Center for Education Policy Research
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

The Power of Shared Evidence

American Educational Research Association, Annual Meeting 2015

Can evaluation change practice?

- Information Effects from Scores (Tyler/Taylor)
- Feedback (Goe et al., 2012; Hill & Herlihy, 2011)
- Self-Analysis (Sartain et al., 2011)

Empirical evidence on how evaluation can contribute to teacher learning and development is slim.

The Problem with the Post-Conference

"A productive conference is more than a warm interchange between parties. Technical aspects must be carefully attended to. If teachers are to examine their own behavior, they must have the opportunity to examine a virtual mirror of their classroom."

James Sweeney, *The Post-Observation Conference: Key to Teacher Improvement*

"Suppose the mirror started telling lies? Or suppose I covered my eyes… and refused to look at you? All that loveliness of yours would be wasted on the desert air."

Jean Paul Sartre, No Exit

What is the role of evidence?

A study of Chicago's teacher evaluation system, researchers found that when teachers and administrators used an evidence-based tool as the basis for their post-observation conversations, these meetings, "were more structured and focused on instruction," and the use of evidence helped to decrease, "subjectivity during conversations about teaching practice" (Sartain, et.al. 2011).

- Activity logs
- Artifact analysis
- Classroom observation scripts
- Portfolios
- Written self-reflection
- Portfolios with logs

Research Questions

- Does video change the nature of the post-conference conversation?

- What is the mechanism by which video changes the nature of the post-conference conversation?

Video Observation Cycle

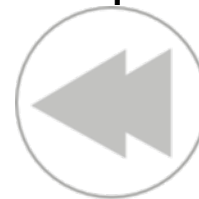Teachers record their classroom lessons.

Teachers select their best video.

Observers watch submitted video

Teachers re-watch with comments

Teachers and observers meet to discuss video.

Methods

Surveys

312 teachers

87 administrators

Treatment control differences by fitting OLS regression models, controlling for randomization block and school type.

For the teacher survey items, standard errors are clustered at the school level.

Focus Groups

61 teachers

36 administrators

4 groups held per site
- TT, CT, TA, and CA

Participants were randomly selected from the site-level sample, constrained by observation completion

Results

Teachers believed they gained a greater self-awareness of their instruction…

Can you identify a specific change in your teaching practice you made as a result of the feedback from your school administrator this year? (1=Y, 0=N)		
T-C Difference (se)	Control Mean	n
.16**	0.55	316
(.05)		

…and pointed to specific areas of increased learning.

How much did you learn this year in about your teaching practices in the following areas:	Opportunities for student participation	Time management practices	Lesson Pacing	Knowledge of main subject area
Treatment	0.21*	0.31***	0.19*	-0.18*
	(0.08)	(0.06)	(0.08)	(0.09)
Elementary	0.09	0.10	0.02	0.27*
	(0.09)	(0.08)	(0.09)	(0.10)
Constant	2.95***	2.74***	2.94***	2.78***
	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.09)
N	312	312	312	311
R^2	0.066	0.076	0.035	0.074

Treatment teachers self-reported lower ratings of disagreement.

Survey Item	T-C Difference (se)	Control Mean	n
How often did you feel the conversation was adversarial? (1="almost always" or "often")	-.06~	0.12	316
	(.03)		
How often did you and the observer disagree about what actually happened during the lesson? (1="almost always" or "often")	-.03	0.06	318
	(.02)		
How often did you and the observer disagree about the appropriate score for the lesson? (1="almost always" or "often")	-.06*	0.08	318
	(.03)		
Overall, how helpful was the feedback you received from your school administrator this year in helping you to improve your teaching? (1="extremely" or "quite")	.2***	0.35	316
	(.05)		

Treatment admins self-reported lower ratings of disagreement.

Survey Item	T-C Difference (se)	Control Mean	n
How often were teachers defensive as you discussed your observation notes with them? (1= "never" or "rarely")	-.28***	0.35	97
	(.07)		
How often did you and the teacher disagree about what actually happened during the lesson? (1="never" or "rarely")	-.03	0.04	95
	(.03)		
How often did you and the teacher disagree about the appropriate score for the lesson? (1="never" or "rarely")	-.04	0.07	96
	(.04)		
How likely are the teachers who participated in the study this year to seek professional development opportunities as a result of feedback you gave them during a post-observation conference? (1="highly likely" or "somewhat likely")	-.01	0.48	97
	(.1)		

What is the mechanism by which video technology made reports of learning and teacher-admin agreement possible?
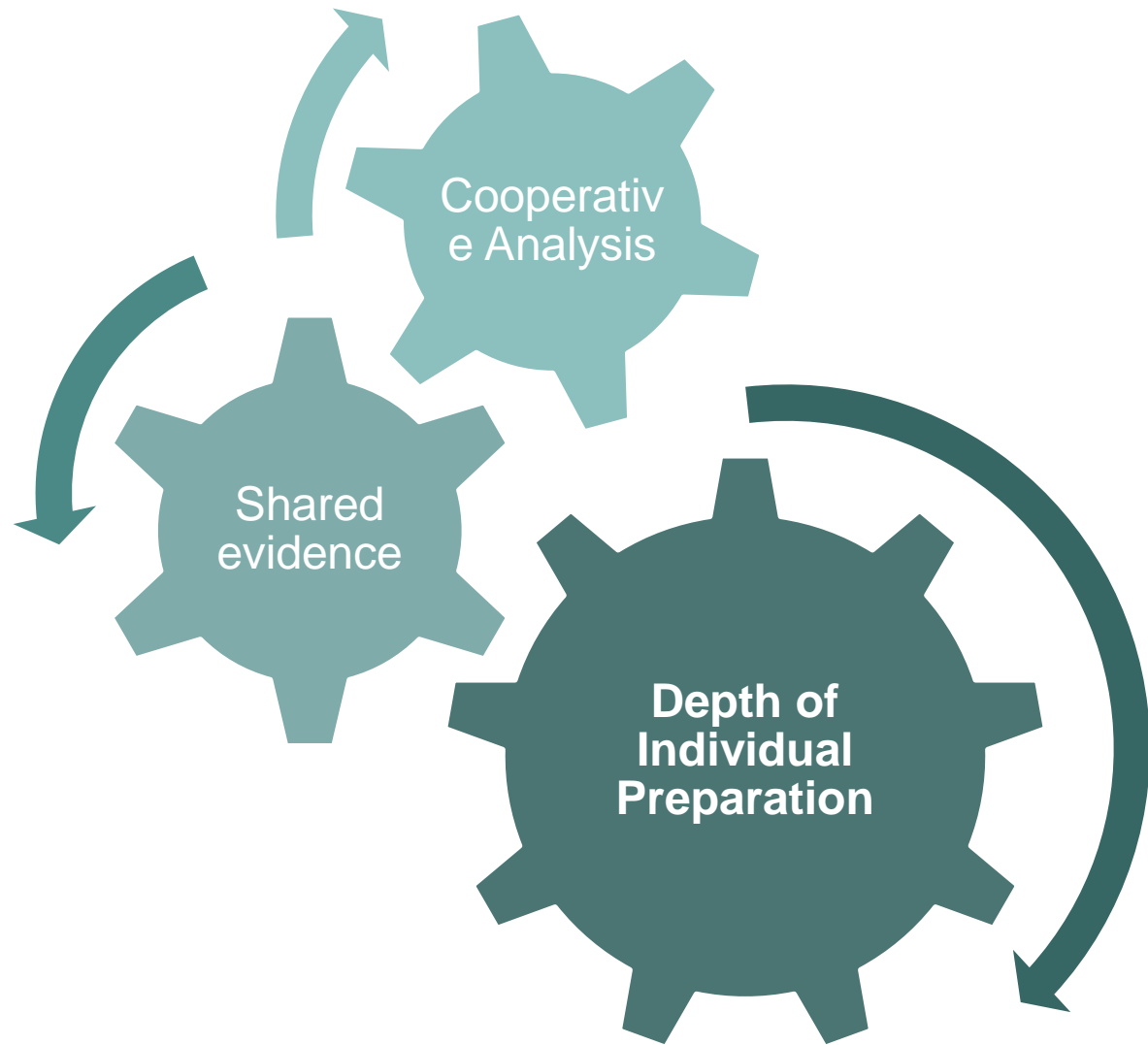
Focus Group Emergent Themes

Preparation for Feedback:

Teacher Self Analysis

I watched the video and tagged it as the video went along just as a way to kind of help myself evaluate myself. And then I felt like sharing that…helped my administrator to understand and see.

Focus Group Emergent Themes

Preparation for Feedback:

Administrator Analysis

They can rewind and stop and actually take their time and think and, you know, put all those things into perspective of what they know, their experiences. And I think it was more personal with the video rather than let me come in 30 minutes. And the whole time, you know, they are watching, but they have to write so much, you know? But having that video there all the time, they can go back

Focus Group Emergent Themes

Memory as Evidence

I did not find [traditional observation] very helpful, because many weeks had gone by and I did not remember the lesson. I mean I had my lesson plan, but it was really hanging on by a string in my imagination… That didn't help me…support what I had done or to defend why I chose to do what I did.

Focus Group Emergent Themes
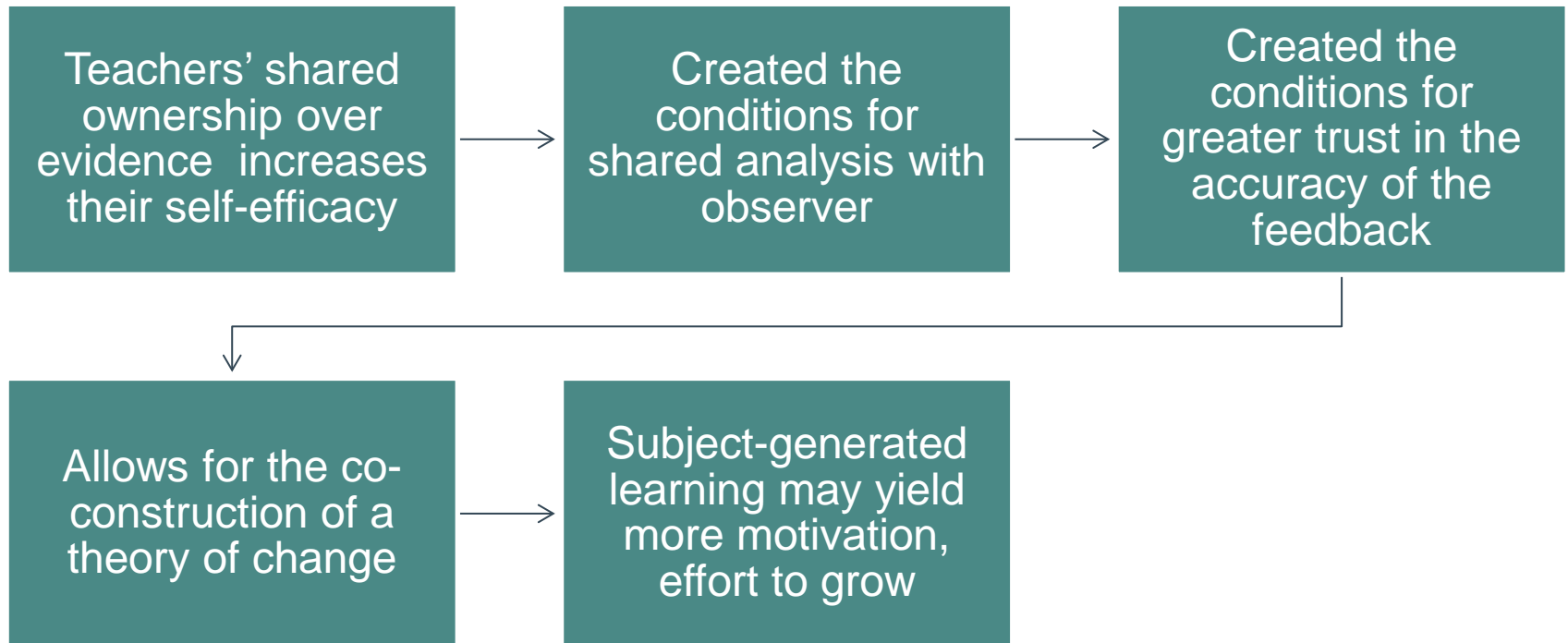
Video as Evidence

One of the lessons that I chose was actually a particularly horrible day. When I talked about it with some of the other people in my hallway, they were like, why don't you try this or try that… [After seeing the video] my administrator came up with some suggestions. It was nice to have somebody else be able to actually see it, instead of just my perception of what happened.

Focus Group Emergent Themes

Cooperative Analysis

As we sat through our post-conference, he would go back to certain things in the video ,and say, okay, I've made this comment here, let's go back and check it out for a couple of seconds. And we'd watch. And then he'd say, well, did you see this or see that, or I liked the way you handled that. I really liked that point of reference that you could pop it up right away.

Synopsis

Teachers' shared ownership over evidence increases their self-efficacy	Created the conditions for shared analysis with observer	Created the conditions for greater trust in the accuracy of the feedback

Allows for the co-construction of a theory of change	Subject-generated learning may yield more motivation, effort to grow

Future Directions

Observe admin-teacher debrief

- Relational Attributes (e.g., defensiveness)
- Teacher vs. Admin talk
- Video Reference
- Student focus
- Parallel noticing

Measure actual teacher change

- Do teachers implement strategies in subsequent lessons?
- Do changes show in growth scores?