



Cambridge English

Teacher Development

Doing peer observation as part of teacher research

Aims

- To help teachers develop ways of learning from their peers through well-planned peer observation

Materials required

- None

Appropriate for

- Teachers with any level of experience

There are several ways in which teachers can develop in their profession. These include reading research studies, attending workshops, doing research, discussing pedagogical issues with colleagues, keeping diaries and reflecting on their teaching practices. There are also online interactive opportunities such as online courses, webinars and talks, and discussion forums and communities. Teacher learning by observing colleagues can also be very effective if properly conducted and accompanied by pre- and post-observation activities that involve the observee and observer. Peer observation is a process rather than a product from which both parties can and should benefit. Observing peers only once may not necessarily lead to full understanding of their classroom practices; therefore, it is essential that two colleagues should set up a plan to perform a series of observations that are supported by a critical discussion of main points of the observed lesson. This follow-up interaction may also require them to identify the differences and similarities in each other's practices. It is also critical that they monitor explicitly the influence of peer observation and discussions on their development and learning. These aspects will be introduced throughout the task.

Before the observation

Activity 1

Answer the following questions with your colleague.

1. What can you learn from observing colleagues?
2. What general factors should you consider before doing peer observation?
3. Your colleague should give you a lesson plan before the observation; why?



During the observation

Activity 2

1. Take notes regarding the given lesson plan and your answers in Activity 1.3 so that you have discussion points after the observation.

Post-observation reflection

Activity 3

1. After the observation, please comment on the following aspects:
 - a. *Write down three points you would like to discuss with your colleague.*
 - i. _____

 - ii. _____

 - iii. _____

 - b. *What did you particularly like about or feel went well during the observation?*

 - c. *Was there anything you thought didn't go so well? Why?*

Comment on the following points, with reference to the lesson plan.

- i. *Teacher's use of time and pace.*
- ii. *Types and range of activities used.*
- iii. *Interaction patterns (whole class, pair work, group work, etc.), monitoring and feedback.*

Post-observation feedback

Activity 4

1. *Discuss the points and your notes in Activity 3 with your colleague.*
 - a. *In what ways are your teaching styles similar/different?*
 - b. *In what ways can you help each other to develop professionally through doing peer observations?*
 - c. *What did you find interesting or challenging about the peer observation?*



Reflection task

Activity 5

Having completed the observation process, answer the following questions.

1. *What is your attitude towards doing peer observation?*
2. *What did you find most useful about the process of observing?*
3. *Would you do anything differently the next time you observe another or the same peer?*

Further reading

Bailey, KM (2006) *Language teacher supervision*, Germany: Ernst Klett Sprachen.

Day, RR (1990) Teacher observation in second language teacher education, *Second Language Teacher Education*, 43–61.

Malderez, A (2003) Observation, *ELT Journal*, 57(2), 179–181.

Parrott, M (1993). *Tasks for Language Teachers*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

This item is based on material from Cambridge English Teacher, the professional membership that supports teaching excellence. Find out more at www.CambridgeEnglishTeacher.org



© 2015, Cambridge University Press and Cambridge English Language Assessment

