An Introduction to English Language Teaching
Second Year 2020-2021
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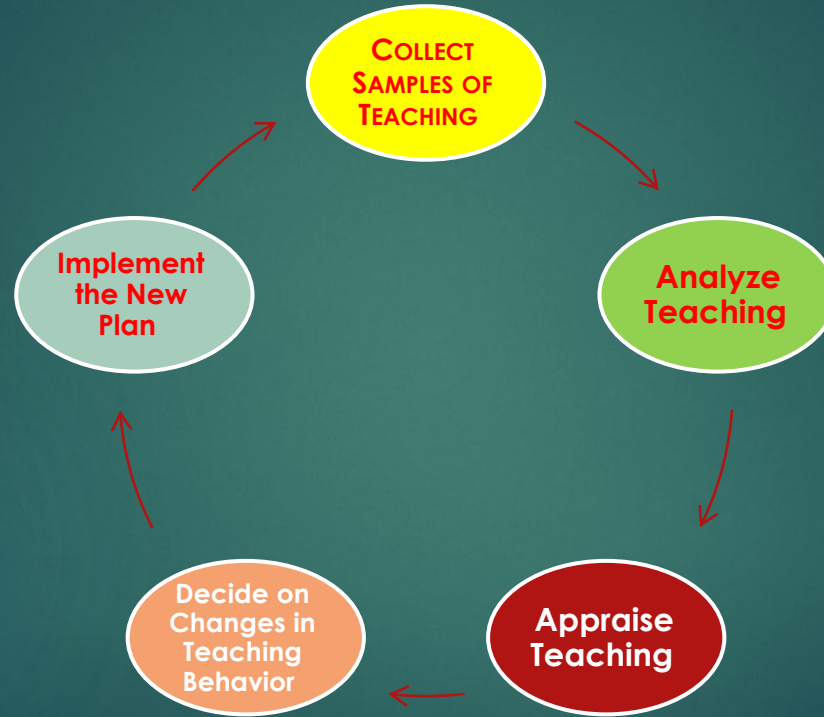
First Semester
Week 1:
Lecture 2:
Exploration of Teaching
Self-Observation

How can teachers explore their own teaching?

COLLECT SAMPLES OF TEACHING

Analyze Teaching

Appraise Teaching

Decide on Changes in Teaching Behavior

Implement the New Plan

Collecting Samples of Teaching

Why do we need to collect samples of our teaching?

The reason behind collecting samples of our teaching is to have descriptions of what actually goes on in the classroom that focus attention on some aspect of our teaching. See page 23.

How do we collect samples of our teaching?

This best way to collect the samples is by using audio recorder or camcorder. Some teachers prefer video taping because of the visual aspect. It helps providing us with ample information about the students' verbal and nonverbal behaviors.

How taping is done?

How taping is done depends on the goals of exploration.

- If you are after exploring the students' reactions to instructions or explanations, the video camera can be focused on the students.
- If you are after knowing what is going on during group work, focus the camcorder on a group of students for a period of time.
- If your aim is to explore the type of questions you ask, have the camcorder focused on you.

Analyzing the samples of teaching

Analyzing the collected samples depends on the objective of your exploration. The analysis can be done in two phases or steps:

Phase (Step) one: Listen or view the tape while doing one or more of the following tasks:

- Focus attention on the aspect of teaching you are interested in learning more about. Write down actual examples of the aspect.
- Make short transcripts from the audio or videotapes.
- Tally the behaviors you are interested in.
- Take notes.

Phase (Step) two: Study interaction and look for patterns by asking the following questions.

- What is going on?
- How is it going on?
- What behaviors do I say recurring?

Appraising Teaching

The next step in the exploration process is evaluate teaching based on the analysis. It is recommended that the evaluation of teaching shouldn't be done in terms of the (good-bad) dichotomy, because such a judgment will hinder the way of exploring. Judgments like "Wow! I've done a great job today." and "Oh! I'm not a very good teacher!", can get in the way of seeing our teaching clearly. We get so involved in the good feelings from our positive judgments and in the bad feelings from our negative judgments that we miss out capturing descriptions that could be quite useful.

How do we appraise our teaching, then?

1. We can do so by asking interpretative questions like:
- How are opportunities possibly provided for students in my class to learn the target language?
- How are opportunities possibly hampered?

Appraising Teaching

The previously mentioned questions are asked in relation to exploring the process of teaching in general. In relation to specific areas of exploration, we can adjust the questions in such a way that addresses the specific aspect we are after. For example if we are after exploring (students' error correction), we may ask questions like:

- Is my treatment of students' errors likeable, comprehensible?
- Does my treatment of students' errors provide them opportunities for feedback on their English?

2. We can appraise our teaching by reasoning that motivates our teaching practices. We can ask questions like the following to help guide us throw the process of reasoning:

- Why do I teach the way I do?
- Why don't I try new techniques?

Deciding on Changes in Teaching Behavior

The next stage in the exploration cycle is to decide on changes we want to make in our teaching through questions like:

- What do I want to keep doing?
- What do I want to change?
- How can I break the pattern?
- How can I bring about new consequences?

Why do we need to change the way we teach?

We need to change the way we teach because there is a problem that needs solution.

What problems frequently occur in language classes?

- Students do not talk.
- Instructions are not clear.
- Students speak their native language excessively.