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Integrating Teachscape and the FFT for Professional Learning

The effective use of the FFT requires that an ecosystem of tools and services evolve to support it. Certainly observers and teachers benefit from live, hands-on training on the design rationale and content of the instrument itself, but educators need a host of other supports in order to realize the full potential of the FFT. Parenthetically, any validated instrument for assessing high quality teaching requires such an ecosystem. Teachscape has developed such a system to support the FFT.

In the course of this session we will explore the Teachscape tools, content and services that have evolved to support the FFT.

The session will begin with a software system that we call *Focus*. *Focus* includes tools that prepare observers to develop a deep understanding of the FFT, through robust, interactive online training; then to practice their skills by scoring sample video-lessons online; and finally to assess their proficiency at using the FFT by taking a six hour online proficiency assessment. This test determines whether observers can accurately differentiate “bias” from “evidence,” and accurately score on eight components of the domains 2 and 3 of the FFT.

We will then introduce a software system called “Reflect” which we developed to enable teachers and observers to engage in a co-constructed lesson observation process, where both observer and teacher compile evidence of the what occurred in the lesson, score that lesson according to the FFT and engage in extensive conversation about the strengths and weaknesses of the lesson, according to the rubric.

Finally, we will walk through a software tool called “*Learn*,” where teachers build professional learning plans based on the data from their FFT evaluations and access professional learning resources to explore new strategies to improve their practice. They can also film and reflect on their own practice using a tool we call “Video Channels.” We will spend a considerable amount of time discussing the *processes* by which educators persist at the instructional improvement cycle using the FFT, as we find the development of these processes to be the most challenging area of our work. Whether called “instructional rounds, “professional learning communities,” data teams,” or “grade level study groups,” schools struggle to get groups of educators to persist at a rigorous, data-driven process for analysing and continuously improving instruction.