

LESSON OBSERVATION Pocketbook



For observers and
observed, a pocketful of
tips, tools and techniques
for sharing and shaping
classroom expertise

Roy Watson-Davis

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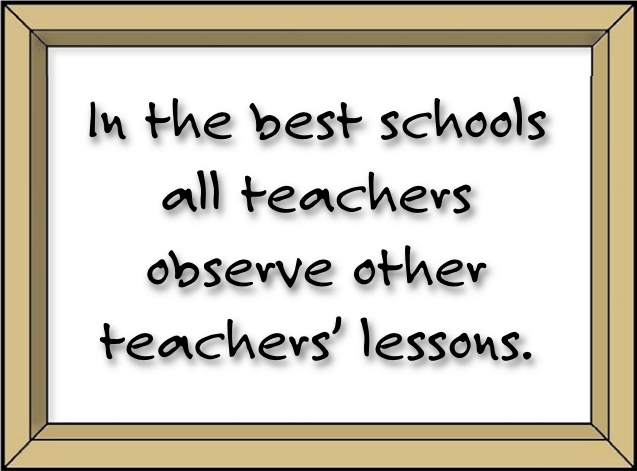
In my seven years as an AST, one of the most pleasurable aspects of the job has been visiting colleagues' classrooms to watch them at work. I can think of no better way to spread good practice, offer advice, provide a united front against the best efforts of students to derail work, talk through ideas, model new approaches, offer a shoulder to cry on when things don't go as planned and give high fives and slaps on the back when lessons simply dazzle with brilliance.

I can also think of no other way in which I could have learned so much about how to teach, than by watching other teachers, taking away the ideas I have seen and implementing or adapting them in my own lessons. (OK, that's posh talk for stealing people's ideas!)

Foreword

Observation plays a fundamental role in improving the quality of teaching and learning. It is the most exciting and dynamic engine for whole school renewal and change, and it's a powerful way to inspire and motivate. Unfortunately, for many teachers – perhaps because in their schools it's only ever linked with performance review or inspection – observation is about as welcome as a poke in the eye with a sharp stick.

This Pocketbook is squarely positioned behind models of observation that support and develop teachers' professional practice. It is aimed at removing the negativity and stress sometimes associated with observation and at making it something teachers positively demand to take part in.



In the best schools
all teachers
observe other
teachers' lessons.



Why Conduct
Lesson
Observations?



Supportive
Lesson
Observations



Becoming an
Effective
Observer



Observing
to Learn



Inviting
Observation for
Professional
Development



Effective
Feedback



Personalising
Whole School
Observation



Why Conduct Lesson Observations?

Summative observation



The development of observation as a creative process has been a slow one, largely because of the way institutions have viewed the process. Until the 1990s, lesson observation was mainly confined to teacher training – the observer monitored, assessed and judged the trainee as part of the course. Once qualified, apart from a couple of observations during a probationary period, you could confidently shut your classroom door and build a world of your own.

Schools then adopted lesson observation as a management tool for recruitment and for checking up on teaching. It was writ large as the government inspection model, with external observers coming in to observe and grade lessons.

In some schools this model has been enshrined in in-house processes, which often use external criteria – typically, in England, Ofsted's – and employ the observer as 'judge'. It is a summative process and limited as a support for professional development.