The TAP System for Teacher and Student Advancement: A

Background

Over the past decade, federal and state educational policymakers have enacted multiple reform initiatives in support of improving teacher effectiveness, emphasizing teacher-level accountability systems that come along with, typically peripheral and theoretical systems of teacher-level professional support. Federal legislative acts such as Race to the Top (2011) and the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) waivers awarded to states that adopted stronger teacher accountability systems (Duncan, 2011), for example, prioritized accountability PHFKDQLVPV WLHG WR PHDVXUHPHQWV RI WHDFKHUV¶ LPSDFWV RQ WKHLU VWXGHQWV¶ DFDGHPLF performance over time, with a tangential purpose that these mechanisms also yield objective data that could be used to support WHDFKHUV¶ LQVWUXFWLRQDO L improvements at the same time.

Respectively, these stronger teacher accountability and support mechanisms continue to be highly (and often solely) reliant XSRQ PHDVXUHPHQWV RI WHDFKHUV¶ YDOXH-added and observational dimensions, whereby VWDWLVWLFLDQV FDOFXODWH WKH UHODWLYHO\ ³PRUH object LYH´ YDOXH-added measures to assess the ³YDOXH´ D WHDFKHU ³DGGV´ WR RU GHWUDFWV IURP standardized student achievement indicators IURP WKH SRLQW VWXGHQWV HQWHU D WHDFKHU¶V classroom to the point students leave, and whereby practitioners construct the relatively ³PRUH VXEMHFWLYH´ REVHUYDWLRQDO V\VWHP measures to capture latent teacher effects by breaking down teacher effectiveness into a set of tangible and scorable factors (e.g., organization, student engagement, time management). Ideally, these observable factors can also be reduced, quantified, and then used DORQJVLGH WKHLU UHODWLYHO\ ³PRUH REMHFWLYH´ FRXQWHUSDUWV (L.H. WHDFKHUV¶ YDOXH-added estimates) for similar teacher accountability and support purposes, although in terms of teacher support observational systems are purposefully designed to provide teachers targeted and timely feedback to help teachers improve their professional practice.

Notwithstanding, and despite the passage of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2016) which reinstated state-level control over VWDWHV¶ WHDFKHU HYDOXDWLF VXFK ³PXOWLSOH PHDVXUH´ ED\ as much controversy over the appropriateness of both measures as valid representations of WHDFKHUV¶ HIIHFWV 7KLV HVS consequential decisions (e.g., teacher merit pay, tenure, termination) are to be attached to the output derived via both measures.

Consequently, because not until recently have such observational tools been used within such high-stakes policy environments, have observational systems undergone the research required to support such high-stakes decision-making purposes, or rather warrant the high-stakes decisions to which such observational systems have been increasingly tasked. Put differently, because these systems were not designed for high-stakes accountability but rather informative purposes, whether using observational systems for high-stakes teacher evaluation purposes warrants much more consideration, not to mention research into whether such measurement sysn/Subtype/Footer>BDC q0.00000912 0 612

National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET) TAP System for Teacher and Student Advancement (hereafter referred to as the TAP; see NIET n.d.a., n.d.b., n.d.c., n.d.d., n.d.e.). These (and really all other) observational systems, if they are to be used for consequential decision-making purposes, require examination

warranted factor extractions on review of scree plots, Kaiser criterion (eigenvalues greater than 1.00), size of rotated factor loadings, and factor interpretability.

Based on results obtained from the EFA analysis, inclusion/examination of a primary common factor seemed warranted. In this regard, we reformulated four additional CFA models to evaluate the appropriateness of both second order and bi-factor solutions including a single common factor model. All other sampling, procedural, and other methodological details of our study can be found in Sloat, Amrein-Beardsley, and Sabo (2017).

Findings

As noted, our findings suggest that the posited three-factor TAP observational framework (see Table 1) yields a poor-to-marginal fit (i.e., the factor and items do not function or "hold together" per factor as posited Rather a dominant first- or sole factor dimension was present suggesting that the TAP observational rubric is measuring one versus three dominant factors as marketed and claimed. That is, an overall "teacher effectiveness" factor was observed, as measured by the 19-items when combined or collapsed together, that should *not* instructional competence, and increased student academic performance over time, again as incentivized (Jerald & Van Hook, 2011; NIET, n.d.d.).

However, results from this study suggest that reliance on different factor-level scores to identify targeted practices, initiate interventions, and consequentially infer on DWWULEXWHV RI WHDFKHUV¶ SURIHVVLRQDO effectiveness may be suspect, in this and perhaps other cases.

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