Giving Feedback on OTLA

When giving feedback it is important to remember:

* That feedback is a two way process
* To give praise where it is deserved
* To avoid identifying standard practice as a strength
* To distinguish clearly between description and evaluation
* To be unambiguous about weaknesses
* To be positive and make constructive comments

Establish a framework for feedback

Request information/clarification

Identify key evaluations

Summarise findings and grades

Invite comments

Encourage self-assessment

Keep to the key messages – don’t give every detail

Use specific examples to illustrate points

Concentrate on the effectiveness of the learning and how the teaching contributed to this – refer to the learner response

Be aware of body language

Ensure the grade is consistent with the comments

Encourage reflection and discussion

Make suggestions if invited

Be wary of beginning by asking ‘how do you think it went? You may want to be more specific ‘the aim of your lesson was…..How well do you think you achieved this?

Do not say [positive feedback] **but** [negative feedback] instead say [positive feedback] and [negative feedback]

Ensure facts are correct – avoid sweeping assertions

Avoid speculation – focus on the lesson and not on wider issues

Avoid telling teachers what they should do but make suggestions where appropriate

Do not be over-prescriptive – avoid ‘I would have’. If asked, try ‘I have found’ ‘Have you tried?’ ‘How would it be if…?

Do not be diverted from what you want to say

Do not belabour weaknesses or over-justify

**6 tips for improving lesson observation feedback**

**1. Capture your lesson**

Whether you’re being observed or observing someone else, video can be  an objective tool for you both, allowing you to have a two way discussion rather than just a feedback session. Reviewing the video together means you can actively discuss, pause, rewind, fast-forward and allow your colleague to come to their own conclusions, making it more meaningful for you both.

**2. Use exploratory questioning**

This type of questioning naturally opens up dialogue, giving you time to think and draw conclusions. For example, try saying: “What do you think you could do to tackle the problem of…” rather than “What you need to do is…”!

**3. Make feedback constructive**

Even if a lesson doesn't go to plan, the situation can be turned into a positive one if you give the teacher constructive feedback and help them to learn from the situation. Constructive feedback helps identify solutions for areas of weakness by looking at what can be improved rather than focusing on what went wrong.

**4. Relate back to previous objectives set**

Always keep a clear focus in mind. Relate your discussion to the targets already set, if new topics arise; set these as development targets for your next session. Staying focused will allow you to give some ‘easy wins’; developing a feeling of immediate progression. Be clear in your own mind about why you are feeding back. What exactly do you want your colleague to achieve with what you are telling them?

**5. Be patient**

Give you and your colleague time to draw your own conclusions and then explore them together without cutting across one another. You will develop a stronger, more professional relationship.

**6. Do it again!**

Whether giving or receiving lesson observation feedback, request you do it again and regularly. Only by continually discussing and breaking down what you saw can you understand progression.

<https://blog.irisconnect.com/uk/top-5-tips-for-giving-lesson-observation-feedback/>

**Top Tips….**

**for providing effective feedback after observations**

* **Begin by asking ‘What did you think of the learning in that lesson?’** rather than asking ‘How do you think the lesson went?’ This will help focus you both and be a good launch pad for the discussion of learning and progress made in the lesson.
* **Then explicitly link everything that you say to learning and progress.** This will help you to keep focused in your ideas but it does require some practise.
* **Aim for a 80:20 ratio of teacher:observer talk.** This will allow the teacher who has been observed to reflect independently with some coaching from you, particularly with regard to encouraging them to stay focused on learning and progress.
* **Use a blank copy of the Ofsted criteria as a reference point throughout the feedback.** You could even ask the person to say where they thought their lesson fits best.
* **Remember though that you will need to adapt your style depending on the person.** If someone is consistently underperforming and not making any attempt to improve you may need to tell them what they need to do and by when, again making sure it is manageable.
* **Always start with the positives/strengths in the teacher’s lesson.** Be genuinely enthusiastic when you tell them as it will help to make them feel valued. Link this to the learning and progress as it will help you to make your judgements as accurate as possible.
* **Don’t be afraid to change your mind about judgements.** Giving judgements about lessons is not an exact science so there is no way that you can be expected to be exactly identical in opinion to other people. However, if you are prepared to make the observation and feedback process a two-way experience and value the opinions of the person that you observed then you can share good practice and probably make sure that your observations are as accurate as possible.
* **Limit the number of areas for development/targets to one or two.** This will make improvement seem manageable. These could also be a follow up of previous observations.
* **Use the word ‘we’ when discussing targets**. This will remind the teacher receiving the feedback that they are not working in isolation and motivate them to meet these targets knowing that they are supported.
* **Give suggestions of practical strategies** that could be put in place to meet targets. It will help the target to be understood and seem more manageable.
* **Arrange a time scale for the person to put the strategies into action.** Arranging a short observation/learning walk a few weeks later will mean that the teacher is motivated to focus on this target and you can monitor how successful this has been.
* **Be opened minded about being observed giving feedback** as it is a very difficult skill to master; there are lots of different skills involved and the more support that we can get with this the better!
* **Remember and communicate to your team that one lesson judgement does not make or break a teacher.** If observations are terrifying and stressful, no one will perform at their best. They are most effective when they are considered to be developmental and even fun!

**Phrases that might help you with this area of your practice:**

‘What did you think of the learning in that lesson?’

‘Can you link that back to the students’ learning?’

‘How much progress would you say that the students made in this part of the lesson?’

‘How did you know that?’

‘Did \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ make progress this lesson?’

‘What did \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ learn this lesson?’

‘How did you support the progress of school action students in that lesson?’

‘Which students are not making adequate progress over time? Why not?’

‘In which part of the lesson did the students make the most progress? How did you know this?’

**Classroom observation: A Guide to the Effective Observation of Teaching and Learning** (Pg85-86)

Matt O’Leary (2014)

***10 practical pointers to help observers manage the feedback discussion effectively***

1. Try not to make purely evaluative or judgemental comments – focus on what you see. If in doubt pose searching questions rather than making absolute statements.
2. Be sensitive. Overtly critical comments can be off-putting and dent the person’s confidence considerably. Try to avoid ‘offering solutions’; i.e. ‘well this is what I think you should have done…’ unless specifically invited to do so.
3. Avoid making generalised statements such as ‘you need to work on your classroom management skills’ Instead, make sure you provide practical suggestions for future classes, based on concrete examples of classroom practice that the observe can relate to.
4. Vary the types of questions you ask and try to use questions that are more geared to encouraging reflection or eliciting a detailed response from the teacher e.g. ‘you chose to do “x” at that point in the lesson. Why was that?’ ‘Can you explain to me what you were hoping to achieve with this task?
5. Provide ‘constructive criticism’ or ‘balanced feedback’ i.e. feedback that is honest but helpful in developing the observee’s practice and that accentuates the positives as well as the areas for improvement. Think about what they did well and why it was successful. Remember that highlighting strengths is a helpful as recognising and describing what seem to be the challenges faced by the person teaching.
6. Feedback should be a two-way process. With this in mind, try to encourage the observe to take an active role in the feedback discussion, ths taking ownership of their learning and development.
7. Allow the observee the opportunity to explain their decision-making, to provide a rationale for why they did what they did in the lesson.
8. Encourage a shared discussion and agreement as to the key areas for future improvement/development and what support, if any needs to be provided. With your guidance the observee should be encouraged to self-evaluate and identify their professional development needs.
9. Prioritise areas for development. It would be both demotivating and unfair to present the observee with an exhaustive list of areas to develop. Use your professional judgement when deciding what the main priorities are for the observee to focus on in the short term.
10. Make sure feedback is timely i.e. ideally it should take place within a day of the observation, but certainly no longer than a week after.

**Different models of feedback**

Model 1

* Start by asking the teacher how well they thought they achieved the learning objectives. Use open questions and prompts to encourage greater analysis.
* Present your analysis of the strengths and areas for improvement observed and, if it is policy give the grade.
* Summarise what worked particularly well and could be built on and what aspects need further development
* Agree on any action to be taken

Model 2

* Begin by presenting a summary of strengths and areas for improvement, using specific examples from the lesson to illustrate particular points where useful
* Invite the teacher to add any observations of their own and to comment on your assessment
* Summarise what worked particularly well and could be built on and what aspects need further development. If policy give the grade
* Agree on any action to be taken

Model 3

* Begin by going through the lesson chronologically, describing the effectiveness or otherwise of the various stages and activities of the lesson.
* Encourage the teacher to contribute their views and ideas
* Summarise what worked particularly well and could be built on and what aspects need further development. If policy give the grade
* Agree on any action to be taken



