

From Notes to Narrative: Writing Up and Feeding Back

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LXPSkills
LXPTalent

Today we will ...

- Turn observation notes into a clear, factual and balanced written record.
- Highlight strengths and development points in writing without bias.
- Plan and deliver a feedback conversation that is specific, supportive and linked to the written report.





Who am I?

Hollie Barnes-Lomax

- Lover of creating spaces and resources for **all** teachers and students/apprentices to collaborate, learn & thrive!
- Teaching and Learning Excellence Manager at FE college
- Teacher Training lecturer (L3 AET/L5 DiT/PGCE)
- Deputy Chair for SFEC Committee at English Association
- Education Quality and Standards board member for ETF

Let's get started...



Finish this sentence in the chat

**A good observation report should
always...**

A good observation report should always...

- be fair.
- be clear and factual.
- focus on learning, not the teacher.
- support improvement.
- feel safe to receive.
- be something I'd be happy to receive myself.



Why it matters?

Done well....

- turn evidence into understanding
- turn observation into learning
- turn feedback into professional growth
- turn accountability into trust

Done poorly, they....

- distort what actually happened
- damage confidence
- create compliance instead of improvement
- turn observation into performance rather than development

**From seeeing to
recording**

”

“**Observation alone is not enough.** We have to understand the significance of what we see, hear....”

- Dewey (1938)

Notes to narrative

Notes are messy.

When we observe, we don't record reality, we **filter** it.

So the skill isn't note-taking.
The skill is **translation.**



Over to you...



Two of these are evidence. The others are interpretations.

Identify the numbers which are **evidence**

1. "Learners were disengaged."
2. "Four learners asked for clarification during the task."
3. "The explanation was unclear."
4. "Two learners stopped working and began talking during independent practice."
5. "The task was too easy for the group."

Pop an answer in the chat.



Translating

- Apply a JIE format
- Lead with learners
- Use professional language
- Build balance

Rule: If it can't be observed, it can't be written.

Raw notes to professional narrative

Notes	Narrative
“Good questioning, strong relationships”	“The teacher used targeted questioning to check understanding across the group, with eight learners contributing responses. This supported engagement and sustained participation in the task.”
“Task too easy, learners bored”	“Several learners completed the task quickly and waited for further instruction, while others required additional support to continue. This created uneven levels of challenge across the group.”

Highlighting practice

”

“Positive feedback acts as a catalyst, amplifying teacher motivation and engagement and fostering a professional learning environment”

- Câmpean, A. (2024)



Over to you...

Consider on the document you use to record observations. Think about the structure, headings, and prompts and reflect on the following questions?

- What does this document prioritise?
- Does it lead with evidence or judgement?
- Does it support development?

Pop an answer in the chat.

A good observation proforma

- Evidence-led
- Learning-focused
- Balanced
- Actionable
- Dialogic
- Developmental

Observation of Learning Record

Observer: _____ Date: _____ Class / Subject: _____

Evidence of Learning:

Strengths Observed:

Areas for Development:

Action Steps:

Observer's Reflections:

Without bias

Balance is **structural**, not sentimental

Not “a positive and a negative”.

- What supported learning
- What limited learning
- What could improve learning

Development language is **invitational**, not judgemental

Not: “Needs to improve pace.”

But: “Learners would benefit from...”



Without bias continued..

“The teacher needs to improve differentiation and behaviour management.”

Higher-attaining learners completed activities quickly with limited stretch, while two learners required sustained support to access the task. This restricted progress across the group. Adjusting task structure and support strategies is necessary to secure appropriate challenge and progress for all learners.”

**Plan and deliver a
feedback
conversation**



Over to you...

Where and how do you normally deliver feedback from observations?

Pop an answer in the chat.

Best practice for feedback

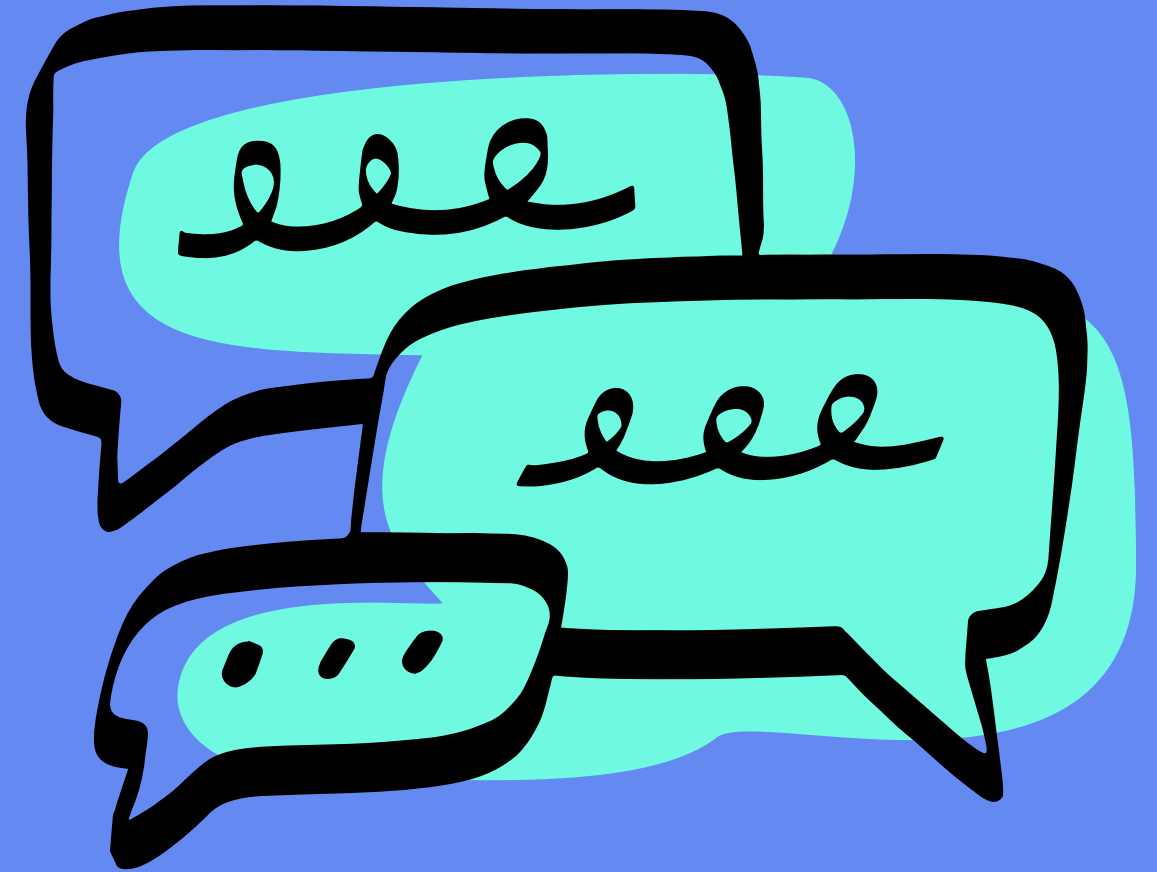
- planned
- professional, safe space
- timely
- evidence-led
- linked to the written record
- dialogic, not directive
- learning-focused
- action-oriented

Feedback

1)
2)
3)
4)
5)

A feedback conversation

- is anchored in the written record
- uses evidence, not opinion
- reflects what was actually observed
- links directly to learning impact
- creates continuity between record and conversation



Structure the conversation

Language matters:

- “Here’s what I observed...”
- “This mattered because...”
- “How did that feel from your perspective?”
- “One possible next step could be...”



Every conversation should end with a shared focus.

Can you coach the next steps?

GROW Model

- **Goal** – What are we trying to improve?
- **Reality** – What's happening now?
(evidence)
- **Options** – What could we try?
- **Will** – What will we do next?



Key Takeaways

- Observation becomes learning through language.
- Writing shapes culture.
- Feedback drives improvement.



Pause and Reflect

What will you change first in how you write or deliver feedback after your next observation

Pop an answer in the chat

**Thank you for your
time**

Stay in touch

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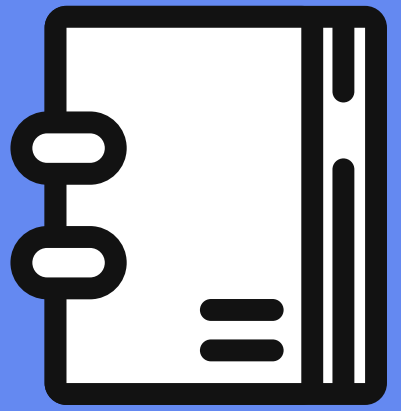


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References and Further Reading



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