



BEYOND THE NUMBERS CONVENING 2014

Breakout Session Summary

Fast-Forwarding Teacher Evaluation

Re-envisioning Classroom Observation and Teacher Feedback Through the Use of Digital Video

Most states have included classroom observations as an important measure of teacher evaluation. Recent large-scale studies using digital video can address challenges associated with scaling up new teacher evaluation models to ensure teacher support. This session covers some of the difficulties with using video-based teacher observation, and follows up with resources that are available to schools and districts to effectively use digital video for teacher evaluation and development. The session highlights the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) IMPACT evaluation online training platform as an example of a district using digital video to support teacher evaluation and development.

Jon Fullerton, executive director of the Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard University, opened by pointing out that states are revising their teacher evaluation systems. In research such as the Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) Project and NCTE's work, video has been used to measure teacher effectiveness. This session looked at next steps.

Miriam Greenberg, project director at the Best Foot Forward Project, shared BFF's work looking into the question "can video technology improve the observation components of the teacher evaluation system?" Other sectors and professions, including politicians, athletes, and surgeons use video to improve their practice. Difficulties with video-based teacher observation include ensuring reliable scores, auditing video scores by "master" raters, finding time to conduct evaluations, delivering quality feedback, and gaining teacher buy-in.

The BFF project gives teachers a camera so they can submit their best videos. Teachers' best videos are accurate representations of their instruction insofar as videos from the best teachers were consistently better than the next best teachers in the MET Project—in other words, teachers' rankings did not change when the teachers submitted their own videos. "So what if teachers perform for the camera? The ideal situation is that teachers are performing again and again to submit that video to their instruction." BFF is testing video's impact with a randomized control trial, and by working to ensure high quality video and audio, privacy, and security.

Kathy Choi, account manager at BloomBoard, shared BloomBoard's observation tools and how they are used to develop teachers. The online interface allows principals and teachers to refer back to classroom instruction together, so feedback can refer directly to available evidence. All goal-setting, classroom observations, and video observations are consolidated in the online interface, allowing everyone to keep organized and find what they need. The tool has immense possibility, but many challenges including technical issues and time required to implement.

Stephanie Aberger, director of the Align TLF Training Platform at DCPS, spoke about the IMPACT program at DCPS, which uses multiple measures but places the most weight (75% of evaluation) on the teaching and learning framework. The online training platform has helped to get 300 evaluators thinking about the framework—which includes movements toward mastery, checking progress, pushing understanding, and creating a climate of learning—in the same way. Training videos are convenient to view, and ensure that all participants see the same instruction. DCPS uses different types of videos, including snapshots, training clips, and calibration clips.

Tamika Guishard, Filming Specialist at DCPS, explained how the TLF training platform takes “2-dimensional video footage and transforms it into a 3-dimensional classroom experience.” Some training videos are outsourced (e.g., from MET), and these are technically sound, already include artifacts and waivers, and are less susceptible to subjectivity, though they have content and grade restrictions. In-house videos take additional time and effort, though they are more likely to be connected to the district rubric, and they offer greater choice in content. Lessons from DCPS’s video work are that districts should strategically recruit teachers, authenticity matters (filming should not change the classroom), and access and usage should be tracked in a centralized way.