

Peer Observation as a Tool for Teacher Professional Development

RESEARCH FINDINGS REPORT

Peer observation as teacher professional development: towards a collaborative culture in primary and secondary schools (PID2020-113719RB-I00)

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01 INTRODUCTION

PEER OBSERVATION FOR TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: TOWARDS A COLLABORATIVE CULTURE IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

This document outlines the findings of the study on peer observation (PO), funded by the Ministry of Science and Innovation within the 2020 call for R&D&i Projects. The study was conducted at institutions affiliated with the Xarxa de Competències Bàsiques [Core Competencies Network] at the Department of Education of the Government of Catalonia and educational institutions of the Government of the Balearic Islands, involving 572 teachers. The research ran from the 2021-22 to 2023-24 academic year.

PO comprises teacher pairs with comparable levels of experience who mutually agree to observe one or multiple pedagogical aspects of each other's classroom practice. They use evidence collection tools to provide constructive feedback to one other, thus facilitating reflection to identify improvement objectives (Duran et al., 2020).

The process of specifying PO is split into four phases: a pre-observation session, an observation session, a feedback session and reflective synthesis (Duran et al., 2020).

The study's collaborative model is underpinned by reciprocal observation, collaboration as a form of peer learning, individual needs and creating awareness of the evolving impact of teachers' practices. We perceive PO as a tool for Teacher Professional Development, emphasising its value in observation, constructive feedback and collaborative teaching practices.

02 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

What is the contribution of research on peer observation?

At the outset of the study, conducting a systematic literature review on PO in primary and secondary schools was crucial (Corcelles-Seuba et al., under review). The 27 examined articles encompass international research spanning from 1981 to 2022.

The majority of these studies (81.4%, n=22) were published after 2000, with an increasing emphasis in the past decade.

The features of the studies include training, observation tools, and observation phases and cycles.

- 66.6% of the studies offered specialised instruction on PO to participants.
- 70.4% used a tool during the observation phase.
- 77.8% of the studies successfully completed all three phases of the PO process.

What impact does Reciprocal Peer Observation have on enhancing teaching practices and student learning?



Benefits

Reflection on practice, enhanced teaching strategies and a focus on learning through observing colleagues.

Positive outcomes for professional growth.



Difficulties

Providing critical feedback (33.3% of studies).

01 At Teaching Level

02 At Organisational Level

03 At Student Level

Enhanced collaborative collegiality (88.9% of studies).

Time constraints for observation and interaction (37% of studies).

Positive teacher perceptions regarding their influence on student learning were reported in 74% of studies. Two studies demonstrated positive outcomes for student achievement.

No particular challenges were noted at student level with regard to PO.

- PO is viewed as a valuable instrument for professional growth, providing a chance for self-reflection on teaching methods and enhanced instructional approaches.
- PO enhances collaborative collegiality among teachers and fosters a more cohesive school culture.
- The primary challenge resides in feedback among colleagues, indicating a need for specialised training in this field.
- Further research is required to examine the direct influence of PO on student learning.

According to the most recent TALIS report (OECD, 2019), teachers indicate that collaborative professional development practices, such as PO, have the most significant impact on enhancing teaching methods.

- In numerous instances, observing teaching practice in action can provide more valuable insights than mere explanation in conventional teacher training programmes.
- Teachers who share ideas and practices experience increased job satisfaction, self-efficacy and improved student relationships.

Therefore, one of the eight TALIS challenges for Spain (TALIS 2018) is to provide additional training activities centred on professional collaboration.

The following are essential to reap advantages from PO (O'Leary and Savage, 2020):

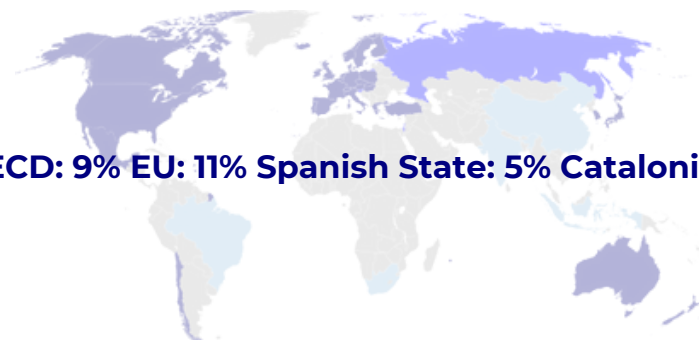
- ✓ Voluntariness and data confidentiality.
- ✓ Trust and constructive feedback- rather than judgement- between teachers.
- ✓ Prior training or guidelines for providing constructive feedback.
- ✓ Observation centred on pre-established goals.

The success of PO stems from a deliberate and purposeful pedagogical discourse, grounded in evidence from teaching practice. Professional and practical knowledge is juxtaposed with published knowledge.

Teachers engaging in Peer Observation.

High School

OECD: 9% EU: 11% Spanish State: 5% Catalonia: 6%

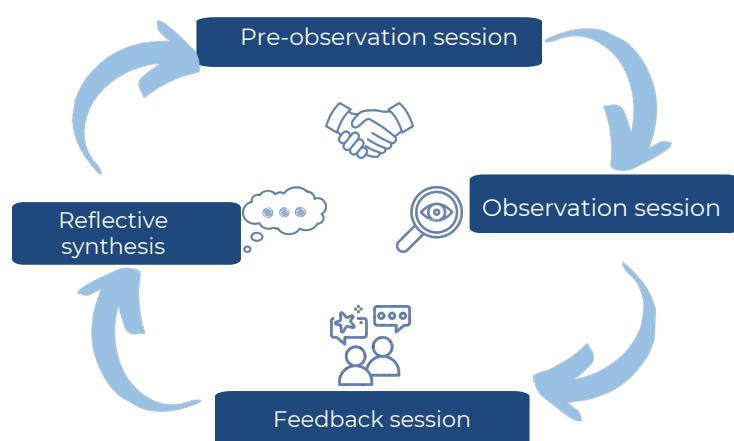


Primary education

Spanish State: 15% Catalonia: 13%



Peer Observation Process



The PO procedure within the Xarxa de Competències Bàsiques (Core Competences Network) (developed in partnership with the GRAI) starts with a **pre-observation session** where both members of the pair establish goals, criteria, duration and data collection. The observer gathers evidence during the **observation session**, and afterwards, the observed individual reflects on it in a concise report. This report forms the foundation for the **feedback session** dialogue, where improvement goals arise from reflections, detailed in the final document from the observed party or **reflective synthesis**.

03 PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Balearic Islands

Fifteen primary education centres take part in the Study of Teaching Effectiveness in the Balearic Islands: Analysis through the International Observation System (ISTOF) (De la Iglesia & Rosselló, 2018).



The research enabled:

- Identifying best practice and promoting educational improvement.
- Validating the adaptation of the ISTOF.
- Questioning the PO evaluation model's focus on effectiveness.

A primary and secondary school take part in a pilot test of the research and training project "The effective school and the effectiveness of teaching in the Balearic Islands" (ISTEBI).



The research enabled:

- Evaluation of the intervention to identify factors that facilitate self-assessment, alongside recommendations for streamlining the process.
- Identifying benefits and challenges in PO and feedback:
 - It facilitates teacher professional growth.
 - It is characterised by organisational complexity.
 - Providing and receiving feedback is crucial yet challenging.
 - There is resistance towards expressing negative criticism, underscoring the significance of feedback in enhancing education.

920 teachers (460 pairs) from 47 centres take part in the Peer Observation and Feedback Programme (POFEI) (Rosselló & De la Iglesia, 2021).



The research findings underlined:

- PO that is grounded in instruments directing and focusing on classroom dynamics and actions, tailored to the observed context and accompanied by quality feedback, enables advancement in fostering more unified teaching teams to move towards self-management of training.
- 86% of respondents confirm their intention to continue using observation and feedback as a means to enhance teaching proficiency.

03 PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Catalonia

44
teachers






The designed PO procedure is tested and perceptions gathered in a final questionnaire (Duran et al., 2020).



Research
2019-20

This study, impacted by Covid-19, enabled:

-  An enhanced process. → It is deemed highly beneficial -albeit challenging- prompting a suggestion to revise the guideline.
-  Recognition of initial concerns and unease. → Discrepancies in roles, without interfering with difficulty...
-  Identification of individual and institutional benefits. → Learning to observe, provide feedback, enhance self-esteem, boost motivation and foster a collaborative environment.



Research
2020-21





131
teachers



They engage in a study that includes a pre-test and post-test (Corcelles et al., 2023).



The aim focuses on comparing resistance levels, agency, procedure and improvement goals before and after PO.

-  Following PO, there is a notable decline in initial resistance, particularly among teachers lacking prior experience.
-  Improvements are evident in the collective efficacy and interdependence among teachers, particularly those who adhere to the entire procedure.
-  A highly favorable assessment of the tools and process. A targeted and pre-arranged observation is crucial for fostering critical reflection.
-  The PO procedure effectively identifies practice improvement objectives, particularly for teachers who create post-observation and synthesis reports.

04 CURRENT RESEARCH

Thanks to funding from the Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities, the research presented here is conducted under the leadership of two principal investigators (PI): David Duran (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, UAB) and Begoña De la Iglesia (Universitat de les Illes Balears, UIB), with the backing of the Government of Catalonia and the Government of the Balearic Islands.

The UAB research and work group comprises: Íngrid Sala (URL), Mireia Soler, Andy Morodo, Ester Miquel, Mariona Corcelles (URL), Marta Flores, Jesús Ribosa, Meritxell Monguillot (INEFC), Sara Escuin, Íngrid Noguera, Maite Ortiz and Matt O'Leary (Birmingham City Univ.). The UIB group comprises Dolors Forteza, Laura Duma, Francisca Moreno, and Joana Llabrés.

Peer Observation for teacher professional development: towards a collaborative culture in primary and secondary schools.

Research and development project PID2020-113719RB-I00, funded by MCIN/AEI/10.13039/501100011033.

The primary aim of the study is to assess the efficacy of implementing PO to enhance teacher professional growth and provide materials and instructions for its effective application in primary and secondary schools, aiming to foster a more cooperative environment that encourages peer-to-peer educational interactions.

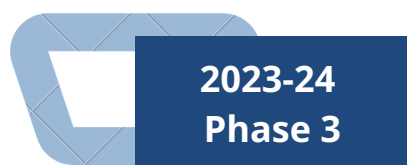
The study methodology uses a mixed sequential explanatory design: a quasi-experimental design involving the analysis of quantitative data before and after PO, alongside a qualitative examination of documentation submitted by participants (pre-observation agreements, post-observation report, interaction analysis in the feedback feedback and the final report).



Designing and validating questionnaires, tools, and protocols, creating platforms, collecting data and validating qualitative analysis categories.



Results analysis and transfer of the objectives to enhance teaching practice.



Results preparation and circulation.

04 CURRENT RESEARCH

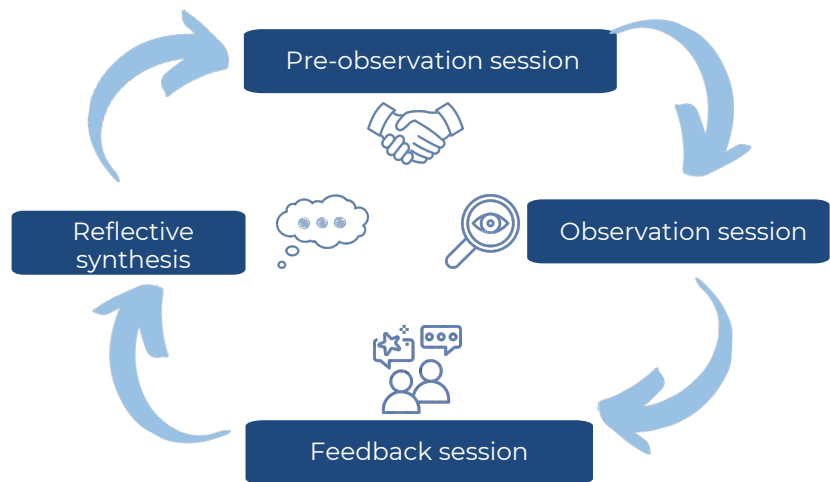


244

Teachers in the Balearic Islands

328

Teachers in Catalonia



572 teachers took part in the study by conducting at least one round of reciprocal peer observation and gathering the required data and documentation: pre-observation agreements, post-observation reports, audio recordings of feedback sessions and final reflective syntheses with improvement objectives.

OBJECTIVES SPECIFIC TO THE RESEARCH

- 1 Examine the impact of PO on teachers' perceptions of collaboration.
- 2 Explore resistance to PO, assessing variances noted by observers and those being observed, alongside their correlation to demographic information and support perception.
- 3 Examine how perceived professional closeness, teachers' interpretations and their effects alter the perception of learning.
- 4 Identify instances of peer learning within pairs during the feedback session.
- 5 Identify the features of quality feedback in PO, pinpointing optimal feedback sessions and predictive variables.
- 6 Identify professional development goals, analyse their quality, the timing of their creation and the resulting practical application.

After setting out the objectives, the findings are detailed on the following pages.

05 PERCEPTIONS

Teachers' perceptions of collaboration significantly influence their willingness and approach to interacting and collaborating with one another, impacting school culture and the efficacy of collaborative practices. Assessing teacher perceptions is essential for evaluating and enhancing effective collaboration in the education sector. In this instance, perceptions are assessed pre- and post-PO.

The Teacher Collaboration Perceptions Questionnaire (TCPQ) was developed by adapting items from previous scales and validating them with experts in teaching collaboration. This tool shows validity and reliability through content and construct analysis, demonstrating satisfactory Cronbach's alpha coefficients and favourable fit indices in factor analyses (Corcelles et al., 2024).

Teacher Collaboration Perceptions Questionnaire (TCPQ)

($\alpha = 0.937$)

400
teachers



3 Dimensions



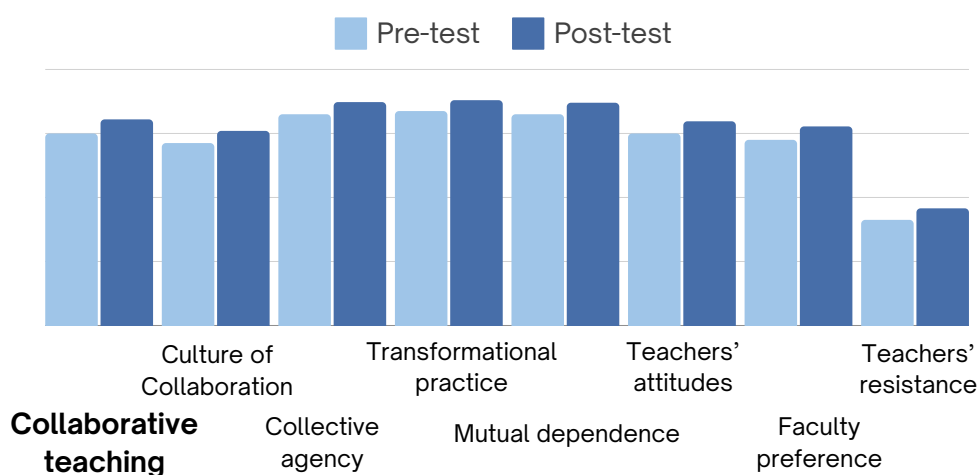
Collaborative culture (10 items). Collective agency

- Positive interdependence (3 elements)
- Transformational practice (5 elements)

Educator attitudes towards collaboration

- Preference for collaborative practices (3 items)
- Resistance to collaboration (7 items)

What is the influence of PO on teacher perceptions?



Wilcoxon signed rank test. * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.001$

Despite the high initial scores, the pre-test and post-test comparison showed a significant increase in teachers' perception of teaching collaboration following participation in the PO intervention.

Consequently, perceptions of teaching collaboration enhanced following a PO cycle.

Statistically significant changes were noted in perceptions of collaborative culture and collective agency, but no significant differences were found in attitudes towards teacher collaboration. Further details are provided below:

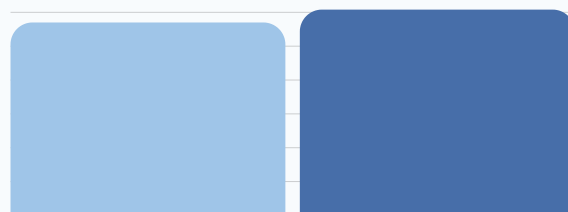
Culture of Collaboration

The Wilcoxon rank test revealed a significant increase in teachers' perceptions of collaborative culture ($p = 0.002$; $rrb = -0.186$).

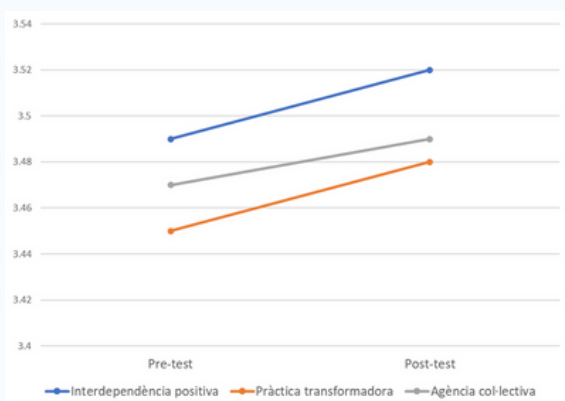
Collaborative culture refers to a work environment characterised by shared responsibility, mutual support and trust among teachers.

Within a collaborative culture, teachers are supported by the institution, and motivated to collaborate and engage in school decision-making.

Pre-test Post-test



Teacher's collective agency involves collaborating, supporting colleagues and receiving support to enhance teaching and school effectiveness.



Collective Agency

Teachers had an enhanced perception of positive peer interdependence ($p = 0.042$; $rrb = -0.124$), with no significant variances observed in transformational practice ($p = 0.094$).

COLLABORATION ATTITUDES

No significant differences were detected in the global dimension. However, a notable rise in an inclination towards collaboration was observed ($p = 0.004$; $rrb = -0.188$) following involvement in PO. No alterations were noted in resistance to collaboration.

This is determined by the preference for collaborative practices over individual ones, and the level of resistance to teaching collaboration.



06 RESISTANCES

Exploring teachers' resistance to PO is crucial since, as seen with perceptions of collaboration, it enables us to comprehend apprehensions that may hinder engagement in observation. By recognising and tackling these resistances, increased involvement in such professional practices can be encouraged.

The Teacher Resistance to Peer Observation scale analyses pre- and post-test variances, examines the impact of demographic factors and the perception of school support on initial resistance, and evaluates the influence of demographic factors, support perception and role performance on final resistances post-PO (Ribosa et al., 2023).

394
teachers



Teacher Resistance in Peer Observation Scale

Although volunteers, the teachers involved in the study acknowledged initial resistance, in spite of their positive predisposition towards PO.



Resistance in the observer role

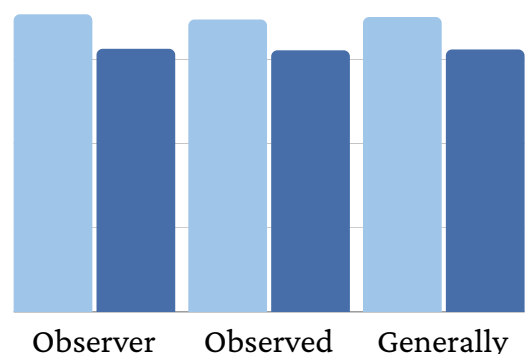
- To observe a colleague.
- As my actions may cause my partner to feel questioned or judged as professionals.

Resistance in the observed role

- Due to being observed by a colleague.
- As I sense my professionalism is being questioned or judged by a colleague.
- As my class may not run as anticipated or planned during the observation.
- As the presence of an observer in the classroom may be distracting for both myself and the students.

The results indicate a statistically significant decrease in initial resistance towards PO compared to final resistance, both overall and for each role ($p < .001$).

Pre-test Post-test



What impact do demographic variables and perceptions of school support have on initial resistance to PO?

Resistance to the roles of observer and observed is initially tempered by teaching experience and feeling well-prepared, alongside other factors moderating resistance to observation.

	Observer role	Observed role
Demographic factors		
Gender		✓
Teaching experience	✓	✓
Educational stage		✓
School management team		✓
Previous PO experience		✓
School Support		
Sufficient training	✓	✓
Adjusted school schedule		✓

What impact do demographic variables, perceptions of school support and role performance have on final resistance?

	Observer	Observed
Resistance	✓	✓
Gender		
Teaching experience	✓	✓
Educational stage		
Management team		
Previous PO experience		
Sufficient training		
Adjusted school schedule		
Role performance perception	✓	✓

Final resistance in the two roles is influenced by initial resistance, teaching experience and factors associated with self-assessment and role perception.

Implementing Observational Educational Intervention (PO) can be a sustainable and effective method to enhance teaching practice, as long as teacher resistance is addressed. This underscores the crucial importance of pre-training for PO, ensuring observers do not disrupt the classroom, adhere to agreed-upon observation indicators and can offer valuable feedback.

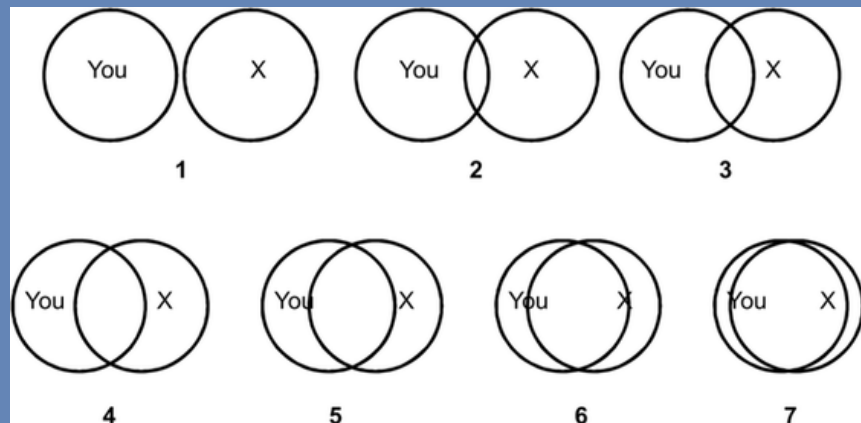
07 CLOSENESS

Closeness in a professional relationship between teachers is defined as the level of emotional and interpersonal connection, trust and collaboration within an educational setting. It involves the ability to collaborate effectively, exchange ideas and engage in productive discussions to enhance student learning (Milatz et al., 2015).

By using a validated single-item scale in pre- and post-test assessments (IOS, Gächter et al., 2015), alongside a group interview and learning perception questionnaire, the influence of PO on professional closeness and its impact on learning were examined. Is a close professional bond essential for PO efficacy?

Teachers were asked to select the graph that most accurately depicts the level of closeness with their PO colleague in a pre- and post-test. This is in line with the Self Scale (IOS, Gächter et al., 2015).

364
teachers



There was a notable rise in teachers with initial low or moderate levels of closeness. No statistically significant variances were observed at a high level of closeness.

Initial closeness	N	Post-test M (DE)	Pre-test M (DE)	Significance level	Magnitude of effect
Low	59	3.559 (1.674)	1.678 (0.471)	< .001	.988
Moderate	206	4.927 (1.383)	3.888 (0.822)	< .001	.789
High	99	6.253 (1.063)	6.444 (0.499)	.127	-.239
Total	364	5.066 (1.611)	4.225 (1.716)	< .001	.685

Perceived closeness is not a pre-requisite for IEO success. Conversely, engagement in PO enhances a sense of intimacy with colleagues, even for cases of low or moderate perceived closeness.

How do teachers interpret this rise in professional closeness?

Based on the variables examined, the rise appears to be unrelated to age, gender, years of experience, seniority at the centre, prior PO experience or the centre's perceived time allocation. However, educational stage does seem to play a role.

Teachers attribute this rise in closeness to feedback exchange, knowledge sharing, personal bonding and mutual aid.

Mutual aid
f = 4

Feedback
f = 8

Sharing information
f = 7

Personal bond
f = 6

What impact does closeness have on teachers' perception of learning?

Teachers' perception of learning post-intervention is exceedingly high.

3.44 out of 4 (Standard Deviation = 0.477)

Perceptions of learning are unaffected by age, gender, years of experience, years at the centre, educational stage or prior experience in PO. However, it appears that the centre's perceived time allocation does have an impact.

The final level of closeness influences the perception of learning: higher closeness aligns with a heightened perception of learning. The findings even indicate that excessive initial closeness may be marginally less beneficial for learning.

Hence, it is clear that the final rather than initial level of closeness influences the perception of learning.

08 Knowledge Co-Construction

Knowledge co-construction (KCC) is the collaborative process where a group of individuals work together to collectively generate knowledge, thereby enhancing the group's shared knowledge (Popp and Goldman, 2016).

PO is frequently cited as fostering teacher learning. This study aimed to investigate whether teachers have opportunities for constructive criticism in feedback sessions (Flores et al., under review). 273 audio recordings were analysed, from which a random sample of 94 (34.43%) was selected.



How do teachers collaboratively build knowledge during feedback sessions in PO practice?

The analysis process is outlined below:

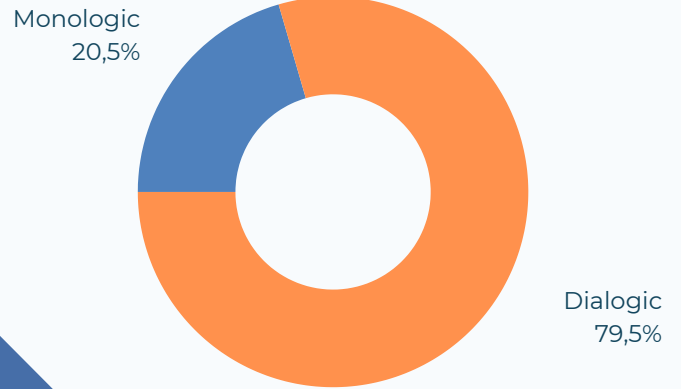
- ↗ Classification of feedback sessions based on whether they exhibit monologic or dialogic discourse.
 - Monologic discourse is primarily led by one teacher, restricting essential interaction for collaborative learning.
 - Dialogic discourse is marked by generating collaborative inquiries, developing concepts and engaged involvement from both educators.
- ↘ Identification and analysis of discursive moves related to collaborative and non-collaborative knowledge-building in an interactive dialogue.
 - By using a system of categories and subcategories from Popp and Goldman (2016), the analysis focuses on the meaning and significance of each speaking turn with discursive movements.
- ↗ Identification and analysis of the differences between the observer and observed roles in relation to KCC.

The feedback sessions are classified using a quantitative analysis with a descriptive and inferential approach. Subsequently, the analysis becomes qualitative and involves adjusting categories and sub-categories in line with Popp and Goldman (2016), with the inclusion of a category focusing on reflection on classroom practice.

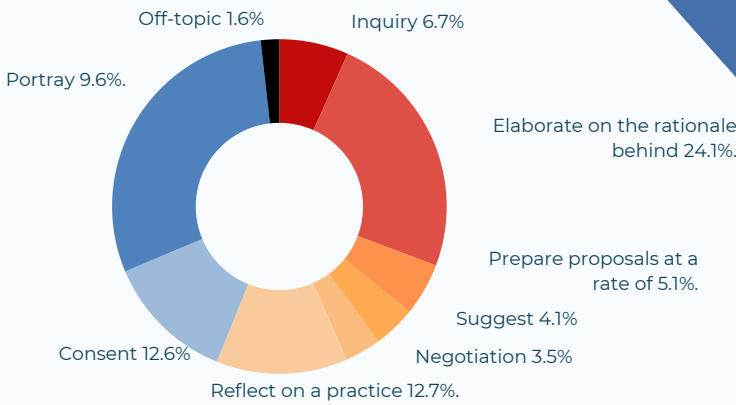
What is the discourse like during feedback sessions?

20.5% of the analysed feedback sessions exhibit monologic discourse, whereas 79.5% feature dialogic discourse.

Dialogic feedback sessions support constructive critical thinking, particularly through exploratory discourse interactions. In monologues, the opportunity for interactive learning diminishes.



Discursive move frequency distribution:



Quality feedback, collaboration support mechanisms, discussion improvement tools, and the use of observational evidence would be essential for optimising PO benefits.

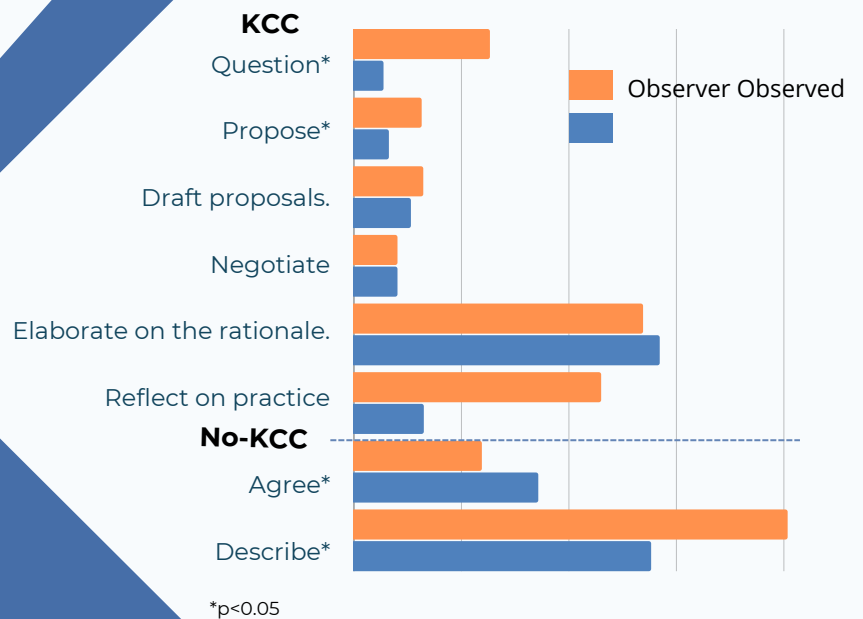
What is the discourse like within KCC?

In the time analysis, 61.9% of discursive moves align with KCC, 36.3% with no KCC, and only 1.8% are off-topic.

What differences exist between the roles?

Both roles benefit from learning opportunities.

- ✓ The observer plays a crucial role in KCC, learning and reflecting on one's own practice.
- ✓ The observed individual benefits from constructive feedback and self-reflection.



The significant number of interactive sessions and the proportion of moves related to KCC, particularly in explaining rationale and reflecting on practice, offer evidence of the learning opportunities for teachers in PO.

09 FEEDBACK

Feedback is characterised as "the process by which the learner comprehends the information they receive from various sources and utilises it to enhance their task and/or learning strategies" (Carless and Boud, 2018).

Research indicates that the primary challenge of PO lies in the feedback exchanged by teachers (De la Iglesia, et al., 2024).

Kinicki and Kreitner's (2006) model, focused on feedback quality, enabled recurring features in conversations to be identified, as well as those needing more detailed consideration during feedback sessions to enhance teaching practice. This study assesses PO feedback quality and the variables that affect it (De la Iglesia et al. in review).

217 audio recordings of the feedback sessions were analysed and categorised based on their characteristics.

217

audio recordings



Quality feedback characteristics:

- ✓ **Specific**
- ✓ **Timely**
- ✓ **Appropriate**
- ✓ **Based on behaviour**
- ✓ **Proactive**
- ✓ **Linked to an action plan**
- ✓ **Based on observed data**
- ✓ **Facilitates collaboration**

Quality characteristics	N. audio files	% audios
Specific	215	99.08
Timely	216	99.54
Appropriate	215	99.08
Based on behaviour	213	98.16
Proactive	139	64.06
Linked to an action plan	127	58.53
Based on observed data	213	98.16
Facilitates collaboration	175	80.65

Over 98% (n=213) of the analysed recordings met the quality criteria for specific, timely, appropriate, and based on behaviour and observed data. The least common characteristics were: proactive (n=139), linked to an action plan (n=127) and facilitates collaboration (n=175).

Which variables predict the emergence of high-quality feedback?

Variables	Quality predictor?
Years of teaching experience	No
Years at the centre/school	No
Previous PO experience	No
Being on the management team	No
Educational stage	No
Level of interaction	Yes

Feedback quality is notably higher in dialogic and mixed sessions compared to monologic sessions.

The level of interaction is the variable that predicts feedback quality.

The research validates the significance of quality dialogue in conversations to enhance knowledge co-construction between teachers during feedback sessions.

**The more dialogic the exchange,
the better the feedback quality.**

Knowledge co-construction enhances feedback-related attributes, fostering improved teaching practice.

10 IMPROVING PRACTICE

The primary goal of PO is to identify an improvement objective (IO), strategise on how to achieve it, implement it and guarantee its sustainability over time.

This stage of the research analyses the quality of the IOs selected by teachers, the moment in the PO process when they emerge and the

support from written guidelines in materialising the IOs (Miquel et al., under review). Additionally, it also looks at the potential application of IOs in the classroom (Flores et al., under review).

228
teachers



A sample of 228 teachers was randomly selected.



A high-quality IO encompasses enhancements in teaching practice that align with student learning, outlines actionable steps for implementation and incorporates measures involving additional teachers and/or the centre.

A qualitative documentary analysis revealed various patterns concerning when IOs occur.

60% (n=139) of participants identify the IO immediately after the session where they were observed and retain it until it is included in their final reflective synthesis.

Pattern	Post-observation	Feedback session	Final reflective synthesis	no.	%
1	No (IO)	No (IO)	IO	23	10.09
2	No (IO)	Yes(IO)	IO	54	23.69
3	Yes(IO)	No (IO)	IO	12	5.26
4	Yes(IO)	Yes(IO)	IO	139	60.96
			Total	228	100

IO Level	no.	weight
low	94	41.23
medium	96	42.10
high	38	16.67
Total	228	100

Upon reviewing the quality of the written IOs, it is evident that only 17% (n=38) show a high quality level.

Of these, over 76% were identified in the post-observation report, confirmed in the feedback session and maintained in the final synthesis, in line with pattern 4 above.

Do written guidelines aid in specifying IOs?

Thanks to the voluntary participation of 46 teachers in group interviews, the findings were clarified and explained. Based on the post-observation report and the final reflective synthesis, over 90% of teachers find them beneficial and positive, with some nuances.

Positive

Both instruments require individual preparation. This enables them to reflect, expresses emotions and thoughts, and outline the IOs.

Usefulness

The reflective synthesis is a more objective document that aids in focusing on practice improvement aspects. In contrast, the post-observation report is more general, enquiring into other aspects.

Limitations

Writing written reports requires time and effort, both resources that may not always be readily accessible.

Improvements

Adjust the centre's schedule to allocate specific time to write documents.

To what extent are improvement objectives transferred into the classroom?

Attainment Level for Improvement Objectives (IO)		Observed		Observer	
		no.	%	no.	%
	No transfer	1	0.87	0	0
1	The IO and its associated activities are partly transferred (25%).	1	0.87	0	0
2	The IO and its associated activities are somewhat transferred (50%).	9	7.83	6	5.22
3	The IO and its associated activities are mostly transferred (75%).	56	48.70	40	34.78
4	The IO and its associated activities are fully transferred (100%).	48	41.74	69	60
	Total	115	100	115	100

After analysing 115 teacher pairs in a second observation, the findings indicate the IO is mostly transferred into the classroom, as reported by both observed individuals (90.44%, n=104) and observers (94.78%, n=109).

PO enhances professional development by facilitating the transfer of learning to practice.

11 CONCLUSIONS

International organisations and prior research highlight PO as a potent means of professional collaboration that fosters crucial teacher development. Despite its potential and the associated benefits for teachers, educational institutions and student learning, PO remains underutilised.

The research presented here is based on a review of work produced by the international scientific community and previous studies conducted by the Universitat de les Illes Balears (UIB) and the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), in collaboration with the Balearic Department of Education and the Xarxa de Competències Bàsiques (Core Competencies Network) at the Catalan Department of Education. The research focuses on PO involving teacher pairs with similar levels of experience and status. These pairs voluntarily observe each other's teaching practices in the classroom using data collection tools. Subsequently, they provide constructive feedback to facilitate reflection and identify areas for improvement.

A study was conducted involving 572 teachers, 244 from the Balearic Islands and 328 from Catalonia, according to a four-stage PO procedure: pre-observation, observation, feedback and reflective synthesis. The research used a mixed sequential explanatory design, combining quantitative pre- and post-tests with qualitative analysis of documents and the content interaction in feedback sessions.

The findings have identified:

- Enhanced perception of teacher collaboration, particularly in collaborative culture, collective agency and attitudes towards collaboration. This indicates teachers view PO as a method for fostering a collaborative culture.
- Although participants were volunteers and had a positive attitude towards PO, they initially displayed resistance in both roles (observed and observer), which diminished notably by the end of the PO cycle. Engaging in structured PO processes helps alleviate these resistances, even if they are minimal at the outset.
- A perceived initial closeness with a partner is not a requirement for PO, as is commonly believed. Conversely, engaging in PO enhances this perception, even if it is initially minimal or moderate.
- Most feedback sessions were dialogic in nature, involving an exchange between the observed individual and the observer. Discursive interactions related to knowledge co-construction were identified and comprised 62% of the session time, with a focus on elaborating on the rationale and reflecting on practice. These findings offer insights into the potential for peer learning and teacher professional development through PO.
- The feedback in dialogic sessions met high-quality standards, particularly in terms of being specific, timely, appropriate and based on behaviour and observed data. Constructive dialogue is key.

- Most observed individuals (60%) identify improvement objectives immediately following the observation session and retain them, further enhancing them in the feedback session and documenting them in the final report. Those who follow this pattern of individual and collaborative reflection develop higher quality objectives.
- After analysing a sample of 115 pairs who, after defining their improvement objectives, undertake a second observation, the findings show over 90% transferred their proposed objective to classroom practice. PO positively impacts professional development by facilitating the transfer of learning to teaching performance.

In short, the research findings have enabled strengthened PO use through a straightforward yet effective process, aided by support materials and a video. These have been trialled by a substantial number of teachers, offering evidence to validate the ability of PO to enhance teacher professional development and foster collaborative school environments. Moreover, the study has pinpointed areas for improvement, particularly with regard to the quality of feedback sessions.

The findings have been circulated to participants twice and shared with the community in twelve publications (articles and book chapters), alongside presentations at the two most important international educational research conferences (EARLI 2023, four presentations) and AERA 2024 (one presentation).

Finally, the following website was established to make information available to the community:

<https://www.observacioentreiguals.com/>

The site hosts the project's findings and related resources in three languages.

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