Examining Interrater Agreement Analyses of a Pilot Special Education Observation Tool

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This paper reports the results of interrater agreement analyses on a pilot special education teacher evaluation instrument, the Recognizing Effective Special Education Teachers (RESET) Observation Tool (OT). Using evidence-based instructional practices as the basis for the evaluation, the RESET OT is designed for the spectrum of different instructional needs found within special education classrooms. The RESET OT informs what Danielson (2011) maintains are the two features of a teacher evaluation system 1) ensuring teacher quality and 2) promoting professional development. In June 2012, six special education teachers participated in a data coding session using the pilot RESET OT to evaluate video observations of special education instructional practice from the 2011-2012 school year. The teacher coders received an introductory training session to the RESET OT, and participated in two whole-group coding sessions before completing individual coding assignments. The results of the interrater agreement analysis report weak to no agreement within specific instructional practices, indicating the need for 1) additional research and development on the RESET OT 2) repeating the data coding session using a group of teacher coders who have received in-depth training on the RESET OT and evidence-based instructional practices, and 3) further investigation into the specific components of evidence-based instructional practice and how these might be applied across settings.

Keywords: special education teacher effectiveness, special education teacher evaluation, value-added model, evidence-based instructional practice, interrater reliability