

Guidelines for the Use of Data Collected by the High-Quality Teaching (HQT) Study

The high-quality teaching study has collected, and continues to collect, a broad range of quantitative and qualitative data related to elementary school organization, leadership, instructional practices, curriculum coverage, and student achievement in partnership with Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), a large metropolitan school district in Maryland. The study is funded by the Interdisciplinary Educational Research Initiative (IERI #0115389), a combined effort of the National Science Foundation, the U.S. Department of Education, and the National Institutes of Health. The basic research questions are:

- What do highly successful 4th and 5th grade teachers do to help students achieve above predicted rates in the areas of mathematics and reading?
- What do these teachers do to expand learning opportunities for all students and help close the achievement gap in foundational skills between traditionally high and low performing groups?
- Do teachers change their pedagogical practices over time? If so, what is the nature of those changes?
- Are documented changes in teachers' practices associated with shifts in their learning or that of their students?
- What, if any, educational policies and instructional programs (including technology) influence teaching practice?
- How consistent are different indicators of teaching quality: nominations, classroom observations, and student learning gains?

Use of Data

The HQT research team will consider proposals to use these data that address related research goals. However, the team places two important restrictions on the use of these data -- namely, these data may not be used for any purpose that conflicts with the expressed goals of the HQT Study (as described in the research proposal to the National Science Foundation dated February 2, 2001), nor may these data be used for any purpose that conflicts with the rights of principals, teachers, and others who agreed to participate in the study (as described in the HQT Informed Consent Form approved by the University of Maryland Institutional Review Board on November 16, 2001). All uses of these data must safeguard the goals of the research study as well as safeguard the rights of participants.

Procedures

HQT research team has developed a series of procedures to ensure the appropriate use of all data collected as part of the study. These procedures include the use of semi-public and restricted datasets to safeguard the identities of participating schools, administrators, teachers, and students, and a required review process for access to HQT data for the purpose of analyses not directly related to HQT funding proposal.

Semi-public and restricted datasets. The HQT study constructs two types of datasets: semi-public and restricted. Semi-public datasets include no identifying information regarding schools, administrators, teachers, or students. Identification codes are randomly generated and unique to the HQT study. All data analyses are done with these datasets. All members of the HQT analysis team and faculty have unlimited access to these data for the primary purposes of the study. However, these datasets should not be given to anyone or used for purposes outside of the study without the expressed permission of the HQT review panel (see below).

Restricted datasets include identifying information about participants or information that could be linked to identifying information through SEA or LEA records. These datasets are used to merge institutional records with HQT records. Access to these data are restricted to members of the HQT analysis team for the purposes of cleaning records, monitoring data quality, and developing the semi-public files. These datasets may not be used for any other purpose, and access to these data will be restricted and carefully controlled to safeguard the identity of participants.

HQT review panel. Faculty researchers and a representative of MCPS have the responsibility of reviewing and approving use of data collected as part of the HQT study. The purpose of the HQT review panel is to ensure that the proposed study does not conflict with the goals of the HQT study and that the rights of participants are sufficiently safeguarded. Researchers who wish to use these data for purposes other than those specified in the HQT funding proposal must submit a one-to-two page written request to one of the primary research investigators for the study (Drs. Linda Valli or Robert Croninger). The request should include a brief description of the proposed study, including research questions, methods, and the HQT data to be used as part of the study. Primary consideration will be given to those faculty, students, or school personnel who are or have been directly associated with the HQT project. Under some circumstances, the proposals of those external to the HQT project will be considered, provided that the proposed analyses are deemed related to the project goals, conform to the restrictions set by the project, and acknowledge the project's principal investigators and funding agency. If access to the data is granted, the review panel will inform the researcher of acknowledgements that should be made in the publication and presentation of results.

Questions

If there are questions about the use of any data collected by the HQT study, please contact the principal investigators:

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