

Department of Mathematics and Statistics Colloquium

The Influence of Content and Other Contextual Factors in Measures of Teaching Practices

Job Candidate

Abstract: Current policies require states to develop teacher evaluation systems that include both teacher performance and student growth data. Many districts use observational assessments to gauge instructional practices as the main indicator of teacher performance. However, there is a scarcity of empirical studies on the validation of using certain assessment to measure teacher quality for the purpose of evaluating teachers. In particular, we know little about how content influences teachers' teaching practices and their observational scores. The question of subject-specific and subject-area-specific practices is particularly important for teachers who are evaluated without regard to the content under current teacher accountability frameworks. In my dissertation, I am using the data from *Measures of Effective Teaching (MET)* to examine the content sensitivity of observational scores obtained from several well-established observational assessments, and the influence of other contextual factors in teachers' ratings. The results of the study contribute to the corpus of literature on teacher quality, especially the research program of validating the interpretation and use of observational scores produced by these widely used assessments. Moreover, this study provides empirical evidence about how the content and the conscious use of observational assessments should factor into modifications of current teacher evaluation systems.

**Thursday, November 12 at 3:45 in Roop 103
refreshments at 3:30**