



PINPOINT



Good feedback describes the solution – in concrete, actionable terms – rather than the problem.

Doug Lemov

Formative v summative

Performing while you are being marked, isn't an effective learning context. That's why peer observations— without the pressure of managers and their tick boxes— are so effective.

They are formative and not summative. Or, as colleges call it, developmental and not evaluative observations.



Learning partnerships should not have unpleasant surprises associated with them.

Helen Timperley

Evidence & reasoning

Teaching worth observing needs to be based on evidence. Teachers should ensure that the techniques they are trying out come from meta-studies published by Hattie, Marzano, Petty and the Sutton Trust.

Equally, they should form part of the teacher's reasoning in testing out a hypothesis. "If...then..." causal reasoning is an integral part of the Instructional Rounds approach, that builds action research into



Narrowing and aligning observations...can lead to lasting change in behaviour.

Doug Lemov

High-fidelity perception

There's something rarely talked about when discussing peer observations — whether the observer is seeing accurately. It's an assumption that needs questioning.

John Bransford, in his book *How People Learn*, points out that experts and non-experts see very different things when viewing the same lesson. The expert, with a sort of x-ray vision, is not distracted by the surface details. She is able to observe the key behaviours that make up a teaching strategy. By contrast, the non-expert's focus is diverted by contextual information.

Signal-to-Noise ratio

Surface detail is often termed *visual noise*. That is to say, it is the visual equivalent to the interference you sometimes get when tuning to a radio station. When the signal is found, the message comes loud and clear. Similarly, expertise allows insight beyond visual noise to the underlying signal, or message.

Finding the balance

The search is on, therefore, to find ways for peer-friendly observations to have all the rigour and accuracy of expert perception.

Empowering teachers needs to be more than a concept. Teachers need the tools to

REFERENCES

Bransford, J. (2000) *How People Learn*, National Research Council, Nat. Academy Press, Washington DC

Lemov, D. et al (2012) *Practice Perfect* Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, USA

Timperley, H. (2011) *Realizing the Power of Professional Learning*, OUP, Maidenhead.

HOW2s maximise professional learning

HOW2s are all evidence-based teaching techniques. The interactions between teacher and peer observer maximise learning for both.

- 01** Teachers learn new techniques in minutes by looking through a HOW2. They rapidly put it into action in their classroom, helped by the step-by-step instructions.
- 02** A request to a colleague to observe, results in a detailed explanation of the HOW2. The clarity of the visual means the peer learns a great deal before the observation.
- 03** The peer observes through the precision of the HOW2 framework, ensuring their perception is accurate — like an expert's.
- 04** Feedback is conducted through the shared viewing of the online HOW2 visual. This creates a framework that is objective, emphasising the teaching and not the teacher.

