Autonomous peer observation cycle

Introduction

This is a self-access activity designed to encourage you to get involved in a structured cycle of peer observations. The activity includes the cycle structure that each peer observation should move through and in the materials section, you can find a number of peer observation tasks that you can use with a colleague. These tasks have been designed to be informal and to encourage mutual sharing of expertise rather than evaluative.

This activity draws on materials and ideas presented by Florencia Ramos and Mariela Masuyama in their presentation ‘Developing remote teaching through observation.’


Time: You could continue this cycle through any number of lessons.

Aim: To make peer observation a constructive part of your professional development.

Preparation:

- Find a colleague who you respect and who also wants to develop their teaching.
- Look through the observation tasks in the materials section and see which one would be most appropriate for you.

Procedure:

- Meet with your peer/colleague and choose an observation task together.
- Give your peer observer a copy of your lesson plan before they observe your lesson.
Teach the class while they watch and follow your plan. Note: If you are teaching remotely, you can record the lesson for them. The observer should follow the lesson plan as they watch and make notes of any points for feedback on the different stages of the plan.

After the lesson, you should both take some time to think and reflect on the lesson before you meet up.

After reflecting on the lesson, you should both meet up for a conversation and talk through the observation task and share your reflections and insights.

After you have discussed the lesson, take some time to reflect again and think about how you would like to use your next observation cycle.

**Materials:**

**Similarities and differences**

The observer watches and makes notes of things that they do differently in their own class.

After the lesson, think/talk about:

- How they were different
- How the different approach impacted on the lesson
- What they learned from the differences

**Peer reactions**

While watching the lesson, the observer makes notes under headings.

**Something that:**

- Surprised me
- Confused me
- Inspired me
- Amused me

After the lesson, share the list and discuss.
Stolen goods
While watching the lesson, the observer identifies they would steal to use in their own lessons.

After the lesson they discuss the stolen goods, what the observer likes about those things and how they think they would impact on their own students’ learning.

Things to keep and things to change
While watching, the observer makes notes of 2 – 3 things they would keep from the lesson and 2 – 3 things they would change.

After the lesson, the teacher does the same thing. Then they compare lists.

Discuss how they would expect the changes to impact on the lesson.

Leaving the plan
While watching, the observer makes notes at any point where you leave or change the lesson plan.

After the lesson, discuss why you changed the plan and the impact of these changes.

Technology interventions
While watching the lesson, the observer makes notes about any technology use and its impact on the lesson.

After the lesson, discuss why it was used and how it impacted students’ learning. Talk about other technologies that could be used in the lesson.
Additional resources

Peer observation panel discussion

- Taking place over 45 minutes, this discussion includes presentations from Huma Riaz and Anastasia Nikulenko and leads into a participant-led discussion around the issues raised in each of the two talks.

[https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/peer-observation-panel-discussion](https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/peer-observation-panel-discussion)

I can see clearly now: rethinking teacher training observation tasks

- As tools given to trainees when they watch peers or experienced teachers, observation tasks aim to develop awareness of teaching methods. However, we have been wondering whether they prove as effective as hoped for in prompting reflection. This talk will present findings of research using observation tasks with a different focus also discussing the principles of task design.

[https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/i-can-see-clearly-now-rethinking-teacher-training-observation-tasks](https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/i-can-see-clearly-now-rethinking-teacher-training-observation-tasks)

A guide to continuing professional development – formal observations

- Formal observations are part of the performance management process in a learning centre. They may have a developmental and/or an evaluative function. This guide provides valuable information and suggestions on how to make formal observations effective and useful.

[https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/guide-continuing-professional-development-formal-observations](https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/guide-continuing-professional-development-formal-observations)