



OLEVI

Facilitation Standard 3.3: Observation of Pedagogical Practice

Facilitation Theory Piece for OFP (2022-2023)

**OLEVI | The International Centre for
Leadership in Teaching & Learning**

High Performing People,
Transforming Cultures



Standard 3.3: Further Reading

Observation of Pedagogical Practice

Facilitation Standard 3.3: You expose learners to observing professional practice, prompting personal analysis, evaluation, and innovation.

WHY is this standard important?

“The point of this method of observation, is to turn a potential judgemental mindset, into a more developmental, learning process.”

Richard Lockyer, CEO OLEVI

Pedagogical research is defined as the study and practice of how to teach, or perhaps more appropriately, an investigation of evidence-based teaching. It also shows the positive impact that high-quality role modelling can have on learning. Observing others, when done well, should benefit the individual in four ways:

1. Understanding what ‘good’ pedagogy entails.
2. Stimulating high-level personal reflection.
3. Taking inspiration to develop and improve their practice and recognise the clear learning ways to achieve this.
4. Providing the opportunity to ‘magpie’ ideas from other sources.

The concept is not about judging others but growing oneself!

The facilitator’s role is to ensure their learners understand the value of observing their peers and how to perform this consciously and intentionally to encourage personal awareness, deep thinking, and productive action.

As a facilitator, how would you ensure high-performing people continue to reflect and refine their practice as a result of observing others?

Sometimes observations in schools are conducted by leaders simply to monitor the classroom experience or to judge the quality of the learning. This can be beneficial for leadership teams but should not replace quality observation that facilitates deep reflection and a refinement of practice for teachers. Teachers want to learn, therefore deserve effective feedback and developmental dialogue.

To create this culture, you may want to consider the following:

How do we create a thriving culture of continual improvement where:

- ***people see observation as a tool to prompt another person's thinking?***
- ***observation is seen as unthreatening to the observed, as they know they are not being judged?***
- ***‘the observed’ think consciously about what they are doing and why, helping them to grow their own practice?***
- ***colleagues take risks and innovate, knowing their peers will be supportive?***

The objective of peer observation presents an opportunity for both parties to learn and improve professional practice. Therefore, the facilitator’s role is to make this a positive learning experience. Sometimes, it will be necessary to challenge negative perceptions when observation has been undertaken, in order to ensure the observer gains an insight into new learning or to prompt reflection on current practice. This helps to enforce a culture of aspiration, growth mindsets and collaborative working.

WHAT does this standard mean?

Providing opportunities for all learners within your organisation to collaborate with others is clearly important. OLEVI believes this will promote learning in many ways. Facilitators should set out the rationale for observing and ask powerful questions to prompt thinking. Here we will use **OLEVI’s DR ICE model** to:

1. **Deepen** the learners’ thinking about their own practice, evaluating what they should stop doing and what they should do more of. This process generates powerful questions delegates ask themselves about their own practice.
“What three questions are you asking yourself now? What is important now?”

- Role model** specific learning processes and allow learners to analyse what 'the observed' did and its impact on learning. They can use it to compare this practice to what they do; explore the reasons for this and its relative impact. This is a non-judgemental experience whereby you focus on your practice (not that of 'the observed').
"What exact steps did that teacher take to have that effect?"
- Impact** on a learner's confidence and competence. They are now motivated to act in many cases and innovate a strategy to meet their own context.
"What was the impact, and what are you going to differently now?"
- Challenge** expectations of the learners. By observing different subject areas and phases it makes them open their minds to new ideas and see how different strategies work in different contexts.
"How has your way of thinking been challenged?"
- Engage** people in their learning, moving them from the abstract to the concrete, raising their aspirations.
"What ideas do you think are useful to you?"

HOW do facilitators do this effectively?

Facilitators lead the **OLEVI's 4 Step Process of Professional Practice** to ensure a powerful and profound learning experience for their delegates:

1. IDENTIFY & RESEARCH FOCUS

- Identify and communicate the focus:** Before delegates start observing, they must narrow the focus to an area of pedagogy, e.g. questioning.
- Notify the observed:** Depending on the school culture, facilitators might notify teachers that an observation by colleagues will happen; how long they will stay; and the purpose and focus of the session.
- Explore the abstract first:** Before observing the area of pedagogy (e.g. questioning) the facilitator will use a stimuli such as learning activities, skill audits, or conceptual models to establish the theory and language to explore what the pedagogical area should look like.

2. SELECT & ENGAGE IN CONCEPT

- Set expectation and purpose:** Delegates should understand they are observing to prompt personal growth, not to judge others. Facilitators should instruct delegates about meeting classroom protocols.
- Select observation type and method:** The five concepts of observation (see diagram below) should be selected at different times during a programme. Exposing delegates to a variety of concepts will give them a toolkit to use post programme to continue their learning journey. Facilitators will engage delegates with these concepts by explaining the value and purpose of them.

"Be a smiley spider: hug the walls, make no noise and make eye contact with teachers to show appreciation."

Chris McGeehan, OLEVI Facilitator

3. EXAMINE & ANALYSE PRACTICE

As seen in the diagram to the right, there are five observation concepts, each with their own method that a facilitator could use to frame the learners' thinking.

Peer Modelling using the DR ICE methodology.

- Peer Modelling:** Delegates are trained to consciously observe what the facilitator and the other delegates say, do and achieve. Again, this is not to judge them, but to prompt personal reflection and action.
- DR ICE:** This model frames observations and reflections focusing on the quality of learning, rather than personal style.
 - *What was done or said to deepen thinking?*
 - *What questions challenged pupils' learning?*
 - *What am I going to do now to impact upon my own practice?*



Ward Round using the QFF methodology.

- **Ward Round:** Delegates visit 3-4 classrooms for approximately 5-10 minutes each. The purpose of this type of observation is to prompt initial questions and to consider how ideas can be adapted to suit different contexts.
- **QFF (Question, Feeling & Favourite):** This is a simple model that allows delegates to create powerful reflective questions to move them forward (Question), to think of a word that describes the atmosphere of the classroom and the students' engagement (Feeling) and to capture any great ideas that a delegate might want to 'magpie' and/or modify for their context (Favourite). We keep the proforma small to avoid the temptation to over detail.

Lesson Observation using the WWW+EBII methodology.

- **Lesson Observation:** A delegate stays in a lesson for 20-30 minutes to ensure they see the flow of the lesson, and the impact of an activity can be observed to its completion. This helps with seeing the impact.
- **WWW+EBII or "What Went Well & Even Better If I...":** This method of reflection helps delegates focus on identifying the good practice of another teacher's lesson (WWW). The EBII is designed to recognise an area that the observer could improve upon.

Meet the Teacher using the WAQ methodology.

- **Meet the Teacher:** When delegates observe teaching and learning in this format, they should be considering key questions to ask the teacher that specifically highlight and investigate possible learning opportunities in a post-observation discussion.
- **WAQs or Wisdom Accessing Questions:** These are questions to understand the thinking behind a teacher's actions and results to 'access their wisdom'. This is a conversation that is comfortable and learning orientated. The focus should be on asking open questions to 'access wisdom', not making judgments.

Team Teaching using the WIN/ICT methodology.

- **Team Teaching:** This is a process where at least two colleagues collaboratively plan and deliver a lesson, for at least 20-30 minutes. They can teach together with the view of conducting a learning conversation following the lesson that provides peer challenge and support to prompt individual learning objectives to be fulfilled.
- **WIN/ICT or "What is Important Now? & I Commit to...":** This model is the structure of the learning conversation following the lesson, based around tools, such as a skill audit, focusing on 3 key questions that result in a commitment to personal action:
 - "What went well for both of us in that lesson?"
 - "What could we have done better in that lesson?"
 - "What is important to me now (WIN) & what will I commit to do (ICT)?"

4. REFLECT & COMMIT TO ACTION

Following the action research (the five steps of observation) the facilitator must manage the post-observation conversations to ensure their validity. They should focus the learners on the thinking/questions the exercise has prompted about their own professional practice, rather than describing or judging what they saw/heard.

Ensuring the learning process of turning observation to action should be clearly role-modelled and reinforced until the facilitator is confident that all the delegates have maximised their learning.

This is further explained in more detail in:

Standard 4.3: You coach by summarising and synthesising learning, to challenge, contextualise and generate actions.

Golden Nuggets

