

Exploring the Use of Clinical Interviews in Teacher Development

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Many consider records of practice a powerful means for not only promoting teacher growth but for assessing teacher growth as well. Clinical interviews are one such record of practice. This discussion group will provide an opportunity to consider the value of clinical interviews for teacher educators and researchers. We hope that colleagues who have used other records of practice will join us in exploring the ways in which clinical interviews differ from and augment other records of practice as research instrument and a professional development tool.

One-on-one clinical interviews with students have most typically been promoted for helping teachers understand how children think about mathematics (Buschman, 2001; Ginsburg, Jacobs, & Lopez, 1998; Long & Ben-Hur, 1991; Schorr & Lesh, 1998). We believe that interviews can also help teachers develop the expertise needed to respond to that thinking and implement the kind of instructional practices called for by reform documents. Specifically, interviews provide teachers with opportunities to practice eliciting and building on children's thinking by engaging them in discussions of problems. Because the development of this expertise takes time, videotapes or audiotapes of interviews can provide windows into teachers' developing practices thus making interviews a promising context for assessing teacher change and, in particular, the degree to which their practices align with reform recommendations. When interviews are used by researchers as a means to promote and assess teachers' growth, analytical frameworks are required to examine them.

The organizers of this discussion group have been developing analytic frameworks for evaluating teacher-conducted interviews in separate projects (Crespo & Nicol, 2003, Haydar, 2003, Jacobs & Ambrose, 2003, Moyer & Milewicz, 2002). While the teachers in the projects differ according to teaching experience (preservice vs. in-service teachers) and geographic location (U.S. vs. Lebanon), we have identified similar phenomena in teacher interviews through our informal discussions and by studying one another's writing. For example, we have all noticed that the way in which teachers ask questions and the order in which they ask such questions when they conduct clinical interviews with students can tell us a great deal about teachers' thinking and teaching practice in their classrooms. However, our characterizations differ, and we are interested in comparing and contrasting our frameworks in greater depth. We propose to apply each framework to the same interview as a way to illuminate the similarities and differences between the frameworks. In so doing we hope to better understand each framework and its advantages and constraints. This group session will help to begin to develop a common vocabulary for characterizing teacher/student interactions which should prove useful to researchers and teacher educators.

In the discussions, we will explore the following questions:

- Are interviews reasonable proxies for the kinds of interactions teachers have in their classrooms?

- How do interviews differ from other records of practices as measures of teachers' practice?
- What are the benefits and limitations of using interviews as a means of assessing teacher learning?
- What are the benefits and liabilities of each of the frameworks?
- Can the frameworks shared by the organizers be used for novice and experienced teachers?
- Can these frameworks be used across mathematics content areas and tasks?
- How can these frameworks help promote teachers' growth?
- What might teachers learn by observing and conducting interviews and how does this differ from what they learn from other analyzing other records of practice?

In our first session we will:

- Invite the audience to share their experiences with clinical interviews
- Invite audience to generate 'what they might look for' if they were asked to 'assess' a one-on-one teacher-student interview
- Share 3-4 frameworks
- Invite the audience to analyze similarities and differences among the frameworks
- In our second session we will:
- Watch 3 (maybe only 2) videoclips of problem solving interviews (3-5 minutes each) with transcripts
- Invite the audience to provide an analysis of the each videoclip from each framework's perspective
- Discuss (with input from the audience) differences between the analyses
- Consider the possibility of integrating the frameworks

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