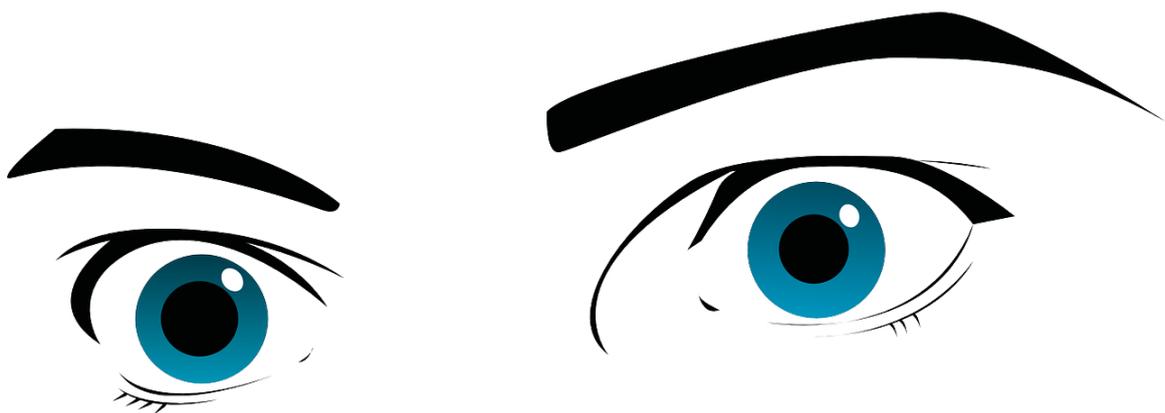


Peer observation in the Xarxa de Competències Bàsiques (Basic Competences Network).

Didactic guide for the video "Peer observation".



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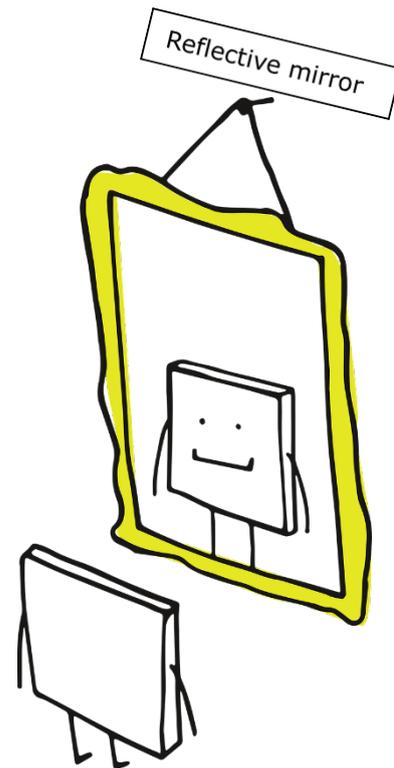
1. Introduction

The guide is the result of a research project entitled *Peer Observation as Teacher Professional Development: Towards a Collaborative Culture in Primary and Secondary Schools* (PeerObserv).

It is intended as a roadmap for implementing peer observation (ELO) autonomously in schools. It is necessary to reactivate and consolidate the idea that when teachers learn together, in a reflective and critical way, it has a powerful impact on their own professional development; it also predisposes them to research their own practice. The IEO becomes a kind of mirror (observer/observed) through which decision-making for the improvement of classroom practices is promoted.

The purpose of this guide is to synthesise the process that involves the OEI as a modality of teaching collaboration to co-construct knowledge in and from teaching practice.

Peer observation consists of pairs of teachers, with similar degrees of experience, who agree to observe one or several pedagogical aspects of their classroom action mutually, by means of instruments for collecting evidence, in order to subsequently offer constructive feedback to each other, which allows for reflection in order to find objectives for improvement (Duran, Corcelles and Miquel, 2020, p. 48).



2. Objectives of the guide

The following objectives are the aim of the guide:

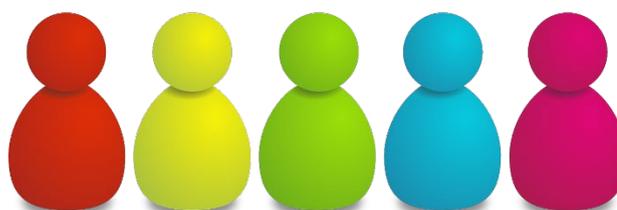
- To prepare towards an understanding of the **key concepts** involved in a peer observation process.
- Facilitate the identification of the **strengths** of peer observation as a strategy for teacher professional development.
- Promote peer observation as a resource for establishing a **collaborative culture**.
- Overcoming the initial **resistance** of peer observation in favour of being a sustainable training practice over time.
- Appreciate the **benefits** of peer observation in terms of its impact on student learning and on our own learning as teachers.



3. To whom is it addressed?

The guide is primarily aimed at:

- Teaching teams from Pre-school, Primary and Secondary Education and Higher Education.
- Trainees on the Bachelor's Degrees in Early Childhood and Primary Education, and students on the Master's Degree in Secondary Education Teacher Training.



4. Phases of reciprocal observation

Before entering into the phases of the peer observation process, there is a key initial moment: the choice and creation of the pairs, which will have to be symmetrical according to the degree of experience and similar status. This is a voluntary task.

4.1. First Phase: Pre-observation

- The pair, once formed, agrees on the focus or theme to be observed and the specific observation criteria ([previous agreements](#)) of the classroom performance, as well as the number of observation sessions (one, two, three...) and the time to carry it out (both by the observer and the observed).
- The couple establishes an ethical standard of confidentiality of information (oral or written).
- It is agreed in advance whether the session will be recorded. The

decision is voluntary, but recommended. Another way of collecting data is to draw up a table or observation grid, considering that it is an open resource and, therefore, should allow for written notes beyond what has been established.

- The role orientations of [observer and observed](#) are reviewed as this action is important for the feedback session.

4.2. Second phase: Observation

This phase corresponds to observation.

- The person observing does not intervene (non-participant observation) and is located in the classroom in a discreet place.
- Students are informed at the beginning of the observation.
- The observer takes notes in accordance with the focus and prior agreements decided upon.
- At the end of the session, or shortly after, the observed makes a brief report in which he/she reflects on how the session went: what worked or not so well, the achievement of the objectives of the session by the students, the actions perceived as satisfactory and those that still need to be worked on, if he/she would modify anything if the session were repeated and why, how he/she felt, etc.

4.3. Third phase: Feedback

The feedback starts with the assessment made by the observed from the reflection after the observation.

- The observer asks questions on points that require explanation, presents his/her observations (from the notes and/or the recording of the session).
- From the dialogue between the observer and the observed emerges the goal of improvement; it is a key moment of

collaboration:

- Ensure a reciprocal dialogue, both persons have an active participation.
- Maintain respectful treatment on both sides.
- Ensure a climate of trust, using positive language.
- Constructive accompaniment.

4.4. Fourth phase: Individual closing reflection

The observed plays a leading role in this last phase.

- Produces a personal synthesis based on individual reflection and collaborative reflection (dialogic feedback).
- [Synthesis](#) in which the observed reflects the specific objective of the proposed teaching improvement and the actions to be carried out to achieve it.

5. Activities



The following are some activities related to the video that can stimulate the interest to take part in a video game.

individual and collective process (pairs, medium-sized groups, members of a teaching department, the teaching staff, etc.) depending on the context of each school.

5.1. Activities prior to watching the video

a) **Activate prior knowledge by** reflecting on the answers to the questions below:

- What do I/we know about peer observation?

- What would I/we like to know?
- Have I/we had any previous experience with a partner?
- What assessment do I/we make?
- Why do I/we consider it necessary to explore this issue in greater depth?
- What barriers do I/we think may hinder the development of peer observation in the educational context in which I/we work?

b) **Reflect** on the following **statements**, expressing, with **arguments**, whether they are true or false:

- Only the most experienced teachers can provide valuable feedback.
- Only teaching is observed, not student learning.
- Teachers should only be observed by experts in their subject area or by professionals from outside the school education field.
- Only novice teachers need to be observed.
- I will learn more from a couple with whom I have a very good personal relationship.

5.2. Activities to do while watching the video

a) While watching the video, it is proposed that **information be collected** individually for each of the phases.

Pair formation:

Pre-observation phase:

Observation Phase:

Feedback phase:

Individual reflection:

- b) Afterwards, the **possibilities** and **opportunities to** implement peer observation in practice should be **discussed** together. It is recommended that a question or doubt be raised about each phase.
- c) The idea is to be able to express perceived **strengths as** well as perceived **fears** and foreseen obstacles.

STRENGTHS	DIFFICULTIES AND FEARS

5.3. Post-video activities

a) **Reflect** on the following questions based on your own experience:

- Observation
 - Is sufficient time provided for teachers to prepare for peer observation at school?
 - Are clear and shared agreements established on how the observation will be carried out?
 - In the video, four phases for peer observation are specified. Do you think they are necessary? Why?

- Trust and climate among teachers
 - How do you foster an atmosphere of trust between the couples you observe?
 - Are concerns about peer observation addressed?
- Feedback
 - How do you ensure that the feedback you receive is effectively incorporated into your teaching practice?
 - Are there mechanisms in place to monitor and review the contributions made by the observer?
- Teacher Professional Development
 - How is peer observation integrated into continuing professional development?
 - Are there opportunities to share and discuss observation experiences?

b) Finally, to **facilitate** the implementation of peer observation in the classroom¹:

- Choose a peer observation situation.
- Identify strengths and weaknesses.
- Engineer an observation instrument (table/grid).
- Anticipate possible difficulties and possible solutions.
- Design a tool to assess the shared process of observation or consider how this could be done.

¹ This activity can be carried out with a partner with whom you do not necessarily have to have a good personal relationship.

- Develop the key ideas that should be contained in the preparation of the observed information to ensure good feedback, aligned with the observation focus and the improvement objective.



6. Synthesis

To sum up, the IEO promotes peer-to-peer teacher learning. It therefore promotes a more participatory culture. A culture that can become the hallmark of a school organisation that learns in order to manage the continuous improvement of teaching practices.

"The practices that are shared or the knowledge that is constructed generate a body of information that serves as learning input for teachers" (Krichesky and Murillo, 2018, p. 149).

Sharing and learning from each other through the IEO facilitates the transition:

- from **initial resistance** to anyone observing what is being done in the classroom, to the **opportunities** that this practice offers for individual and collective professional development;
- The learning process is a process of **personal** and team **learning** that is nourished by the contributions of colleagues, to the learning that is incorporated into the **culture of the centre**, a **collaborative culture**.



In summary, peer observation has a strong impact on the improvement of teaching competence and, in addition to improving student learning, it encourages the introduction of innovations in practices, as well as improving the relationships and cohesion of the teachers who make up the teaching staff.

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