

An Introduction to English Language Teaching

Second Year 2020-2021

Asst. Prof. Mahdi Alasadi

First Semester

Week 2:

Lecture 3:

**Exploration of Teaching
Observing Other Teachers**



How can teachers see their own teaching in the teaching of others?

In addition to self-observation, observing the teaching of other teachers is also another effective way of exploring our own teaching. One may ask how we can see our own teaching in the teaching of others. The answer is, when we observe others to gain knowledge of the self, we have the chance to construct and reconstruct our own knowledge. When we observe others we should not only have a magnifying glass to look carefully at what was being done, but we should also have a mirror so that we could see what is being done as a reflection of much of what we do.



How can teachers see their own teaching in the teaching of others?

While we observe other teachers, it is possible for us to do the following:

1. Collect samples through audio or video-taping,
2. Take fast notes,
3. Draw sketches,
4. Tally behaviors,
5. Jot down short transcripts like samples of interaction.

The observers and the observed teachers are encouraged to get together to look at photos, listen to tapes, view videos, study short transcripts, and talk about the class. By doing so, all parties will benefit from the exploration process.



Talking as Part of Exploration

Exploration can be enhanced through talking about teaching. It can offer chances to learn about and reflect on our own teaching. Usually talking about teaching is done according to a three-step evaluative sequence:

1. Positive or negative evaluation is made, such as “You kept the students active all the time” (positive) or “You didn’t give the students enough time to speak” (negative).
2. Justification (explanation of why the comment was made).
3. Prescription (what should be done in the class to improve teaching) such as “You should do more pair and group work”

This three-step evaluative sequence to talk about teaching is not productive because judgments take attention away from description of teaching toward feelings about what is going on. Therefore, it is recommended to avoid judgmental and prescriptive discussion. Through nonjudgmental and nonprescriptive talking we can gain lots of description which will help to generate lots of alternatives.



Writing as Part of Exploration

Exploration can be enhanced through writing about teaching in a journal or a diary. The purpose of writing in a journal is to have a place to record our observations of what goes on in our own and other teachers' classrooms. Teachers should include the following list in their journals:

1. Descriptions of classroom interaction as well as analysis and interpretations of these descriptions.
2. Tally sheets, transcripts, sketches and coding as a part of descriptions and analysis.
3. Photos and descriptions of what goes on in each photo.
4. Summaries and reflections on discussions with other teachers.
5. List of alternative ways of teaching aspects of lessons.



Questions

1. What is judgment?
2. What is a prescription?
3. What is an alternative?
4. What is the benefit of generating alternative teaching ideas?
5. Why shouldn't the exploration of teaching be judgmental and prescriptive?

