

TRUE CONFESSIONS

In this task you read some opinions of experienced teachers about observation.

Step 1

Work individually.

Read the teachers' remarks about observation on page 8. Make notes on your answers to the following questions:

1. Whose opinion(s) do I agree with the most? Why?
2. Whose opinion(s) do I disagree with the most? Why?

Step 2

Discuss your opinions in groups.

In some ways I am not quite myself when I am being observed. I try to do my best and that means that I try to make sure both my English and my teaching are just perfect. I always hope that my learners will be on their best behaviour too, but you can't count on that.

Vanida

I rarely have a chance to talk to other teachers about a new idea; we're all so busy. Recently, another teacher at my school asked me if I would like to come and observe some of her classes, and in exchange she would observe some of mine. At first I was a bit nervous, but then I thought, 'This is what I have been waiting for!' It's been one of the best things I've done and I definitely feel I have a buddy at work now.

Kinfe

Maybe I'm weird, but I really like it when other teachers observe my classes. It's a good opportunity for me to get some feedback from a totally different perspective. Sometimes I invite another teacher to come and watch my class, and I ask her to observe a particular aspect of the lesson, such as trying to balance the class to get all the different levels of learners actively involved. It's so difficult teaching mixed-ability classes, and another teacher's feedback about what happened in my class is invaluable to me.

Anna

I don't really mind when another teacher comes in to my class to observe my lesson. It's a great way to get new ideas about how to teach a particular point or handle a situation I usually find awkward or difficult. But I do feel as though our privacy is being invaded. I mean, I feel I have a certain rapport with my learners, and my classes have a positive atmosphere. When an outsider enters our classroom, there is always a chance that the special atmosphere we have created will be upset.

Tomek

I dislike being observed. I feel like the person is judging me. It's usually the school inspector who observes my classes, and I feel he's only looking at what's wrong with my lesson. Maybe he's just trying to help me, but I resent his criticism. Why can't he spend an equal amount of time telling me about what is positive in my lessons?

Andreas

Observing other teachers is something I began to do many years ago. At the very beginning I think I tended to be rather critical and constantly see the lesson in comparison to the way I think I'd teach it. But the more I did it, the better I became at it. Doing observations well is definitely something that takes some practice, but you can gain a lot from them, if you're willing to put in the effort.

Masaaki