



NCTE Webinar Takeaways: Technology in Observation and Evaluation

Observation and evaluation systems are intricately tied to technology, which provide the framework within which they operate. Administrators record evidence of teaching proficiency on mobile devices. Online professional development modules are aligned with teaching standards, and master teachers demonstrate best practices via video clips. Complex psychometric models, meanwhile, crunch student and teacher performance data to develop ratings that have important consequences for educators.

Building technical capacity can present significant challenges for school districts rolling out their new evaluation systems. But utilizing technology can ease the transition and improve efficiency for administrators who are charged with observing and recording scores for each teacher least once, and as many as four times, during each school year.

Technology may potentially alleviate some of the work of evaluators as they collect the evidence of teaching proficiency, and record that data in accordance with the rubric that categorizes teaching practice. Using laptop computers or mobile devices, evaluators can record evidence they gather in observations into formatted programs directly linked to servers that store and process that data. Tim Daly of the New Teacher Project (TNP) says that “real time” collection of data is essential.

[Click here to hear Tim Daly from TNP talk more about the importance of having “real time” data collections systems in place](#)

Video plays a central role in both evaluator training and teacher professional development. Vendors have created rich video libraries to provide evaluators examples of evidence of teaching proficiency rationales of scores. Evaluators use the videos to practice their scoring before entering the classroom.

Teachers, meanwhile, increasingly view these video libraries to view examples of teaching mastery within the instructional frameworks that are used to judge them. The state of Tennessee has developed an online video that’s now available to 90,000 teachers.

[Click here to hear Tim Daly talk about the importance of timely data collection at the district level](#)

Several vendors have developed their own platforms to support the evaluation and observation systems. TNP has developed custom tools to store observation data and provide schedules for data collection, so evaluators know when to turn in their quarterly observation results.

Teachscape’s Reflect Walk system is a data collection application that provides for mobile data collection and analysis and lays out a classroom observation process that sets up a framework for evaluator-teacher discussions and monitoring an educator’s progress. Its Reflect Live system sets up a framework for teacher reflections, lesson artifacts, and observer notes that creates a platform



for interaction between evaluator and teacher. Teachscape's Reflect Video system create opportunities for districts to upload videos of best practices, which can be scored, and shared within the district's professional community.

Teachscape, which bases its model on the work of internationally renowned expert on teacher effectiveness, Charlotte Danielson, uses its extensive video library to develop its training program. Teachscape's program uses 21 hours of training on 12 online modules, with more than 100 master-scored videos.

[Click here to hear more about Teachscape's Rater Proficiency system for rater training](#)

[Click here to see an example of how online video clips are master coded by Teachscape](#)

Teachscape videos drill down into the various components of the instructional framework, and shows distinctions in the levels of performance, such that an evaluator can see, for example, the difference between a "high 3" and a "low 3" on certain components.

Pearson Education has developed myriad platforms for districts and states that provide integrated systems. In Idaho and Kentucky, Pearson developed a system that handles teacher ratings, identifies mentors for teachers, and links to the district's human resources department to monitor teacher improvement progress.

Pearson's Educator Development suite consolidates professional development resources and activities, creates schedules for observations, and tracks the observation process. The suite also has space to record student perceptions, artifacts of teaching and learning, and growth in student achievement.

Pearson's Teacher Compass software makes the link between teacher evaluations and professional development opportunities, with the program suggesting various improvement plans, based on their ratings. Those plans can include online instructional videos available at the Teacher Compass portal.

[Click here to learn more about how Pearson customizes online platforms for districts and states to manage teacher professional development.](#)

Summary prepared by David McKay Wilson.

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