

# Observation

Observation is one of the first things a mentor has to do during a traineeship.

- Observations are necessary to give feedback
- Observations are important to see the growth of a student
- ...

## 1. THEORY

Observation can be characterised as two types: incidental and planned.

- Incidental observation occurs during the ongoing (deliberate) activities of mentoring and learning and the interactions between mentor and trainees. Whether incidental observation can be used as a basis for formal assessment and reporting may depend on the records that are kept.
- Planned observation involves deliberate planning of an opportunity for the mentor to observe specific learning outcomes. This planned opportunity may occur in the context of regular activities or may occur through the setting of an assessment task (such as a practical or performance activity).

Based on the competences it is important to do both. It's important that observations occurs all they long and incidental. But sometimes it's necessary that mentors have to focus on one of the competences that students have to reach.

### How do you observe?

- Goal-oriented: while observing our attention is focused on a small part of our environment. We limit ourselves to the data that could provide an answer to a question that we have set ourselves. This allows us to see some things overlooked and are we going to see another with more attention. Take the competences and focus on one or two competences when you observe.
- Systematically: for a good observation we not be satisfied with what we observe happens to be in a particular situation. Instead, we try to obtain information at different times and in different situations. In this way we try coincidences to eliminate as much as possible.
- Objective: Our observation (and its description in our view) should be as close as possible to reality and minimal elements that are added by the observer himself. 'Remain objective' is not as easy as you might think, we spontaneously add all kinds of elements that are in fact not observed in reality. Moreover, we do not all look the same, even though the stimuli that reach us from the environment or identical. We can not avoid our perception is subjective, it is important to realize that our perception is subjective. Write things down as objectively as possible.

## 2. POSSIBLE WAYS (exercises) TO BRING THIS THEORY

1. exercise 1 (Appendix 1): movie
2. exercise 2 (Appendix 2): Student/mentor role-playing
3. exercise 3 (Appendix 3): Make the sentence objective

## 3. TIPS

- Write observations down. It makes it easier to give some feedback.
- Use the competence profile to see what you have to observe.
- Make a little notebook. Here you, and your colleagues can write down some observations.
- ...

## APPENDIX 1

### Movie

→ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ubNF9QNEQLA>

Let the participants watch this movie and let them just observe if they saw anything. Let them watch the movie a second time and give them the following instructions: how many changes do you see during the movie?

The second time, they see much more than the first time. Goal oriented observations are much better.

## APPENDIX 2

### Student/mentor roleplaying

Half of the participants is a mentor, half of them is a student. The students have to act like they having a meeting. Every student has a different role. The topic can be different from organisation to organisation and from training to training. Each mentor has to observe one of the students. Afterwards, the mentor has to give feedback to the student about the competence “working together”.

## APPENDIX 3

### Make this sentence objective

Are the following sentences objective are not. If not, make them as objective as possible.

1. Laura is angry.
2. Tom doesn't take any initiative.
3. Steve is quite lazy today.
4. ...