



NCTE Webinar Synthesis: Professional Development

Improved teaching and classroom learning are the ultimate goals of teacher evaluation and observation systems. Having those systems linked to targeted professional development can ensure that process moves beyond the evaluation results.

The instructional frameworks, with their specific criteria for teaching proficiency, provide rich opportunities for professional growth.

Those opportunities open up after an observation takes place, and teachers receive their ratings. In the post-observation conference, the evaluator and educator together decide what's needed to address shortcomings in their teaching practice.

“No matter what we do, what it boils down to what are the next steps, so the teachers can change their behaviors for the better, and improve the life chances for the students,” said Robert Ramsdell, vice president, Cambridge Education. “We need to make sure teachers make the next steps, and we sometimes need to work with the teachers to make sure they achieve them.”

[Click her to learn more about TAP's online training and certification portal from Kristan Van Hook of NIET](#)

Districts are developing myriad ways to align professional development to address specific dimensions included in the instructional frameworks—be it asking higher-order questions, or managing behavior issues in the classroom. Some use podcasts, so teachers can learn while they're commuting to work or getting exercise. Others districts have crafted face-to-face workshops that target concepts teachers need help addressing.

Increasingly popular are online platforms with video clips of master teachers that provide authentic examples of what it takes to achieve a top rating. Educators can study the video presentations to discern how they can transform their professional practice to meet the framework's standard.

[Click here to see Kristan Van Hook present an example of a TAP training module](#)

Certain systems have designed structures that provide incentives for teachers to learn. In some districts, teachers will be observed up to four times a year, with the final evaluation rating not determined until the completion of the school year. The earlier observations provide specific areas for teachers to focus on to improve their standing for their final rating, which could determine whether they earn tenure or performance pay.

The National Institute for Excellence in Teaching has developed an online professional-development system for the state of Tennessee's TEAM framework. Tennessee, one of the first states to develop statewide teacher-practice standards, began with a video library as a resource



for evaluators to understand what it takes to earn a “2” or a “5.” That archive has since been opened to teachers in all districts, with 90,000 educators now able to view online videos of master teachers through the state’s online portal.

[Click here to hear Kelly Burling talk about how Pearson customized on demand professional development](#)

The library has more than 120 hours of video, with many lessons shot in split-screen, which allows viewers to see both what the educator is teaching and how the students are responding. The library has a search engine, so teachers can target their area of need and find the video from which they could learn.

The training modules tend to be short, and direct, with tangible examples of proficiency on particular indicators within the framework.

Pearson Education, through its Teacher Compass program, has developed an online system for teachers providing them access to the evaluator ratings on their district’s instructional framework and rubric. If the teacher scores poorly on certain indicators, the program will suggest on-demand professional development videos, accessible through a click on the platform, to address those shortcomings.

[Click here to see Pearson’s collaboration portal, including its Educator Development Suite](#)

The Pearson platform includes a collaboration area, resembling a Facebook group, where teachers and administrators can post comments regarding professional development opportunities. In addition, the Pearson Educator Development Suite provides more tools for individualized professional improvement, with information on student performance and feedback from evaluators.

“Teachers have a growth trajectory, just like their students,” said Kelly Burling, Pearson Education’s director of educator effectiveness. “You can’t target professional development unless you know where you are.”

[Click here to hear Kelly Burling talk about Pearson’s role in Educator Effectiveness](#)

Summary prepared by David McKay Wilson.

Copyright © 2013 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, used in a spreadsheet, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopying, or recording—without the prior written permission of the Center for Education Policy Research at the Harvard University.

To order copies of this summary, contact the Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard University, 50 Church Street, 4th Floor, Cambridge, MA 02138. Phone: 617-496-1563 Email: cepr@qse.harvard.edu