The School Work Context and Teacher Development

Joint work with Matt Kraft and (in part) Susan Moore Johnson & The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers

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Central themes

- School work context affects teacher satisfaction and career decisions
- School work context can constrain or promote teacher effectiveness
- School work context can constrain or promote teacher career development
Four studies

- Johnson, Kraft & Papay (2012). *How context matters in high-need schools: The effects of teachers’ working conditions on their professional satisfaction and their students’ achievement.* Teachers College Record.


Data

- School work context
  - Information reported on surveys of teacher working conditions (TELLS survey – Eric Hirsch, New Teacher Center)
    - Key domains of the work context from the literature
    - Statistical properties of work context items
  - Interviews with nearly 100 teachers in 6 low-income schools in a large, urban school district
  - Massachusetts, using publicly available data
  - SDP partner sites, growing out of human capital diagnostic work
Theme 1: The importance of the school work context

- School work context affects teacher satisfaction and teacher turnover (and student achievement)
  - School environment is correlated with student characteristics – which is driving teacher behavior???
  - The environment, not the students, seems to matter most
  - Mounting evidence that teachers reject the working environments in schools that enroll students of color from low-income families (e.g. Ladd, 2011; Boyd et al., 2011; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003)
Teacher Satisfaction: Working conditions are stronger predictor than student chars.

- Overall Working Conditions (SD) vs. Satisfaction (SD): $0.550^{***}$
- Proportion Low-Income vs. Satisfaction (SD): $-0.681^{***}$
Teacher Satisfaction: Working conditions are stronger predictor than student chars.

Overall Working Conditions (SD) conditional on:
- Proportion low-income
- Proportion Minority Students
- Avg. Student Demographics
- Teacher Demographics
- School Type
- District Fixed Effects

Proportion Low-Income conditional on:
- Overall Working Conditions (SD)

Satisfaction (SD)

0.550***

-0.128***
Teachers are much more likely to intend to transfer out of schools with poor working conditions.

Figure 1. Sample probability that teachers say they intend to transfer and predicted probability from controlled model.
Theme 2: School work context can constrain or promote teacher effectiveness

- We tend to think of teacher effectiveness as fixed, but teacher effectiveness likely depends on context
  - Match
  - School contributions to student test scores
  - School context can make teachers more effective

- Two examples
  - Student discipline and support (from qualitative study)
  - Teacher hiring (from quantitative study)
Theme 3: Work context also matters for teacher improvement

- Clearly, just as there is variation in teacher effectiveness, there is heterogeneity in improvement.

- We look at whether more supportive work environments are associated with greater returns to experience early in a teacher’s career.
  - Includes teacher evaluation and professional development.
Working conditions related to greater returns to experience

Figure 2. Estimated returns to experience for teachers in schools at different points in the work environment distribution.

5% of achievement gap between low-income and high-income students
Putting this together

School work context matters for:

- Teacher satisfaction
- Teacher turnover/retention
- Teacher effectiveness
- Teacher development

Teacher evaluation is part of the context

- Accountability
- Development
Teacher evaluation and development

Figure 3. Teacher performance relative to year of evaluation (Taylor & Tyler, 2012).
Teacher evaluation and development

- Can we help teachers leverage the feedback they receive during formal evaluation into lasting improvements in performance through collaborative partnerships
  - Identify teachers who struggle in specific areas of practice (from evaluation data)
  - Pair them with teachers in the same school who have demonstrated success in those areas
  - Encourage partners to work together throughout the year to deepen and develop each other’s skills

- Qualitative pilot results are promising (for teachers on both sides of the partnership)
Thank you

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Using Teacher Evaluation Data to Inform Professional Learning

Ellen Cushing & Lynn Holdheide

Strategic Data Project Annual Meeting
April 22-24, 2014
Boston, MA
The mission of the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders (GTL Center) is to foster the capacity of vibrant networks of practitioners, researchers, innovators, and experts to build and sustain a seamless system of support for great teachers and leaders for every school in every state in the nation.
Module Purpose and Overview
GTL Professional Learning Module

Overview

- GTL has developed a series of PLMs
  - Using Evaluation Data to Inform Professional Learning
  - Creating Coherence: Connecting Teacher Evaluation and Professional Supports to the Common Core
  - Introduction to Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)
  - Connecting Teacher and Student Social and Emotional Learning to Professional Teaching Frameworks (May)
  - Evaluator Training (June)
  - Understanding Teaching Conditions (June)

- Modules are designed to
  - Provide a national picture
  - Build RCC and state education agency (SEA) staff capacity on particular topics
  - Be customizable for RCCs and SEAs
PLMs include:
- Slide presentation
- Facilitator’s Guide
- Handouts and activities
- Meeting agenda
- Additional resources and support materials
Accessing the PLMs
Using Evaluation Data to Inform Professional Learning
Module Overview
National Picture

Professional Growth in Educator Evaluations: Defined by State Guidance or Elementary and Secondary Education Act Waiver Applications

- Green = Professional Growth or Learning
- Blue = Improvement Only Only

Center on GREAT TEACHERS & LEADERS at American Institutes for Research
Module Overview

- **Goals:**
  - Explain how teacher evaluation data informs professional learning.
  - Practice analyzing teacher evaluation data to inform professional learning.
  - Discuss the challenges and opportunities for using evaluation data to inform professional learning.
Definitions and Assumptions
What Is Effective Professional Learning?

Focused  Active  Collaborative

Ongoing, Embedded, and Differentiated

Adapted from *High-Quality Professional Development for All Teachers: Effectively Allocating Resources* (http://www.gtlcenter.org/sites/default/files/docs/HighQualityProfessionalDevelopment.pdf)
## Shared Definitions: Evaluation Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Sources</th>
<th>Evidence/Data Element Examples</th>
<th>Summary Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Rubric-based observations of practice            | ▪ Percentage of students on task  
▪ Number of higher order questions  
▪ Narrative descriptions, running records                                         | ▪ Practice ratings                  |
| Artifacts                                        | ▪ Unit plans  
▪ Classroom newsletter  
▪ Student behavior plan  
▪ Team action-planning protocol                                      | ▪ Professionalism/practice ratings  |
| Assessments of student learning                  | ▪ Student work portfolio  
▪ Standardized tests  
▪ Student performance assessments                                      | ▪ Student learning objectives  
▪ Value-added measure scores                                                   |
| Student/parent perception surveys                | ▪ Mean standard scores                                                                        | ▪ Perception scores                |
Shared Definitions:
Evaluation Data Use Cycle

- Self-Reflection and Goal Setting
- Formative Evaluation
- Summative Evaluation
Using Evaluation Data for Self-Reflection and Goal Setting
Teacher Self-Reflection and Goal Setting

- In this step of the evaluation data use cycle, teachers take charge of their own growth in the following ways:
  - Analyzing the impact of their practice on student learning
  - Engaging in reflection on their practice
  - Setting focused professional and student learning goals, with concrete steps to get there
  - Actively collaborating with colleagues to problem-solve
  - Adjusting their plans as a result of this reflection
Using Evaluation Data for Formative Feedback
Formative Evaluation

- **Goals:**
  - Provide authentic, specific, and evidence-based feedback on practice.
  - Encourage teacher self-reflection on practice.
  - Identify professional learning opportunities.

- **Activities:**
  - Collaborative conversation(s) between the teacher and evaluator to share evidence, ask questions, and provide feedback
  - Adjustment to goals and plans
  - Connection to resources and supports
Translating Data Into Feedback

- Evaluators can translate evidence about teacher practice into actionable feedback to teachers.
- Such feedback, when delivered effectively, will result in productive conversations and greater likelihood that professional learning will occur.
Characteristics of High-Quality Feedback

- Teachers learn best when feedback is:
  - Tied to specific teaching standards.
  - Specific, detailed, and evidence based.
  - Timely and frequent.
  - Constructive, with effective use of questioning.
Observing Instruction to Build Capacity
Waterford High School, California

Carolyn Viss, chair of the mathematics department at Waterford High School, conducts a coaching session based on classroom observation of a core algebra class. She acknowledges good instructional practices and offers solutions for specific dilemmas. (5:18 minutes)

Discussion: To what extent did this feedback session promote learning? What data or evidence did Ms. Viss refer to in her questions?

Video courtesy of the U.S. Department of Education’s former Doing What Works initiative.

Download video at: https://vimeo.com/84709443. The password is DWWVideo.
Using Summative Evaluation Data for Individual and Schoolwide Planning
Summative Evaluation

- **Goals:**
  - Summarize evaluation data for individual teachers.
  - Identify patterns in teacher and student performance across the school to inform the allocation of resources.
  - Identify professional learning and career opportunities.

- **Activities:**
  - Analysis of individual teacher evaluation data to determine final rating(s)
  - Conversations between the teacher and evaluator about performance trends and patterns
  - Connection of resources, supports, and opportunities for the next evaluation cycle
Activity: Using Data to Plan for Differentiated Professional Learning

- Read **Handout 4**, focusing on the scenario with Ms. Blue and her summative evaluation plan.
- Answer the guiding questions in Handout 4.
- Outline a professional learning plan for Ms. Blue on your chart paper.
- Include the following elements in your plan:
  - Professional learning goals
  - Professional learning activities
  - Success metrics
Activity: Using Data to Plan for Schoolwide Professional Learning

- Read Handout 5.
- As a table group, read the summary ratings data for teachers at Orange School.
- Discuss and share:
  - What patterns do you see in the data?
  - What are Orange School’s greatest areas of need?
  - Based on these data, what professional learning activities would you include in a schoolwide professional learning plan?
Principles of Effective Planning Using Evaluation Data

- Teacher evaluation data help ensure better allocation of resources, including teacher time.
- Human judgment is an inevitable—and critical—piece.
- To fill in the gaps around the data, those closest to the work of teaching and learning should be included in the planning.
- Necessary conditions for teacher learning must exist.
- Professional learning is high stakes!
Group Activity
Group Activity

In your table groups:

- List the **main challenges** associated with using evaluation data to inform professional learning and providing high-quality professional learning opportunities.
- Think about specific challenges at the **state, district and school** level.
- Write a different challenge on each Post-It note
- Lynn and Ellen will collect the Post-It notes and facilitate a large-group discussion
Essential Conditions for Effective Professional Learning

- Structural?
- Cultural?
- Technical?
- Fiscal?
Essential Conditions Definitions

- **Structural**: The policies, programs, practices and structure that need to be in place
- **Culture**: The necessary climate or attitude, including changes in culture, to be successful.
- **Technical**: The technical aspects—skill, expertise, content knowledge—that are necessary to get this work done
- **Fiscal**: The financial supports necessary to do this work or the costs associated with doing this work
# Additional Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What</th>
<th>Resource Topic or Title</th>
<th>Where It’s Available</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summative Evaluation</td>
<td>Observation Data Collection Tool</td>
<td><a href="http://bloomboard.com/schools">http://bloomboard.com/schools</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
More questions?
Contact the GTL Center!

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Advancing state efforts to grow, respect, and retain great teachers and leaders for all students
A Practitioner’s Perspective
Using Data to Inform Professional Learning

Strategic Data Project
April 2014
Emalie McGinnis
1

Time & Tools
2

Relationship, Trust, & Authenticity
3

Aligned & Ongoing Feedback
Inspect what you expect