

Optimising Lesson Observations

Tips for Academic Managers & Lead Teacher Observers

The following tips serve as a guide for leadership teams to discuss and customise for their centres. What might you add or adapt for your context?

Stage

PRE

Tip 1 - Communication

What Provide written communication
When 1 week prior
How Work with the leadership team to agree on an email template or approach, send info to T re: institution's expectations, e.g. lesson plan template and/or a completed sample, share observation criteria if used.

Tip 2 - Expectations

What Clarify the process
When a few days prior
How Check in with the T to clarify expectations about the process (e.g. lesson planning), outline feedback processes e.g. type of feedback (oral/written), reflection questions or templates to be completed, etc.

Tip 3 - Planning

What Offer planning support
When a few days prior
How Discuss the class profile, lesson aims (if required), anticipated problems or T's nominated area of focus, set a post-observation time and place, if time permits - review T's lesson plan and materials before the observation day.

Stage

DURING

Tip 4 - Etiquette

What Consider observer etiquette
When entering the classroom
How Be punctual, ask T where s/he would prefer you to sit, be unobtrusive and avoid looking at your phone, avoid participating unless asked to do so, smile often, thank the T when leaving and reiterate you look forward to meeting up to reflect together.

Tip 5 - Notetaking

What Prepare written notes
When during the lesson
How Take notes but don't write furiously, describe or annotate the lesson plan and note actual timing, focus on the Ss i.e. look for evidence of what Ss are doing or not doing, be specific (how many Ss), actively look for things that are going well.

Tip 6 - Support Strategies

What Prepare support strategies
When during/immediately after the lesson
How Asterisk (*) 1-2 moments of challenge in the lesson and identify the issue e.g. classroom management, instructions, use of materials, etc. Identify a strategy or resource you might share in response. Sharing a time you experienced something similar is helpful.

Stage

POST

Tip 7 - Reflection

What Encourage observee written reflection
When within 1-2 days of the lesson
How Provide a set of guiding reflection questions for Ts to complete prior to the feedback session. For example, *How did the Ss respond in the lesson? Were the aims achieved? What worked well? Were there any challenging moments? Is there anything you might do differently next time?*

Tip 8 - Written Feedback

What Plan feedback sessions
When within 1-2 days of the lesson
How Send a brief thank you note to the T and confirm the oral feedback time. Organise observer notes, target the feedback creating a set of guiding questions (*not* comments), consider your approach (e.g. strengths and 1-2 action points), focus on the positive.

Tip 9 - Oral Feedback

What Provide oral feedback
When up to 1 week later
How Invite the teacher to speak first (refer to their reflection), listen actively without judgement or suggestions at this stage, revise your guiding questions, discuss T's nominated area of focus first, collaborate on action points and/or share resources.