

# Observation Protocol Presentation - SCRIPT

## Slide one

Welcome to the introductory presentation to the Stanford/SFUSD observation protocol to identify patterns and characteristics in the instruction of English learners. This protocol is guided by a fundamental question: how do we measure the implementation of quality of instruction in English learner pathways? As we will learn in this presentation, this protocol is the product of more than one year of collaboration between a team of researchers from Stanford University and a number of educators in San Francisco Unified School District. We want to acknowledge the leadership of Special Assistant to the Superintendent Christina Wong and her team of administrators and coaches (...). The Stanford team built on previous work by Prof. Sean Reardon and was led by Prof. Claude Goldenberg, supported by (...) from the Stanford graduate school of education. The project counted on the invaluable facilitation of California Education Partners directed by Dr. Laura Wentworth and supported by Ada Ocampo.

## Slide two

In this presentation we hope that you will gain a meaningful overview of the context that led to the genesis of this observation protocol. As we developed it in successive stages of piloting and reassessment, we crafted descriptors that are specific and intentional in the use of their words. We also collected information about interrater reliability. Both things we hope to share with you today. Last, but not least, we hope to guide you in a basic exercise of observation using the protocol and provide some guidance as to how it can be used with reliability. Ultimately we hope that you will come out of this presentation with a desire to further engage in dialogue about the meaning of instruction and its impact in your context without which this protocol per se would lack full meaning.

## Slide three

The ongoing partnership between San Francisco Unified School District, the Stanford Graduate School of Education and California Education Partners steadfastly addresses perceived gaps between research and practice. The English Learner Pathways project together with the many other projects ongoing in this partnership are a systematic attempt at building bridges between researchers and practitioners by finding a common definition of relevance. Both the academic products and the impact on student learning are considered as related constructs the need to be addressed.

This partnership thrives on the advantage of finding these three institutions in close proximity in San Francisco's Bay Area. Our team engaged in this project with the belief that frequent meetings and the possibility of repeated observations in the classrooms were critical to our success. These projects are sustained in the hope of adding to their growing field that is concerned with making partnerships in education as meaningful as possible. In this respect the role of California education partners, its

facilitation and logistic support together with the incentive fund managed by the Stanford Graduate School of Education proved to be a critical component of this partnership.

#### **Slide four**

This project took place in San Francisco Unified School District and focused on different programs that are offered to support English learners. The first is called English plus, known in other places throughout California as Structured English Immersion or SEI. In English Plus instruction is carried out fundamentally in English in all subject areas. Second, the Dual Language Immersion pathway brings together English Learners and English Only students to learn both English and the target language in varying proportions. The common model followed in San Francisco is an 80/20, meaning that students start receiving 80% of the instruction in the target language in evolving proportion until reaching 50% for each language by fifth grade.

A third model considered in the study was the Biliteracy Pathway which clusters bilingual programs that used to be known as early and late exit. While the design is similar to dual language immersion, the population in these programs is for the most part English learners.

While not considered during the development of this protocol, San Francisco Unified School District also offers a Secondary Dual Language pathway in which students take two courses in the pathway language.

#### **Slide five**

In this slide we see the number of dual immersion programs by language in the district with the blue bar meaning elementary level, red meaning middle school and green high school. For example, the most numerous group of dual immersion programs is in Spanish and English. In the graph we see how there are nine dual immersion programs at the elementary level, five at the middle school level and one at the high school level in San Francisco Unified School District.

We encourage you to see the diversity of programs offered by looking at the district program guide which is also part of this package.

#### **Slide six**

In the same fashion as in slide five, we see the number of biliteracy programs in elementary, middle and high schools. As we mentioned before biliteracy follows a similar structure to dual language immersion but the population is composed of English learners.

#### **Slide seven**

Part of the motivation for this observation protocol is the results obtained from a quantitative study led by Prof. Sean Reardon and Prof. Ilana Umansky on the levels of reclassification by program in San Francisco Unified School District. Reclassification entails that formerly classified English learners have obtained the language proficiency and academic performance that allows them to exit the English learner category with all that implies.

Consider as an important reference that the data pool for the study spans over 10 years, between 2002 and 2012, which makes the study extremely valuable for the tremendous amount of data points. On the y-axis observe the percentage of students being reclassified. On the X axis we have the progression of grades where students could have been reclassified in California. One important observation emerges from this graph: starting in fifth grade there is a reversal in the reclassification trends with biliteracy and dual language immersion programs obtaining higher reclassification percentages than English class. As a team of committed practitioners and researchers we asked one question: what is happening in the classroom that leads to these data?

### **Slide eight**

In this graph the performance of English learners in the California standardized test, known as CST, English language arts is considered. This test has been discontinued and replaced by the current Smarter Balanced Assessment. However, it remained the data source for academic achievement in language arts during the time of the study by Prof. Reardon and Rachel Valentino. As in the previous slide, several questions emerge with regards to what could be happening in the classroom that leads to these results. It is noteworthy to point out that the progression of scores for dual immersion students grows from below par in second grade to matching in fifth grade and clearly outdoing the results of comparable English learners in other programs by seventh grade. This is also true if we compare the results with the state average, represented with the black line in a black triangle in the graph, which almost perfectly overlaps the trajectory of English plus students.

### **Slide nine**

Our project and the resulting protocol address the conceptual changes brought by the new ELD standards and the ELD/ELA framework in California. As you can see in this graph, we have conceptualized language support for English learners as instruction happening throughout all content areas, or integrated, and in a separate segment where language is the main focus, i.e. designated ELD. The observation protocol is designed to be used throughout all these scenarios and transcends specific curricula or subject matter peculiarities to focus on instructional arrangements that support English Learners.

### **Slide 10**

Whether you are part of San Francisco Unified School District or another educational organization, you may find commonalities in the motivation behind this project. San Francisco Unified is striving to provide quality instruction in the array of offerings available to English Learners. However, it is understood that each pathway is distinct and responds to language needs differently. Moreover, we have seen in previous slides the difference in achievement and reclassification across pathways. All these motivations reflect a common need for accountability. The district is using this protocol connected to the new ELD standards and the Common Core Standards to produce a unified, common observation protocol across the district.

### **Slide 11**

The observation protocol takes as a point of departure the old observation protocol commonly used for accountability implementation of the Lau consent decree. This, in conjunction with the ELD standards and other existing ELD documents in San Francisco unified were considered in designing the structure of the observation protocol. Ultimately the protocol consists of three sections interconnected as shown in the image: language development opportunities, meaningful access for English learners and formative assessments.

#### **Slide 12**

Our team started this research with a question in mind: to what extent do classrooms in three of San Francisco's EL pathways demonstrate adherence to district best practices and existing research on effective practices for English learners? Much of our work was oriented towards aligning local practices and common understandings and what research has been able to document so far in this surprisingly underresearched area. Many of these conversations held during the year 2014 and beyond would resemble the conversations that you may have had in your organization about the meaning of any specific practice. We expect that many of these questions arise as you read the protocol and as you try to calibrate with other observers.

#### **Slide 13**

For the sake of documenting our process and disclosing how this protocol was put into practice before scaling up, let us describe the research process. An initial observation protocol was developed based on the foundational documents, as mentioned earlier. This draft was piloted by iterations of paired observations: pairs of observers saw the same instructional segments, used the protocol to document the practices present and finally reviewed what they had checked as observed and the concepts and understandings underlying these checks. Once the second draft was developed based on these findings, a second piloting phase took place in a similar fashion. The data was analyzed and we were able to come up with an interrater agreement that we will be discussing in the next slide. Similarly we were able to come to common agreeable definitions of what the descriptors meant, which we captured in the attached guide to the protocol.

#### **Slide 14**

In this graph we see the total number of observations carried out by paired observers, which is 35. 12 in the English plus pathway, 12 in the dual language immersion pathway, and 11 in the biliteracy pathway. The overall agreement between paired observers was 82.8%, which gives us a fairly positive level of confidence in the protocol. This graph also describes the minimum level of agreement that any item got overall and by pathway, and the maximum level of agreement reached by any descriptor. The bottom line is that across all 56 items in the protocol and across all 35 lessons observed in the second piloting phase, raters agreed 82.8% of the time.

#### **Slide 15**

This slide shows a potential use of the data collected. In the Y axis we have the percentage of times in which any given item was observed by one or two observers. The one on top means hundred percent, that is all 35 observations. On the X axis we see all protocol items in a growing order. B 14 was never observed and on the other extreme a 14 was observed more than 90% of the time. When identifying what each descriptor entails we may come to a certain reading of instructional patterns in our data collected across observations.

#### **Slide 16**

In this sample chart we can see how different descriptors/practices fare across pathways. For example, item A9 refers to the facilitation of oral interaction in the classroom, particularly those in which the student decides to address the teacher. It was significantly present in all English Plus observations but much more limited in the other pathways, with a 74% agreement between paired observers. We may want to consider a hypothesis for what has happened in these observations for such differences. For this purpose we may want to revise the qualitative notes in the teacher/student columns. Similar comparisons can be carried out with the other items, leading to the formulation of other conjectures and/or explanations.

#### **Slide 17**

We celebrate your interest in best practices that support English learners, and your desire to observe them in the classrooms using this protocol. However, we cannot emphasize enough how the key of implementation is the agreement on what is meant by which practice among observers. For that purpose we are going to model how we would organize a calibration exercise.

#### **Slide 18**

First, take five minutes to read section A, understanding the concepts and/or getting ready to share and raise questions. In calibration you do want to share your background information about the object of observation and come to a clear consensus on how that practice is collectively defined. Our experiences in teaching and observing will definitely have influenced our personal understanding of instructional elements and we bring that unique expertise to the table. For this purpose, we will focus on the first two descriptors: setting objectives and eliciting background knowledge and connecting to previous learning.

#### **Slide 19**

Let's focus on setting the objectives. Now, read the descriptor once more, the explanation and the examples provided. In the next slides we are going to discuss examples and provide feedback. We will discuss as a group whether we think that the provided objectives qualify under the observation protocol or not.

#### **Slide 20**

Now, in pairs, discuss the following objective: “okay, kids, we’re going to learn how a windmill works with a few activities that I have for you.” Take two minutes to see how this objective reflects or not the descriptor and subdescriptors in A1. Follow to the next slide once your discussion is over.

### **Slide 21**

Now discuss in the big group your opinions about this objective. Indicate which boxes you would have checked. Where appropriate, argue why. Follow to the next slide once your discussion is over.

### **Slide 22**

In our rationale this objective does not meet all the subcomponents specified. This objective does not contain a larger goal reflecting wider understandings, such as the functioning of machines or their sources of renewable energy, for example. We could not consider “doing activities” as an explicit definition of what the process would be like. This objective does not state what is the ultimate outcome that can be seen and assessed by the peers or the teacher. Ultimately, there is no reference to a language objective and or linguistic skill involved, which in this case could have been “describe.”

It is common to have different groups of people come up with different rationales and expectations as to what a learning objective is or should be. Many are based on different backgrounds and professional development experiences that as learning communities we have had. Ultimately, this protocol is trying to prompt a common understanding or, at the very least, to promote the conversation among observers so that they can create their own common understanding.

### **Slide 23**

And now, for a second objective: “today we’re going to make a poster about the lifecycle of frogs and you will differentiate the stages.” Take two minutes to see how this objective reflects or not the descriptor and subdescriptors in A1. Follow to the next slide once your discussion is over.

### **Slide 24**

Now discuss in the big group your opinions about this objective. Indicate which boxes you would have checked. Where appropriate, argue why. Follow to the next slide once your discussion is over for our analysis of this objective.

### **Slide 25**

In our rationale this objective meets all the subcategories of the objective descriptor. We have a wider goal, lifecycle; a process showing how learning would happen, designing a poster; an observable outcome that we can assess, the poster itself; and a language skill, differentiating, which entails describing and comparing and contrasting.

Again, aside from agreements or disagreements, the importance rests on your group of observers having a common understanding. Objectives can be written on the board or swiftly stated, which makes

it a particularly complex category. We encourage you to develop your own agreements on the meaning of these categories provided in the protocol. Then, adhere to them.

### **Slide 26**

Now, let's focus on background knowledge and previous learning, descriptor A2. Read the descriptor again, the explanation and the examples. Now, in pairs, take two minutes to discuss the differences between the concepts and the anticipated implications/realizations that these may take in the classroom. Follow to the next slide once your discussion is over.

### **Slide 27**

Now, if you're in the company of other people, let's share the outcomes of our discussions. Follow to the next slide once your discussion is over.

### **Slide 28**

Now get ready with a copy of the protocol. We will be using section A while observing an instructional video lasting five minutes approximately. This time we will focus on descriptors A1 to A6 only. As you observe instructional practices, mark them accordingly in your observation form and take time to write down what the teacher and the students do. Importantly, once the video is over make sure that you have marked all the boxes that you are intending to mark and you do not leave any box unchecked by accident.

### **Slide 29**

Please, click on the link to view the video. You will view the video from the start until approximately minute 5.

### **Slide 30**

Let's now discuss what you observed. Share with others the items that you checked. What is your evidence? Discuss this over five minutes. Then, in the next slide, we will share our own results for this video.

### **Slide 31**

These are our observations. In descriptor number one we checked "goal" since the teacher makes clear that the overarching purpose of the lesson would be to enable students to identify main idea and details in expository text. Likewise, we checked the language objective which could be fulfilled by "identify" as a communicative function. At this point in the observation, there is some ambiguity regarding process and observable learning outcome. The teacher mentions a sketch and the students seem to be familiar with this practice. Perhaps later on, if we were to remain in this "classroom" we can see that this sketch is the very process of fulfilling the goal as well as the observable outcome. If this were the case, "process" and "observable learning outcome" would have been explicitly addressed and we could check these boxes too.

In descriptor number two, connecting with background knowledge and previous learning, we see how the teacher tried to retrieve previous experiences from the students when asking about soldiers in white.

In descriptor number three, sketch is identified and reviewed and also camouflage. The teacher puts a definition on the board and shows a picture exemplifying camouflage. The students engage in conversations regarding the nature and application of camouflage.

Therefore, with respect to descriptor number four, we see how the teacher has prompted the students to engage in discussions about how camouflage works when asking them about the relationship between a frog in a picture and camouflage.

In descriptor number five we see that there is student to student conversation in the format of think pair share, student to teacher interaction initiated by the teacher in the form of IRF, and the teacher also addresses the students and the whole class, as when asking them to repeat objectives. We do note that the repetition of objectives is in itself not a very productive communicative situation but the rigor of instruction and communication is rated elsewhere. Hence we see the importance of getting a full picture of the protocol, with descriptors dissecting aspects of instruction that are regularly interwoven.

Lastly we do not have information to determine if there is a strategy for the grouping of students in the class. This is something that can be determined more easily if documents like the ones mentioned at the top of the protocol are provided prior to the observation: daily schedules, ELD plans, classroom profiles and ELD standards in any event classroom.

### **Slide 32**

After this presentation you may consider the next steps in moving forward. We do recommend that you reflect on the purposes and scope of your own use of the protocol and how this could improve instruction in your site or context. Our team discourages the use of this protocol for any high-stakes decision-making or evaluative purposes. Second, we do recommend that you review closely all the materials included in this package so as to gain a full understanding of the work involved. Last, we recommend that you undertake this process with the team with which you may have time to build consensus on the instructional concepts and time to carry out some calibration exercises like the one modeled in this presentation.

### **Slide 33**

Thank you very much for your time and interest in the SFUSD/Stanford observation protocol . If you have any questions, reach out to...