Teacher Observation

The Teacher Observation intervention trained teachers in a structured observation approach. Teachers used software to rate their colleagues across a range of pre-specified components, such as managing student behaviour and communicating with students. Teachers were instructed to conduct a minimum of either three or four observations per year.

EEF Summary

Teacher observation is an integral part of CPD in English schools. A recent US study found that structured lesson observation led to gains in student and teacher performance. The EEF funded this evaluation to explore the impact of structured teacher observation in the English context.

The evaluation did not show any overall improvement in combined maths and English GCSE scores for pupils of the teachers involved.

The total number of teacher observations was much lower than expected: teachers involved in the trial reported that they felt uncomfortable taking time out of teaching to complete observations, and that the level of expected observations was unsustainable. However, even when observations did take place, there was no evidence that schools which did more observations had better pupil results.

It is important to note that many of the comparison schools reported that they were already doing peer observation of some sort. This evaluation does not mean that general peer observation has no impact, but rather that this structured observation programme was not found to have any benefits over the status quo.
Research Results

Outcome/Group | Impact - the size of the difference between Teacher Observation pupils and other pupils | Security - how confident are we in this result?
--- | --- | ---
Combined GCSE maths & English | 0 Months' Progress | 
Combined GCSE maths & English (FSM eligible pupils) | 0 Months' Progress | N/A

Were the schools in the trial similar to my school?

54 of the 82 trial schools were rated good or outstanding by Ofsted.

Around 40% of pupils had ever been eligible for free school meals.

Could I implement this in my school?

The project was designed and delivered by University of Bristol and is not currently commercially available. The RANDA Tower software is available from RANDA solutions.

Teachers were required to attend training on how to use the software, and needed free time to observe other teachers' lessons (on average teachers did 5 observations per year).

Delivered by Teachers | Participant group Whole School | Intervention length 2 Years
--- | --- | ---

How much will it cost?

Teacher Observation cost each school around £4000 per year, or £3 per pupil per year when averaged over 3 years. Staff time was required for training and lesson observations. Teachers needed computer tablets to use the programme software.

Cost per pupil £3 | No. of Teachers/TAs Year 10/11 teachers | Training time per staff member 1 Day
--- | --- | ---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Pupils</th>
<th>Key Stage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>14,100</td>
<td>Key Stage 4</td>
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Start date January 2013 | End date November 2017 | Type of trial Efficacy Trial

Evaluation Conclusions

For more information, tools & supporting resources, please visit: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/

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1. The project found no evidence that Teacher Observation improves combined GCSE English and maths scores.

2. The project found no evidence of impact of the intervention on the GCSE English and maths attainment of pupils who have ever been eligible for FSM.

3. The number of observations were below the developer’s initial expectations: teachers had difficulty fitting in the required number of observations because of timetabling and arranging cover, and some experienced problems using the software.

4. Teacher engagement with the programme varied greatly across schools, and practice ranged from individuals simply recording some observations using the RANDA software to whole-school, collaborative planning, discussion and reflection as part of an integrated CPD programme.

5. Almost three-quarters of the control group schools were already doing some peer observation prior to the intervention. The lack of impact seen in this study may be because the structured Teacher Observation intervention was no more effective than existing practice rather than because general peer observation has no impact.