

# Practical Uses of the Classroom Observation Scale

A Self Reflective Approach



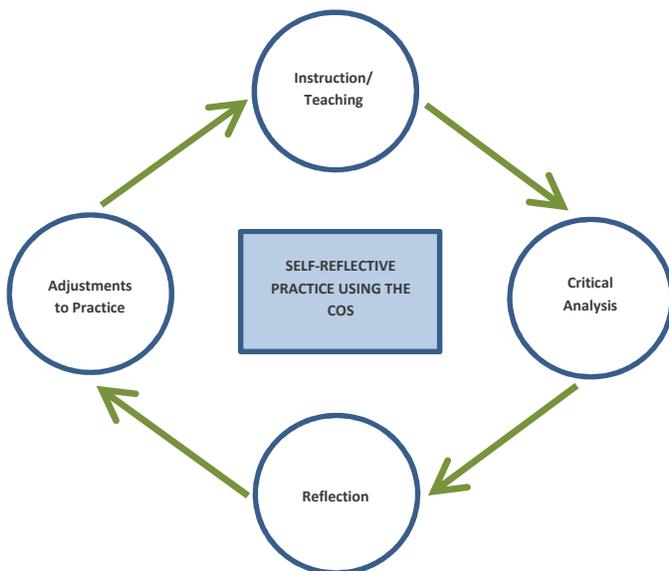
Pembina Hills Research Project



*"The capacity to reflect on action so as to engage in a process of continuous learning is one of the defining characteristics of professional practice" (Schoen, 1983)*

## Introduction to the Classroom Observation Scale (COS)

The Classroom Observation Scale (Stanovich, 1994; Stanovich & Jordan, 1998) is a rating and observation scale comprised of instructional skills and teaching techniques derived from literature on effective teaching (McGhie-Richmond, Underwood, & Jordan, 2007). It includes both constructivist (i.e., teacher searching for learner understanding) and teacher-directed elements as well as, different classroom management, time management and lesson presentation skills. It is believed that observation and reflection guided by this scale allows for a more concrete, in-depth analysis of teaching practices.



## How to Use the Classroom Observation Scale as a Self-Reflection Tool

1. Choose one specific class period or teaching activity as the focus of the self-reflection.
2. Immediately following the instruction (or as close as possible), self-rate the teaching activities using the "Self-Reflection on Organization and Management of Instructional Time" tool.
3. As each item is rated, use the space provided to note specific examples for each category.
4. Use ratings and observations to reflect on positive teaching practices and adjustments that can be made in the future.

*"The primary benefit of reflective practice for teachers is a deeper understanding of their own teaching style and ultimately, greater effectiveness as a teacher" (Ferraro, 2000)*

Use self-reflection tool on an ongoing basis for continued self-reflection and analysis

## Useful Resources

- **Reflective Practice and Professional Development** by Joan M. Ferraro (2000)- <http://www.ericdigests.org/2001-3/reflective.htm>
- **Reflective Practice** by The Learning Site - <http://www.learningandteaching.info/learning/reflecti.htm>
- Jordan, A. (2008). *Introduction to inclusive education*. Mississauga, ON: John Wiley & Sons Canada. [Adapted from Englert, C.S., Tarrant, K. L., & Mariage, T.V. (1992). Defining and redefining instructional practice in special education: Perspectives on good teaching. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 15(2), 62-86.]
- Jordan, A., & McGhie-Richmond, D. (2014). Identifying effective teaching practices in inclusive classrooms. In C. Forlin & T. Loreman (Eds.) *International Perspectives on Inclusive Education Volume 3, Measuring Inclusive Education*, pp. 133-162.

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