

Four Patterns of Teacher Observation

Part 1: Why?

Program Goals

- Be able to name and describe the four patterns of observation
- Be able to conduct with confidence performative and normative observations
- Develop clear action steps for building shared language and understanding

Part 1 Goals:

- Convince you that using a common framework with teachers and school leaders is worth the effort!

Why do we conduct classroom observations?

- Evaluation
- To help them grow
- To see what's happening
- Follow up on PD
- Check on kids
- Fulfill observation mandates

This lack of clarity:

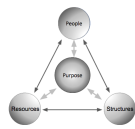
- Creates stress!!!
- Causes unclear or conflicting expectations by both teachers and school leaders
- Undermines the collection of good and useful data
- Leads to ineffective feedback
- Encourages a haphazard approach that lacks follow through

Reflect on a recent teacher observation:

What was the purpose	Did the teacher know the purpose?	What kind of feedback did you provide?	Did the feedback have any impact?

Advantages of a common framework:

- Purposeful observations
- Useful data
- Strategic professional development
- Coherence
- Bliss and enlightenment!
- Collaboration



Part 2: The Patterns

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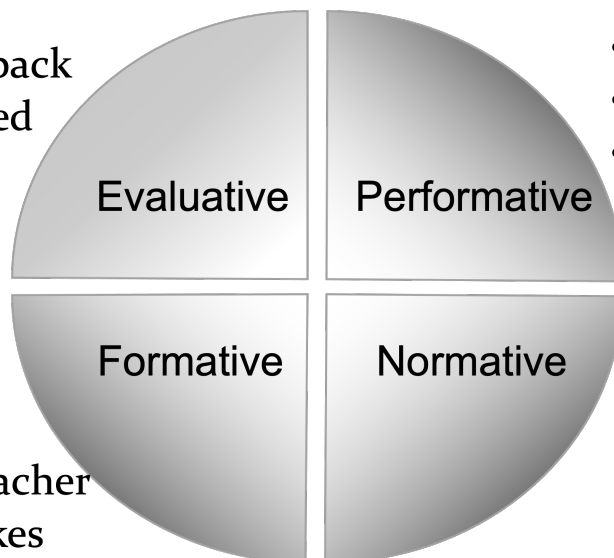
Part 2 Goals:

- Name and differentiate the four patterns

Each pattern asks a different question(s):

- Evaluative: How well is the teacher doing their job?
- Performative: What can I (the observer) learn?
- Normative:
 - Was our PD successful?
 - What comes next?
- Formative:
 - Was our coaching cycle successful?
 - What comes next?

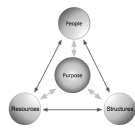
- Benefits the system
- High Stakes
- Summative
- Formal feedback
- Self-contained



- Benefits the observer
- No stakes
- Informative
- No feedback (!)
- Preliminary

- Benefits a teacher
- Medium stakes
- Formative
- Formal feedback
- Part of a cycle

- Benefits a group of teachers
- Low stakes
- Formative
- Group feedback
- Informs PD



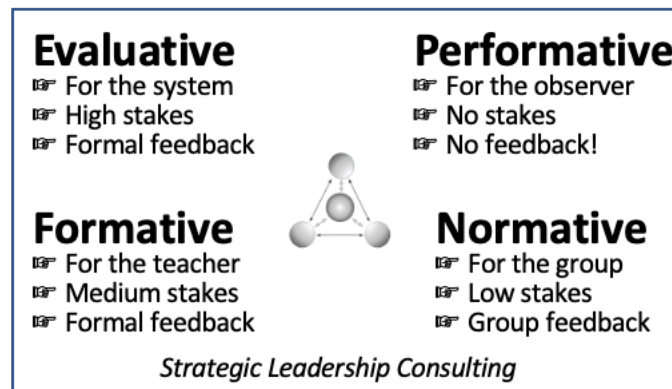
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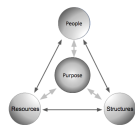
How simple walkthroughs might differ based on the pattern being used:

Pattern	Why?	Data	Post-observation
Performative	Wondering what the level of engagement is (individual or group)	Mental notes, impressions, stories	Personal reflection, discussion with ILT, maybe 5minute coaching
Formative	Part of a coaching cycle for a specific teacher	Look-fors identified in a previous coaching session	Meet, share data, next steps
Normative	Following up on a PLC on engagement strategies	Implementation rates/fidelity of look-fors from training	Group, aggregated data, plan next PD

Printable card!

This is a business size card that you can stick in your lanyard if you want to have the four patterns close by.





Part 3: Performative Observations

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Part 3 Goals:

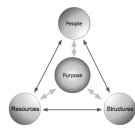
- Understand how the purpose of performative observations influences their structure and characteristics
- Be able to conduct performative observations

Performative observations are for the observer's benefit. I may do performative observations for many reasons:

- Observe good teaching – because it makes us smile
- Check in on a student
- Be visible
- Know what is happening in classrooms
- Show teachers you appreciate them
- Look for patterns
- Follow up on hunches

In the following example, we will be following up on a hunch. We are three weeks into the school year, and we have had a large number of office referrals from the fourth grade during the first part of the day. All three of the teachers are early-career and one of them is a lateral entry teacher. We suspect that poor classroom procedures may be part of the issue, but we need more information. Notice that we are the ones who need the data, so this observation is for our benefit, which makes it performative.

Purpose	Discipline problems early in the day
Focus	Evidence of beginning class procedures
Documentation	Mental notes, maybe tally
Data collected	Quality and consistency of procedures
Customization	NA
Data sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers: none or 5mc • ILT: Impressions, tally score
Next steps	ILT discussion
Teacher development	Pending



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Feedback

Because performative observations are for our own benefit, it is critical that we provide no feedback to teachers following performative observations. None!

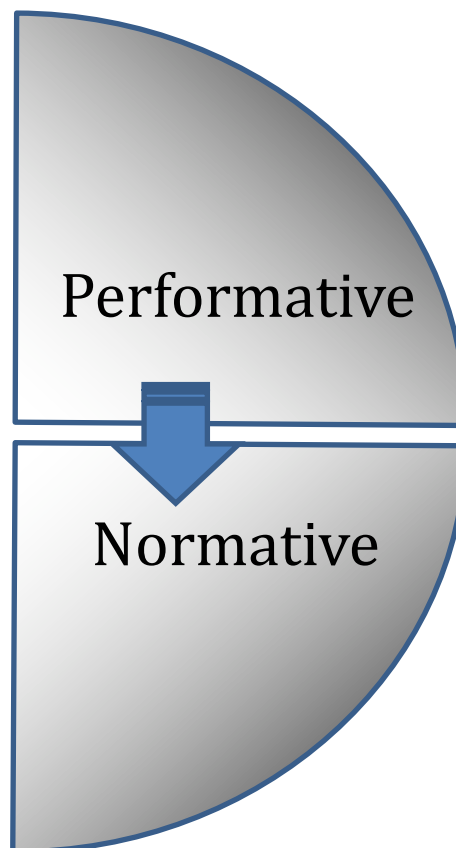
Why?

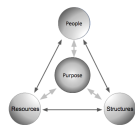
- The observation isn't about the teacher
- Feedback can create a wall as teachers always brace themselves for a possible critical piece of feedback
- Feedback reinforces the feeling by teachers that they are being judged
- Knowing there is no feedback alleviates stress

There are two exceptions to providing feedback:

1. The teacher requests feedback about a specific thing. For example on the challenge level of a particular question they asked the class.
2. As part of a 5-minute coaching session. Alluding to one positive thing you saw as an introductory statement to a 5-minute coaching session is acceptable because the rest of the session is for their own reflection, not your feedback. Example: Ms. Carrie, the students were working so well together in their groups, what else went well today?

Performative observations may lead to normative observations





Part 4: Normative Observations

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Part 4 Goals:

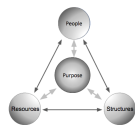
- Understand how the purpose of normative observations influences their structure and characteristics
- Be able to conduct normative observations

Imagine that after doing our previous performative observations and sharing them as an instructional leadership team, we realized that our three 4th-grade teachers needed some help with classroom management. The instructional coach develops a training that teaches the teachers how to teach, prompt, and reinforce an entering class procedure.

In this situation we are working with a group of teachers, and our observations follow up on professional development (PD) and will likely be used to make future PD decisions. This makes them normative observations.

Normative

Purpose	Opening class procedures implementation
Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look <u>fors</u>: Store, Sit, Write • Positive verbal reinforcement • Prompt with questions
Documentation	• Checklist/tally/notes
Data collected	Quality and consistency of procedures
Customization	Look <u>fors</u>
Data sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers: group, aggregated • ILT: disaggregated, notes
Next steps	Discuss with teachers: writing prompts
Teacher development	Revisit quality prompts Coaching cycle with Mr. Gale



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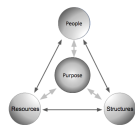
We develop a simple tracking sheet (an instrument) to capture data related to the three parts of the entering class procedure (store, sit, write), reinforcement, and prompting statements.

We then observe each teacher three times. Between the three teachers there are 70 students, and this yields 210 data points for each of the three parts of the procedure. IN addition, we tally the number of positive reinforcement statements and record verbatim evidence of asking questions as a way of prompting students to follow the procedure.

Normative Observation Tool and Data

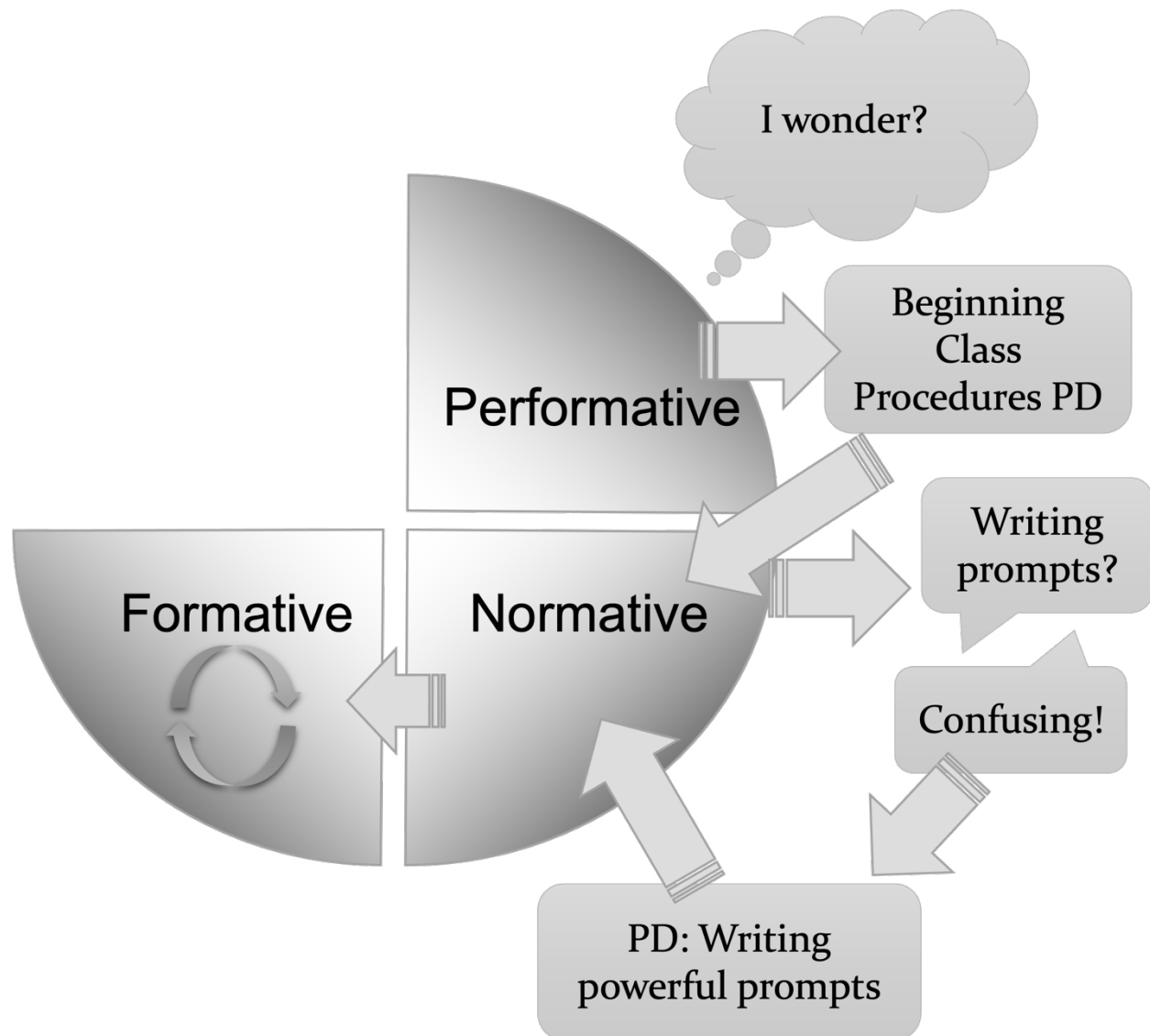
	Store	Sit	Write	Reinforcement	Qs	Notes
Perrin	23/23 23/23 22/23	23/23/ 23/23 22/23	0/23 10/23 10/23	35	When needed, focused on store and sit	No writing prompt Prompt unclear Gave verbal prompt
Gale	14/23 8/23 5/23	23/23 16/23 16/23	12/23 16/23 16/23	6	Telling to sit repeatedly	Long transition, students off-task early, eventually all writing
Bishop	24/24 24/24 24/24	24/24 24/24 24/24	22/24 23/24 23/24	77	Consistently, with a smile, then reinforcement	Students are writing but prompt is not related to standard
Aggre gated	<u>167</u> 210	<u>195</u> 210	<u>132</u> 210	118		

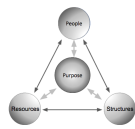
Based on our nine observations, we conclude that the group needs additional PD on writing quality prompts. We also decide that Mr. Gale needs specific support (coaching) to better implement the procedure.



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At this point, we have completed a number of activities that all feed into each other. As is often the case, our normative observations, which follow PD, will lead to additional normative observations of subsequent PD. The normative observations also surfaced a specific need of an individual teacher and leads to a formative observation.





Part 5: Formative Observations

Program Goals

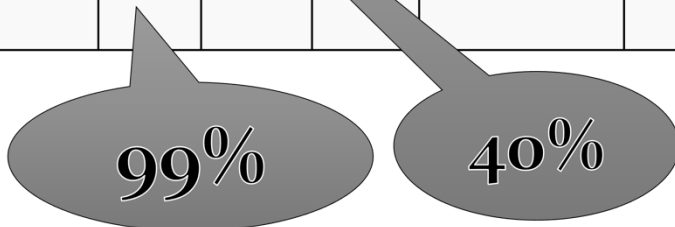
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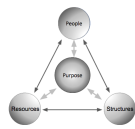
Part 5 Goals:

- Understand how normative observations can lead to formative coaching cycles
- Understand how the purpose of formative observations influences their structure and characteristics

We can adapt the aggregated normative data to facilitate a conversation with Mr. Gale and to work with him to focus on being more engaged when students enter the class and to more frequently reinforce positive execution of the procedure.

	Store	Sit	Write	Reinforcement	Qs	Notes
Gale	14/23 8/23 5/23	23/23 16/23 16/23	12/23 16/23 16/23	6	Telling to sit repeatedly	Long transition, students off-task early, eventually all writing
Aggregated	167 210	195 210	132 210	118		





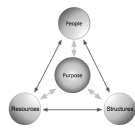
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Our plan for formative observation looks almost identical to the one for normative observation, with only a few tweaks to focus on Mr. Gale's goals. This plan leads to a coaching cycle (PD), with the subsequent formative observations providing data on the success of the PD and informing the next steps.

Purpose	Help Mr. Gale implement beginning class procedure
Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look <u>for</u>s: Store, Sit, Write • Positive verbal reinforcement • Prompt with questions
Documentation	• Checklist/tally/notes
Data collected	Quality and consistency of procedures
Customization	Look <u>for</u> s
Data sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher: numbers and words • ILT: summary, details if needed
Next steps	Discuss with teacher
Teacher development	Coaching cycles with Mr. Gale

We can use the same instrument as we did previously, but with a separate row for each observation.

Gale	Store	Sit	Write	Reinforcement	Qs	Notes
1	16/23	23/23	19/23	9 "Thank you, A" "Good R"	"J, what should you be doing?" "Why didn't you put your things away?"	3:15 Need more interaction during store. Feedback is generalized.
2	22/23	23/23	23/23	35 "Good job storing your things" "You are moving so nicely" "I see V is already writing"	"J, what is step 2?" "M, where can we find the prompt?"	2:35 Lots of reinforcement, students smiling and moving quickly. J is taking a long time going through his book bag. Providing more specific feedback 50% of time.
3	23/23	23/23	23/23	21	"J, where is the prompt?"	1:12 High use of specific feedback. Few prompts needed



Part 6: Next Steps

Program Goals

- Be able to name and describe the four patterns of observation
- Be able to conduct with confidence performative and normative observations
- Develop clear action steps for building shared language and understanding

Part 6 Goals:

- Make a commitment to act
- Identify an A-B step
- Develop a plan

Reflect on some of your previous observations:

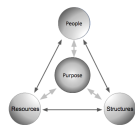
- What might you do differently?
- How would the value of your time be increased?
- In one year, what might be the impact of developing a shared understanding of the four patterns of observation?

Possible action steps:

- Begin labeling observations
- Begin using the terminology
- Have conversations
 - with your ILT
 - with a trusted teacher
- Share with a couple of trusted teachers and get their thoughts
- Practice making look-for observation tools

A simple plan:

Goal	A-B	Timeframe	Success measures	Accountability partner



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My hopes for you:

- You take action!
- That teachers and school leaders develop and apply a common understanding of the four patterns of teacher observation.
- Improves collaboration between teachers and school leaders.
- Teachers' growth increases while stress decreases.

THANK YOU for working through this pilot project, you are almost done!

Please use the feedback form to help me make this project better. You can use the QR code below or the email link.

Cheers!

Frederick

PS: remember that you can print the business card below for a simple cheat sheet!



frederick@frederickbuskey.com

