

Peer observation

Peer observation involves teachers observing each other in order to learn from what they observe, from feedback they receive, or both. Those involved in the observations agree how they want to conduct them and what they want out of them. The most important feature of peer observation is that it is supportive and constructive. The prompts that follow are to help you to set up, carry out and reflect on your peer observations, either as a pair or as part of a larger team.

Getting started

1. What is the purpose of the peer observation? (Who is learning from whom?)
 - The observer is learning from good practice observed.
 - The teacher is learning from feedback.
 - Both of these.
 - Other.
2. How is the above agreed? (For example, negotiation between observer and teacher, agreed as whole team if more than two involved.)
3. Is there a focus for the observation?
 - A specific aspect of good practice that has been identified and the observer is hoping to learn from through the observation
 - The teacher has requested feedback on a specific aspect of their teaching because, for example:
 - a. they feel it is good
 - b. they think it needs improving
 - c. they have been working at improving it
 - d. they are trying out new ideas
 - A teaching and learning approach agreed within the team that all members are trying out.
4. Are there any other protocols/ground rules that need agreeing?
5. Will there be a pre-meeting and any lesson documentation provided in advance?

After the observation

6. How and when will you de-brief on the peer observation, for example:
- as a pair (with guidelines?)
 - verbally
 - followed up by written notes?

(See Sheet 1 for reviewing the peer observation.)

7. How will you review the experience as a whole team?

Reflections on a peer observation

The framework below gives prompts for reflection, verbal discussion or feedback after the session. The order and range of prompts can be tailored to suit the particular purpose or focus of your peer observation. For example, you may wish to focus only on positive aspects of a session or you may want to produce separate prompt sheets for the teacher and the observer.

After the discussion the teacher and/or observer may wish to make a note of any ways in which they will experiment as a result of the session. The form **Experimenting and reflecting** can be used for this.

Teacher self-evaluation

- I think ... (part/aspect of the session) went well because I ... (what the teacher did) and the learners ... (include learner response if possible)
- I think ... (part/aspect of the session) went less well because I ... (what the teacher did) and the learners ... (include learner response if possible)

Observer feedback

- I think/agree ... (part/aspect of the session) went well because you ... (what the teacher did) and the learners ... (include learner response if possible)
- I think/agree ... (part/aspect of the session) went less well because you ... (what the teacher did) and the learners ... (include learner response if possible)
- From observing this session I learned ...
- I will (do differently/try out) ...

Teacher

- From this session I learned ...
- As a result I will ... (do differently/try out/continue to do)

Your notes and 'experiment' could form part of your professional development portfolio.

Sheet 1

Experimenting and reflecting

Planning

1. What will you try out as a result of the peer observation (as teacher and/or observer)?
2. Which learners will you try it with?
3. Who will support you/buddy with you (if appropriate)?
4. How will you evaluate your 'experiment' (eg reflection and self-assessment; peer reflection/feedback; learner feedback)

Feedback and evaluation (based on evidence from 4 above)

5. How did it go?
6. What have you learned that you can use again?

Next steps

7. What will you do next?
8. Do you have any additional comments or suggestions for teachers and/or managers about your experience of taking part in this project?