

Sharing Classroom Experience – Advice to Schools (June 2023)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The sharing of classroom experience is part of on-going professional learning for teachers, to identify good practice and encourage teachers to develop their expertise and complement self-evaluation.
- 1.2 The sharing of classroom experience is amongst those strategies used to develop and complement the teaching and learning process and may assist staff to evaluate the quality of their teaching and identify areas for development as part of their ongoing professional learning.
- 1.3 Peer and management evaluation plays the major part in this process, where high quality professional interaction and dialogue between colleagues may lead to enhancement of the teaching and learning process.
- 1.4 Classroom visits play a key role in improving learning and teaching and assuring quality as part of school self-evaluation within the improvement planning process. Sharing classroom practice is a two-way process at the heart of collegiality and all visits should take place within a climate of trust and support.

2. Rationale

- 2.1 Sharing classroom experience can:
 - Help develop critical reflection
 - Encourage professional dialogue amongst colleagues
 - Allow sharing of improving practice
 - Encourage support strategies amongst colleagues
 - Be part of continuing professional learning
 - Possibly provide additional support to individual teachers where appropriate

3. Establishing Arrangements

- 3.1 Effective sharing of classroom experience, resulting in positive benefits to teachers and learners, is most likely when:
 - Staff are fully consulted and involved in agreeing the arrangements for the process
 - All staff make a positive commitment to the process
 - There is an open and honest approach, based on mutual respect amongst colleagues

4. Key Principles

- 4.1 Arrangements for sharing classroom experience shall ensure that there is agreement on:
 - The nature of the process
 - The focus and purpose of the shared classroom experience reflecting school priorities
 - The roles and responsibilities of the participants
 - The recording of any relevant information
 - Adequate and appropriate time required for the whole process
 - The range of feedback methods both individual and whole school
- 4.2 These agreements should be negotiated annually and should form part of the school annual calendar and working time agreement. In line with GTCS Standards for Full Registration, each

teacher should engage in up to 2 formal, recorded observations within an academic session. A QI observation may be used as one of the up to 2 formal observations a teacher may participate in during a year. If this is to be the case, there must be an understanding and agreement across the school of the formal focus, who will be involved and that formal feedback is provided. Additional observations may take place as part of the West Lothian VSE programme and/or an external inspection from HMIE. All schools should be informed in advance of the academic session of involvement in the VSE programme and can therefore plan for this to compliment the school annual calendar.

5. Good Practice

5.1 Prior to sharing experience, the participants should discuss:

- The focus of what is being shared and the intended outcomes
- The role of each participant
- Any relevant criteria to be used as a basis for discussion
- The agreed recording format

5.2 During the sharing of experience, participants should:

- Keep the intended learning outcomes for the class and any agreed criteria in mind
- Where appropriate, be involved in the lesson

5.3 Prior to any professional dialogue session, participants should:

- Consider the points they will share during the feedback

5.4 During the professional dialogue session, participants should:

- Engage in an open and honest discussion about the shared experience
- Confirm shared evaluative judgements and recognise good practice
- Discuss any areas for development and where appropriate, agree on a plan of action

5.5 Sharing classroom experiences may be undertaken by others out with the senior promoted staff as this develops reflection, encourages professional dialogue, shares good practice, identifies support strategies and may provide additional support. Visits of this kind, for example peer observations, must adhere to the good practice principles set out above, particularly that staff are fully consulted and involved in agreeing the arrangements for the process.

6. Record Keeping

6.1 The date of every shared experience should be noted with any agreed focus, purpose and outcomes recorded on the agreed formats.

7. Role of Sharing Classroom Experience through an authority supported Validated Self-Evaluation (VSE)

7.1 VSE is a process which aims to build the capacity of schools to evaluate their own performance and improve the quality of outcomes for learners and families. The HT and staff will plan and participate in Sharing Classroom Experiences during the VSE. VSE team members will be provided with the agreed school formats for recording and summarising observations of

learning, teaching and assessment. While it is good practice to give brief verbal feedback to staff that have been observed as soon as possible after the shared classroom experience, this process is about the school and not individual teachers.