Nathan Jones

The Day Reconstruction Method:
A New Tool for Measuring Teachers' Work, Work Contexts and Affect

Abstract

For the past 15 years, teachers and the quality of their teaching have been major focal points of education policy in many countries. In this context, there is a strong need for valid evidence on teachers and their work. We argue that the current array of tools for measuring teacher quality and the factors that influence it needs to be expanded. We believe that having better tools for understanding teachers' work will not only provide critical information about how aspects of the school environment shape teacher quality, but will also help researchers and policymakers better understand critical related challenges such as early departure from the profession, teacher burnout, and teacher dissatisfaction.

This proposal describes our efforts to develop and validate the Day Reconstruction Method (DRM). The instrument holds promise for capturing rich evidence about teachers' work activity, characteristics of the contexts in which it occurs, and teachers' affective responses to their work. An important advantage of the DRM is it captures the simultaneous occurrence of these constructs, potentially yielding insight into aspects of teachers' work that have historically been difficult to study. In the proposed session, we will begin by discussing the need to attend to teachers' time use, affect, and work context, highlighting gaps in the current measures of teaching used in the field. Then, we will introduce the DRM and will describe our current validation efforts, including early pilot data if available by the time of the convening.

In sum, we believe that the DRM instrument will give the field a useful new tool that provides critical information. The instrument will also create a portrait of teachers' work and work contexts that will differ in qualitatively important ways from that revealed through commonly-used measurement tools such as observations, "checklist" evaluations, and teacher self-report surveys.