  – Other districts learn about successful (or unsuccessful) strategies.
  – Other districts learn about methods used to develop, test, and refine strategies.
School District of Osceola County
Problem of Practice and Root Causes

• District-level data show that instruction is more frequently focused on practicing skills rather than engaging students in cognitively complex tasks.

• Root causes:
  – Teachers lack understanding of the instructional framework.
  – Teachers lack understanding of the full intent of the standards and how they connect to the instructional framework.
  – Teachers engage in low-quality planning for instruction.
  – Teachers and school and district leaders do not have a shared understanding of the purpose of the instructional framework.
District Driver Diagram

**Aim**
- Evaluation system that improves teacher practice and instructional quality

**Primary Drivers**
- High-quality data and feedback on instruction
- Teacher engagement and trust
- Aligned supports and professional development in schools and district

**Secondary Drivers**
- Evaluator training
- Specificity of rubric
- Frequency of observations
- Communication process
- Evaluation policy
- Curriculum/instructional materials
- Coaching or peer support
- Formal professional development
Change Strategy 1

• Implement common collaborative planning time with professional development:
  – Guidance on how to use the Marzano teaching map
  – Coaching on how to engage in effective instructional planning

• Participants:
  – 44 K–5 teachers at Highlands Elementary School, Kissimmee, Florida
  – School-based and district instructional coaches
Practical Measures

• **Instruments:**
  – Teacher perceptions survey
  – Instructional lesson plan rubric
## Findings: Teacher Perceptions Survey

### Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree Somewhat</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Agree Strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I understand the Florida standards that apply to my students, including the required levels of rigor.</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>22.7%</td>
<td>63.6%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand the teaching strategies described in the instructional framework.</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>40.9%</td>
<td>47.7%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand how to connect the standards and the teaching strategies in the instructional framework to design my instructional plans and materials.</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>38.6%</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am satisfied with the level of support my school provides for designing instructional plans that connect standards to the instructional framework.</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>31.8%</td>
<td>47.7%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am satisfied with the level of support my district provides for designing instructional plans that connect standards to the instructional framework.</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>36.5%</td>
<td>40.9%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Findings: Instructional Plan Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating (T1 to T2)</th>
<th>Overall (n = 23)</th>
<th>Math (n = 11)</th>
<th>ELA (n = 12)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improvement</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Change</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decline</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating (T1 to T2)</th>
<th>K–1 (n = 8)</th>
<th>2–3 (n = 8)</th>
<th>4–5 (n = 7)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improvement</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Change</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decline</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Change Strategy 2

• Adapt first strategy to help teachers intentionality plan using guiding questions and specific strategies from the instructional framework. Professional development will help teachers:
  – Understand specific instructional strategies.
  – Plan for intentional use of these instructional strategies.
  – Explain how to implement instructional strategies.

• Participants:
  – 24 K–2 teachers at Highlands Elementary School, Kissimmee, Florida
  – School-based and district instructional coaches
Practical Measures

• **Instruments:**
  – Teacher perceptions survey
  – Instructional lesson plan rubric
  – Student work rubric
Findings: Teacher Perceptions Survey (Example)

I understand how to connect the standards and the teaching strategies in the Marzano instructional framework to design my instructional plans and materials.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time 1</th>
<th>Time 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Agree</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>27%</td>
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Change Strategy 3

• The Cycle 2 strategy continued with Grade K–2 teachers and was expanded to Grade 3–5 teachers.

• Four additional schools were recruited to participate in project:
  – Two elementary schools
  – One middle school
  – One high school
Reflections on Practical Measures

• Keeping it simple is key.

• It is easy not to monitor change, but doing so is critical to improvement.

• Collecting different types of data is important:
  – Surveys are easy to administer but limited in the information they provide—teachers are often overly positive.
Problem of Practice and Root Causes

• Teachers do not have sufficient opportunities to learn from one another’s instruction.

• Root causes:
  – These opportunities to learn are *not given the high priority* needed.
  – There is no *supportive structure for peer observation*.
District Driver Diagram

Aim

- Evaluation system that improves teacher practice and instructional quality

Primary Drivers

- High-quality data and feedback on instruction
- Teacher engagement and trust
- Aligned supports and professional development in schools and district

Secondary Drivers

- Evaluator training
- Specificity of rubric
- Frequency of observations

Additional Drivers

- Communication process
- Evaluation policy
- Curriculum/instructional materials
- Coaching or peer support
- Formal professional development
Change Strategy 1

• Pilot a peer observation structure to support teachers in learning from one another.

• Participants:
  – Four teachers
  – One facilitator
  – Four observations conducted
Change Strategy 2

- Refine the peer observation process and implement it with prioritized teachers throughout the district.

- Participants:
  - 86 teachers
  - 11 facilitators
  - 27 observations conducted
Practical Measures

• **Instruments:**
  – Observer reflection
  – Observation facilitator reflection
  – Instructional logs
Findings: Observer Reflection

The support I received while participating in the peer observation process was tailored to my professional development needs.

Participating in the peer observation process was valuable.

- 55% Completely
- 32% To a great extent
- 13% To some extent

- 73% Completely
- 22% To a great extent
- 5% To some extent
Findings: Observation Facilitator Reflection

The peer observation process is valuable for peer observers.

- 71% completely agree
- 29% agree to a great extent

The peer observation process is valuable for teachers being observed.

- 43% completely agree
- 43% agree to a great extent
- 14% agree to some extent
Findings: Instructional Logs

Have you applied your professional learning from the peer observation process in your classroom with respect to the focus of the observation?

- Yes: 68%
- No: 32%
Change Strategy 3

• Embed peer observations into the teacher evaluation process and district professional development system using a mini-observation and feedback process.

• Participants:
  – 86 teachers
  – 18 school leaders
Practical Measures

- **Instruments:**
  - Administrator reflection
  - Teacher reflection
  - Observation and Feedback Tracker
Findings: Administrator Reflection

Administrators’ perceptions of the weekly observation process.

- I was able to schedule weekly teacher observations (n=15).
  - Strongly Disagree: 13%
  - Disagree: 67%
  - Agree: 20%
  - Strongly Agree: 0%

- I was able to complete weekly teacher observations (n=15).
  - Strongly Disagree: 13%
  - Disagree: 33%
  - Agree: 53%
  - Strongly Agree: 0%
Findings: Administrator Reflection

Administrators’ perceptions of the weekly feedback process.

- I was able to schedule weekly teacher feedback meetings (n=15).
- I was able to complete weekly teacher feedback meetings (n=15).
- I felt confident that my feedback was aligned to teachers’ professional development goals (n=15).
- I felt confident in my ability to identify a specific area of feedback that would improve teacher instruction (n=15).

Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strongly Agree
Findings: Teacher Reflection

Teachers’ perceptions of the weekly observation and feedback process.

Overall the feedback I received during the weekly teacher observation and feedback process was:

- Specific (n=76): 36% Strongly Agree, 55% Agree, 8% Agree, 5% Strongly Disagree
- Timely (n=75): 31% Strongly Agree, 57% Agree, 8% Agree, 10% Strongly Disagree
- Aligned to PDP goals (n=76): 29% Strongly Agree, 59% Agree, 8% Agree, 9% Strongly Disagree
- Delivered effectively (n=76): 37% Strongly Agree, 50% Agree, 8% Agree, 10% Strongly Disagree
- Able to be used to improve my classroom instruction (n=76): 34% Strongly Agree, 54% Agree, 8% Agree, 10% Strongly Disagree
Reflections on Practical Measures

- Align practical measure data collection with expected outcome in theory of action.

- Give participants the opportunity to share their experiences using open-ended questions.
Moderated Discussion
Evaluation and Closing