

How to Observe with eCOVE

The Seven-Minute Sit-Down

This is a more valid, data based observation than the “Three-Minute Walk-Through”, and takes just a bit more time.

1. Let the teachers know that you’ll be doing quick visit observations. No need to give a specific time. Let them know that it will be a quick, single focus observation
2. Identify ahead of time the data you’ll be gathering, and why. Best is something that’s a school-wide goal, or something of interest across multiple classrooms.
3. Identify what you’ll do with the data. Most important is to assure the teacher that they will get a copy of the report, and that their interpretation of the data is very important to the process. If you’re building local norms for an item, assure the teachers that their names will not be revealed.
4. When you drop in to do the observation, gather data using just one tool. Be sure that the tool is one appropriate for short-term data collection, and realize that the small window of time will not accurately represent the full period or teacher’s day.
5. Leave a positive note or comment with the teacher when you finish. Email the data to the teacher as soon as possible with these questions
 - A. Is this data what you expected? Please explain.
 - B. Do you think a change is indicated? If so, what should the change be? How can I support you?
 - C. Is there any particular area, activity, or individual that you’d like data gathered on in another observation?
6. If gathering data to establish local norms, observe all teachers involved, and distribute the full data set (without identifiers) to all teachers, discuss in a staff meeting, etc. Do NOT single out any individual, good or bad.

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The Recommended Method

1. Pre-conference with the teacher, and share the toolsheet document that describes each tool. Discuss the lesson plans and identify what data might be useful to the teacher. If there is a particular area that the principal is interested in, identify the tool to be used and the best time to use it.
2. Discuss how the data will be used (feedback to the teacher, for the teacher to use with a student/parent, or part of the evaluation record, etc).
3. Identify if the observation will be scheduled or drop-in.
4. At the observation, suspend judgment until the data has been gathered. Focus carefully on the data collection. Add comments/notes during or after the data gathering. Leave the observation with a positive comment to the teacher as the opportunity arises.
5. Post-conference and share the data. Ask the following:
 - A. Does this data match what you expected? Talk about how/how not.
 - B. Do you think, based on the data, a change is indicated? If yes, what would you change? How can I support you?
 - C. When would you like me to return to observe the change and gather follow-up data (if a change is indicated)?;

OR What data would you like gathered in the next observation (if no change is indicated)?

Provide a copy of the data and notes from the observation and post conference to the teacher as soon as possible. Confirm the date/time of the next pre-conference and observation.