Supporting Rater Accuracy and Consistency in Classroom Observations

October 20, 2011

Roger Fry and Rob Ramsdell
Cambridge Education
Presenters

Roger Fry  
Professional Lead, Teacher Evaluation Systems

Rob Ramsdell  
VP, Cambridge Education  
Director, Tripod Project
Roadmap for Today

- Context and background about Cambridge Education
- Overview of our general approach to effective classroom observation
- Details related to implementation
- Questions and answers
Cambridge Education is Part of the Mott MacDonald Group

- We work in over 140 countries
- From 200 permanent offices
- On some 16,000 projects
- 90% in the public sector
- Over 14,000 staff
- Employee owned
### Cambridge Education in the US

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Work</th>
<th>Projects with States, Districts and Charter Management Organizations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Large Scale Teacher Evaluation Projects</td>
<td>MA, CT, NY, NJ, VA, NC, FL, DE, TN, MI, IN, MN, TX, CA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• School Turnaround and Transformation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• District Accountability and Reform</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Leadership Development at all Levels</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Two Components in Our Support to Districts and States

Teacher Evaluation & Feedback Systems

- Tripod
- Student Surveys
- Effective Classroom Observation
What Drives Us?

- Working in Partnership
- Building Local Capacity
- Focusing on Student Learning
- Delivering High Quality
We draw on staff and associates from around the world and are known for effectively managing large scale projects

- Over 1400 schools reviewed in NYC in 2007
- Over 600 administrators trained in Hillsborough, Florida in 3 months in 2010

We don’t sell a package, but instead tailor our approach to suit local needs and budget requirements

- Train observers (raters) ourselves
- Train a portion of observers
- Build local capacity to train observers, providing quality assurance
Roadmap for Today

- Context and background about Cambridge Education
- Overview of our general approach to effective classroom observation
- Details related to implementation
- Questions and answers
A Path to Improved Outcomes

Effective Teaching Pathway

Multiple measures of effectiveness → Accurate teacher evaluation → More meaningful tenure → Differentiated pay based on effectiveness → Strategic placement of teachers → Targeted PD and other teacher supports → More effective teachers → BETTER STUDENT OUTCOMES

Source: Gates Measures of Effective Teaching Project
Featured Examples in Florida: Hillsborough, Pasco, Polk, Pinellas, Highlands, Okaloosa

These examples selected because they

• Represent a range of models, tailored to local needs and budget constraints

• Focus on capacity building for rater consistency and reliability
Our Assumptions in This Work

• The quality of teaching is the single most important factor in student learning, research tells us.

• Teacher evaluation systems must be rigorous, valid and reliable.

• These systems must be trusted by all stakeholders.
Technical Assistance, Training and Development

• Rater training, certification and reliability training

• Pre-lesson observation meeting and post-lesson observation feedback training
Cambridge Education’s Way Forward

Cambridge Education supports:

• All rubrics, to help measure teacher effectiveness
• Multiple observers/evaluators to triangulate judgments
• Formal and informal observation tools with feedback
• Agreed prescriptive professional development
• Mentors for new teachers/induction programs
• Extensive training programs for evaluators
The Process: Formal Observations

- Pre-Observation Conference (pre-observation questions)
- Observation of lesson (selected scripting)
- Post-Observation Conference (summary form with strengths, areas for development, and next steps)
## Types of Observation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formal Lesson Observation</th>
<th>Informal Observation</th>
<th>Walk Through Observation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30-60 minutes in length</td>
<td>15-20 minutes in length</td>
<td>4-7 minutes in length</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Script to collect evidence on 16 components</td>
<td>Script to collect evidence on components related to one Domain</td>
<td>Check evidence next to specific look-fors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Must have pre and post observation conference</td>
<td>No pre or post conference necessary</td>
<td>No pre or post conference necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate components and record data</td>
<td>Rate components and record data</td>
<td>Record data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Roadmap for Today

• Context and background about Cambridge Education

• Overview of our general approach to effective classroom observation

• Details related to implementation

• Questions and answers
Six Days of Training Includes

- 2 days of face to face training (to learn how to script and use the rubric to make judgments about teaching and learning) – this is a change of focus from teaching to student learning
- 2 days of shared observation practice in real-life classrooms with a coach
- 1 full day of coached observation training with 2 pre-lesson conferences, 2 lesson observations, and 2 post-observation conferences in real classrooms (serves as certification process for evaluators)
- Half day paired observation calibration exercise after 3 months
- Half day training on saving information and computer tablet training
Timeline: An Individual Trainee

- DAY 1: First Day face to face training - 1 trainer with 20 trainees
- DAY 2: First Day in school – 1 trainer and 4 trainees, calibration
- DAY 3: Second Day face to face training - 1 trainer with 20 trainees
- DAY 4: Second Day in school – I trainer and 4 trainees, calibration
- DAY 5: Third Day in school – 1 trainer with 1 trainee, calibration and certification
- DAY 6: Computer training and paired observation calibration exercise after 3 month’s observations

Typically, Districts ask for their Administrators to complete their training over 3-4 months. In Hillsborough, the first 630 Administrators were trained by 15 Cambridge trainers in 3 months, August – October 2010.
An essential part of the process that leads to accurate lesson component ratings:

- Training sessions consider what the evidence for particular components looks like and how to differentiate between one performance level and another.

- Administrators working in pairs or small groups observe a lesson, record the balance of evidence, rate all observable components and compare ratings, citing evidence, finally agreeing ratings.
Calibration

Essentials:

• Administrators need at least 10 practices using DVDs and live lessons in school before they are ready to rate for real in their schools.

• It takes very small group and individual training to refine administrators’ skills. Personalized feedback.

• Administrators and other observers need a thorough understanding of what each component rating means in the classroom and how to record evidence.
CE works with all frameworks and rubrics and adds a process for scripting lessons, and pre and post lesson conferences.

CE implements the lesson observation rubrics chosen by our clients, offering advice to ensure they work effectively.

- We can work with existing lesson evaluation rubrics and protocols.
- We can help create new evaluation rubrics and protocols.
CE is working with the Gates Foundation, AIR and Empirical Education to implement an online calibration tool.

There is a data platform that hosts the scoring.

This is in a pilot stage and is ultimately intended to keep a check on the accuracy of rater judgments and to validate the lesson observation rubrics.
Expected Outcomes

- Detailed calibrations of lesson components
- Accurate feedback to teachers and open conversations between administrators and teachers
- Well chosen next steps, leading to improved teaching and consequent student achievement
- Teachers are thinking more about student learning
- Principals are looking differently at teaching and learning
Roadmap for Today

• Context and background about Cambridge Education

• Overview of our general approach to effective classroom observation

• Details related to implementation

• Questions and answers
Question and Answer Period
Contact: Rob Ramsdell

Email: rob.ramsdell@camb-ed-us.com

Web: www.camb-ed-us.com and www.tripodproject.org

Tel: 781-915-0005