

Observation Calibration Training

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) is using Observation Engine™ to improve the calibration of teacher evaluators. Observation Engine is an online tool that uses classroom videos to ensure accurate and reliable classroom observations. With this tool, North Carolina educators can access observer calibration events & reporting that provides practice with rating and helps increase rater agreement to target scores. The online platform provides classroom videos to observe instruction, and rate teachers using the North Carolina Educator Evaluation System (NCEES) rubric used to evaluate teachers. Participants receive immediate feedback as to the suggested ratings and supporting evidence for that particular rating.

In the pilot of the Observation Calibration Training (OCT) resources during the 2014-15 school year, NCDPI worked with administrators from 20 LEAs. The analysis of scoring data showed statistically significant scoring improvement from the first calibration assessment to the second. In addition, the improvement in scoring was directly related to the number of exercises each observer completed; the more *Lessons* observers completed, the more their scoring improved. Survey and focus group feedback documented positive responses on the experience.

During the 2015–16 school year, NCDPI rolled out the OCT to administrators across the state. OCT is structured to be individual and self-paced. However, survey data from the pilot suggests that participants reported greater benefit from the process when it was facilitated by a leader in their LEA/Charter. A recommended Facilitator’s Guide for district leaders was provided if districts decided to participate as a group. This implementation focused on establishing a collaborative element to the experience, encouraging administrators to engage in conversations around the videos, the rubric, scoring, and classroom observation in general. The goal is to enhance the experience for participants and help foster a supportive community resource for teacher evaluators.

The complete process includes a Scoring Study at the beginning of the OCT that serves as a pre-test and another Scoring Study at the end of the OCT to determine growth. Lessons within the OCT include 2 full video lessons lasting an entire class period and 17 mini lessons that are element specific. These 17 observable elements are identified in the N.C. Professional Teacher Standards.

If you have questions regarding the OCT, please contact Kimberly Simmons, kimberly.simmons@dpi.nc.gov