



'How-to' Guide INTRODUCING CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

Classroom observation can be a powerful tool for professional growth

WHAT IS CLASSROOM OBSERVATION?

- educators observing each other's practice, providing feedback and learning from each other to improve their impact on students' learning
- focused on improving teacher practice in alignment with learner needs and school and region/state level priorities
- aims to make classroom practice more visible and encourage colleagues to collaborate to improve teacher practice and student learning

WHY CLASSROOM OBSERVATION?

- provides effective professional learning that emphasises reflection and feedback on practice to improve learning
- develops teachers' self-awareness about their own teaching practice and its impact
- can help determine professional learning needs at individual and school level
- supports the development of a common understanding of effective teaching practices that have impact
- supports sharing of ideas and expertise among teachers including modelling of good practice
- provides opportunities to discuss challenges and concerns with colleagues
- builds whole-school accountability for the quality of teaching and learning occurring



WHAT ARE THE KEY ELEMENTS?



- draw on skills used in everyday teaching
 - understanding the context
 - using available evidence
 - providing descriptive, non-judgemental observation
 - maintaining objectivity
 - reducing bias
- an agreed focus for classroom observation and shared protocols
- develop trust between the teachers observing and being observed
- collegial commitment to the sharing and ongoing development of practice



WHAT ACTIONS ARE INVOLVED?

- **plan:** invite staff to participate in establishing the conditions or 'ground rules' for initiating observation practices e.g. what strategy will be used, how will people nominate to observe/be observed
 - **gradual steps:** begin with small changes e.g. encourage staff to visit each other's classrooms for 5-10 minutes and think about observed practices and how they could be used in their own class
 - **establish supportive structures:** provide time for observation; encourage staff to begin working with others they feel comfortable with; establish collaborative groups to initiate conversations about learning across the school
 - **offer choice:** allow staff some control over who observes them/who they observe and the timing of observations
 - **collaborate:** build opportunities into schedules for teachers to work together on common goals; provide support and structures to ensure staff are jointly planning and problem solving
- incorporate classroom observation into the school's performance and development cycle
 - **Reflection and goal setting:** data from classroom observations helps set goals effectively and realistically as it provides evidence of the impact of a teacher's practice and therefore the strengths and areas for development
 - **Professional practice and learning:** data from observations of practice help to inform the continuous improvement of practice
 - **Ongoing feedback, reflection and review:** data from observations helps to evidence of performance and development in review discussions and ascertain goal achievement



WHAT DO I NEED TO CONSIDER?

- there are many different approaches and strategies for conducting classroom observation
 - > use AITSL's 'how to guides' to help identify what might work best for your context
- classroom observation is a skill and therefore requires practice
 - > provide opportunities for staff to learn and practice the skills of observation before participating in a formal observation process
- classroom observation can be perceived as threatening
 - > teachers could self-select peers when undertaking classroom observation for the first time

Where can I find out more?

[AITSL Teacher Toolkit](#)
[Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework](#)

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