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## Protocol 128

**Name of the protocol: Observing your classroom practice**

**Sources: 'Reader actieonderzoek, Fontys Lerarenopleiding Tilburg', Rutger van de Sande & Maud Slaats.**

**Purpose of the tool:**

The tool provides a number of tips to help teachers in observing practice.

**materials:**

In some cases you need a video camera.

**Time:**

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**Roles:**

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**Process:**

Observing classroom practice is only useful if you are aiming to collect data on student (and maybe your own) behaviour. You use this method exclusively if you want to find out how students operate in the classroom. If, on the other hand, you are interested in how students think or feel about something, or in what they know about a certain subject, observation is not the way to go.

A suitable way of working when observing is as follows:

1. Before starting your observation, think about what exactly you are interested in. What you are interested in depends on your research question or wondering.
2. Try to formulate the specific behaviours that you are looking for and put descriptions of these behaviours in an observation scheme. An observation scheme consists of a template that makes it easy to mark instances of the behaviours. How you shape the observation scheme is up to you. Make it as easy as possible to record the behaviours you are looking for.
3. After analyzing your findings, you can write down the results of your observations in a report.

It is important to notice that it is very hard to teach class and observe your students at the same

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time. There are at least three ways to avoid having to do this:

- Ask a colleague to take the role of observer in your classroom. Be sure to take some time beforehand to talk with this colleague about the observation scheme you developed, the ideas behind it, and what you expect from your colleague.
- You use a video camera to record your lesson and observe the lesson yourself afterwards. Take into account the privacy of your students. Please note that in most cases it is required to have permission of the students' parents.
- You observe a colleague's lesson. In some cases it may not be that important who is teaching the class, or you may even be curious about how your colleagues handle something. In those cases this could be the way to go.

Your observations will lead to descriptions of a number of specific 'incidents' that happened during the lesson. These incidents are your 'research data'.

**Debrief:**

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