

MEASURING EFFECTIVE TEACHER OBSERVATION DATA TO SUPPORT UNDER-RESOURCED SCHOOLS IN HONDURAS

A RESEARCH PRESENTATION

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In 1997, a study conducted by the Honduran Ministry of Education found that 14 percent of school-age children were not enrolled in school, 85 percent of which lived in rural areas (Pavon, 2008)—equating to 3000 villages that historically had not been able to provide institutional education programs to their people. To address this need, Proyecto Hondureño de Educación Comunitaria (PROHECO) was formed in March, 1999, deconcentrating teacher recruitment and management to these rural communities (Rondinelli, Nellis, & Cheema, 1983). The educational background of these teachers however, varies widely and they are provided minimal professional development—an opportunity that has been shown to have significant positive impacts on student achievement (Yoon et. al, 2007).

The project, Train for Change (TfC), was launched in April, 2016, under the non-profit (501C3) Students Helping Honduras in El Progreso, Yoro, Honduras with the aim of providing research-based professional development opportunities to networks of these dispersed, under-resourced schools. The TfC approach consists of a two-year cohort model over which teachers are empowered to bring two hundred hours of professional development back to their schools sites. Learning outcomes for these sessions are determined through local context surveys administered during focus groups held at each school. Two primary research questions emerged: how to reliably collect evidence on teacher professional growth in disperse under-resourced schools; and how does the process and review of this data with teachers over time shape their beliefs regarding professional development?

The primary author implemented a first iteration of an observation protocol in July, 2016. These initial observations informed the implementation of a more rigorous observation protocol. In January, 2017, the author utilized a three-part instrument employed by Dr. Jace Hargis to observe faculty at institutions of higher education (Hargis & Soto, 2017). The Quantitative Effective Teaching Checklist (Chism, 1999), Qualitative Field Narrative, and Faculty Flow Diagram (Hargis, 2014) were modified to fit the local primary school context. Eleven preliminary one hour observations of TfC teachers were conducted over the course of six months in addition to semi-structured interviews with teachers to reflect upon the process of the observation protocol. The interviews were transcribed and coded in MAXQDA using a descriptive coding schema.

This paper builds upon the literature supporting iterative design-based instruction (Barab & Squire, 2004), integrating teacher voice in rural, international settings to the professional development research base. The following themes emerged: references to observation evidence, teacher dialogue regarding improvement and control, and teacher beliefs surrounding student learning, their role as a teacher, and the observation process. Through this session, participants will engage with the process of instrument design through the TfC findings, hypothesizing the ways in which this iterative method involving stakeholder input could be applied to further the field of measurement in transformative learning environments. In addition, there will be a dialogue on the role of measurement instruments in shaping teacher beliefs regarding their

professional development, soliciting recommendations as to additional measures of transformative teacher professional learning that may be able to be collected in rural educational contexts.

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