

## Tips for Principals

### How To Ensure Positive Responses In Classroom Observations



1. **Classroom Observations: A Priority**
  - a. **Informal visit should last 15-20 minutes**
  - b. **A formal observation should last one full class period.**
  - c. **Planning should include frequency of visits.**
  - d. **Spreadsheet/database programs can help track observations.**
  - e. **Devote time each day to classroom visits.**
  
2. **Formal Classroom Observation Etiquette**
  - a. **Preparation – Pinpoint data that the formal observation will emphasize.**
  - b. **Obtain seating charts to track student instruction and teacher movement.**
  - c. **Ask about the place to sit.**
  - d. **Entering the class. Obtain student books and copies of handouts. Arrive before the class begins to get a feel for the procedures. Focus on the teacher's efforts as instruction begins.**
  - e. **Remember that the visitor is not a participant. There is no need to introduce the visitor by the teacher.**
  - f. **An observer's primary task is to collect data. The observer can use a pen or pencil. Laptops or tablets can be great to save time in the narrative process.**

3. **Etiquette Tips**
  - a. **Time spent observing teachers and student learning is sacred.**
  - b. **Instruct all concerned that you may be disturbed only in an emergency situation.**
  - c. **Focus attention on the teacher and the learning environment.**
  - d. **Blend into the woodwork.**
  - e. **Quietly take a seat in the back of the room.**
  - f. **Avoid questioning students-they should relate to the teacher.**
  - g. **It is important to monitor student learning. Do not be an obstruction.**
  - h. **Exiting: Stay for the entire class period, leave when the class ends, and thank the teacher for hosting the visit.**
  
4. **After the Observation**
  - a. **Teachers need and rightfully expect feedback after the observation.**
  - b. **Formal observations requires a timely post-observation conference (within 24 hours, if possible) to explore what was observed and encourage teacher interaction.**
  - c. **Schedule nothing for half hour an hour after the observation. Use this time to compile notes while the experience is fresh.**
  - d. **Only the observer should compile the notes or write the report.**
  
5. **Post-observation Pitfalls**
  - a. **Do not put a summary of the observation in the teacher's mailbox without first reviewing it with the teacher.**
  - b. **Do not hold a post-observation conference more than 48 hours after the visit. Accurate memory is crucial for a reflective conference.**
  
6. **Putting the Teacher at Ease**
  - a. **Send a thank you note after an informal observation.**
  - b. **Be specific in things of praise.**
  
7. **Sensitivity to Circumstance**
  - a. **Reschedule the observation if unplanned circumstances work against the teacher.**
  
8. **Opening Observational Doors And Windows**
  - a. **An invitation to a classroom visit can reveal a climate and culture that fosters professional growth.**
  - b. **Expressing an interest in seeing a new learning technique or a student activity.**
  
9. **Final Analysis**
  - a. **Principals who view teachers as professionals willing to improve classroom practice, encourage growth; those who fail to build trust in the observation process miss many excellent opportunities to help teachers advance professionally.**