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# **Classroom Observation in Mentor and Teacher Training**

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## Mentor training

Mentor training should be based on the assumption that if there is an approach to language teaching that promotes language learners' awareness, reflection, autonomy, and fosters co-operation this very same approach should be adopted in training teachers.

This should be especially important when we refer to initial trainee teachers entering the public school system, and even more when we refer to those who will guide and model the trainees' classroom performance at the beginning of their professional career, i.e. the mentors.

Thus, mentors should aim to create in the trainees a positive attitude of autonomous self-development by:

- \* **Helping them become aware** of how all elements involved in the teaching/learning situation – materials, learners and the teacher herself – interact.
- \* **Promoting theoretical study and research** in the latest trends of applied linguistics and teaching methodology.
- \* **Promoting field research in the classroom**, trialling new materials, procedures and techniques and evaluating their impact.
- \* **Promoting co-operative work** in order to share knowledge and experience with fellow-teachers.

The mentor could be seen as an initiator, as a colleague with more experience and expertise, somebody with a higher degree of those qualities that are needed to intervene consciously and coherently in the model (autonomy, reflectiveness, awareness, etc.), but she herself should also be involved in that training cycle, just as any other teacher who wants to develop professionally.

## THE AUTONOMOUS TEACHER TRAINING CYCLE

Theoretical discussion and reflection



Pedagogical transposition and experimentation



Classroom observation



Analysis and interpretation



Evaluation of the impact of teaching procedures, techniques, materials,...



Conclusions ⇒⇒⇒⇑

Fig. 1.

We have called this cycle **the autonomous teacher training cycle** (fig. 1.) in the belief that if one of the main goals our students should achieve is autonomy, the same goal should apply for teachers. Furthermore, we believe that the training of teachers should be a shared responsibility between teachers themselves and mentors or teacher trainers, especially if we consider that in many educational systems mentors or teacher trainers do not have a distinct status but are in fact teachers who have been temporarily appointed as such and given little or no initial training to help them fulfil their tasks.

Within the extensive field of mentor training this article concentrates on the value of developing techniques of classroom observation.

### Observers and Observees

In approaching the topic of classroom observation (i.e. the observation of the teaching carried out by a teacher – either experienced but seeking further training, or an initial trainee), several questions are relevant, for example:

- \* What does classroom observation mean exactly?
- \* Who will be observed and who will observe?
- \* When will observation be carried out?
- \* How to do it? Steps to follow?
- \* What is the focus of observation?
- \* How will the observations be interpreted?
- \* For what purposes will observation be used?
- \* Is the observee going to be evaluated (marked)?

In a training course on observation it is important for the trainees to become comfortable with the idea that although it is usually the trainer or the mentor who observes her trainees, the ultimate goal to be achieved is that trainees too should become skilled observers. Thus they can begin to carry out the autonomous teacher training cycle we have presented.

For this purpose, the activities should balance risk and challenge, i.e. starting with activities which will not threaten loss of face in front of colleagues, and yet at the same time are challenging enough to motivate.

Therefore, initial guidance from the teacher trainer is very important. Observations of lessons on video by unknown teachers can lead mentors and trainees to become acquainted with different observation instruments and techniques. Later they can practise observation by watching or listening to recorded material from their own classes, until they finally feel strong enough to observe or be observed by other colleagues. In this way, the trainees should have a feeling of progress. We agree with de la Serna, M. P. (1994) that classroom observation proves even more useful when carried out continuously over a period of time so that there is evidence of progress experienced that can be evaluated in detail.

Wajnryb, R. (1992) also believes it important that, in a former stage, it is trainers who guide the growth of the mentors' and the trainees' critical abilities, broadening, deepening and refining their powers of observation, interpretation and analysis so that, once these abilities have been developed, they will be able to carry out thorough classroom observations autonomously. They will therefore:

- \* **become more aware of their own teaching** by contrasting it to their colleagues'. By observing other teachers they may extract very positive ideas that can be incorporated to their classes.
- \* **co-operate with fellow-teachers in observing each other**, thus creating an atmosphere of continuous research towards improvement in teaching procedures, techniques and styles. In fact, if we are observed by different observers, either at one time or on different occasions, we will benefit from more varied insights into our teaching and receive a wider range of suggestions and ideas.

This will prove specially rewarding when it happens among the teachers working in the same school, so that they would all become involved in a training cycle with similar interests and in the same circumstances. In fact, by setting up common research and work areas in a department, it will not only be teachers who will benefit from it but the school in general, since it is likely that the establishment of new research foci might lead to cross-curricular investigation implying other departments.

Self-observation can also be an interesting practice, although for this purpose it is convenient to use audio or video equipment, since when we are teaching we are often so absorbed in managing the whole teaching/learning situation that we are not able to concentrate on observing all the processes going on.

Some teachers who at first show more resistance to observation feel that they themselves

could develop professionally on their own, i.e. by observing solely themselves. In this case, the prejudices they show are usually related to previous negative experiences, in which the approach to classroom observation has been judgmental and evaluative, and to lacks of educational systems, which do not consider classroom observation as a regular, professionally useful practice. Therefore, the teacher's universe is seen as a private one in which the classroom becomes her realm where nobody is allowed to trespass, or otherwise a feeling of insecurity and intrusion may appear.

So, trainers have to demonstrate through activities prior to actual classroom observation that one's reflective views on one's professional practice may lead to even more correct decisions if they are discussed and compared to other colleagues. Trainers should warn trainees of the dangers of working in such a closed universe. As Fitzpatrick puts it «Pedagogical isolation can be demotivating and teachers can quickly run short of ideas.» (Fitzpatrick, F., 1995, p. 14)

One step beyond in the quest of autonomy is when language learners co-operate in classroom observation. This stage is, in fact, a clear sign of teachers' and students' maturity. Of course, in this case trainees will also need to follow a continuous process of training guided by the mentor/tutor. A very important reason why it is convenient to promote the autonomous teacher training cycle among the teachers the same school, is that in this way the students will feel that all teachers are following the same model, thus ensuring a sense of coherence, progression and achievement. This will help them regard such practices as classroom observation as a normal part of their education.

Indeed, the more classroom observation becomes a regular part of the teaching/learning situation the less the classroom dynamics and interactions will be affected by the presence of an observer.

Some of the very important areas learners' observation could contribute to are:

- \* **self-observation** on how they learn more effectively, so that learners can make better choices in types of learning materials, activities, strategies,...
- \* **peer and group observation** so that learners can make the best out of sharing knowledge and experiences with their classmates. As for example observing closely learning strategies that have facilitated or hindered the functioning of pair work or group work, so that these strategies can be enhanced or rejected improving learners' participation.
- \* **teacher observation** so that they can give valuable feedback on areas the teacher may need information, about for example what kind of activities proposed by the teacher they thought were most enjoyable, effective, boring,... This could be promoted, forth the use of learners' diaries or the passing around of questionnaires.

## Attitudes towards Observation

No matter how much we praise observation, we know that some teachers still have negative reactions to being observed in their classrooms. These negative reactions, according to Freeman «... seem to stem from the observer's failure, either intentionally or not, to recognise and to affirm the teacher's experience.» (Freeman, D., 1982, p. 28)

Experience of running in-service training courses shows:

- \* The ultimate goal and **main purpose** of classroom observation is teachers' development and professional growth.
- \* Observation should be evaluative, not judgmental, i.e. attitudes and criticism should be positive and constructive. This, of course, would be very difficult for teachers that have to mentor trainee teachers, but at least we thought that it would be important that when mentors engaged in observation or observation management experiences they could feel quite comfortable and thought of the observers (teacher trainers, peers) as a counsellors, advisors, colleagues, etc. instead of somebody who would examine whether they teach or mentor right or wrong.
- \* Observation must not yield prescriptive conclusions, but offer different possibilities from which the teacher may choose.
- \* Observers must not generalise about teachers' behaviour from what has been observed in a certain lesson.
- \* All feedback and analysis must be constructive, i.e. must provide new ideas to help improve the observee's teaching.
- \* Observation must balance the supply of new teaching ideas from the observers' point of view with the praising of the observees' practice. In fact, through observation both observers and observees come across new ideas they can benefit from.
- \* We should be aware of the advantages of observation and regard it as a voluntary practice, although we know in some educational systems it is compulsory at some stages.
- \* Observation must be viewed as a means to reflect on one's professional practice and as a means of co-operation with colleagues. It must be a non-threatening practice, but a safe and rewarding one where courtesy and comradeship are always present.

The «good» observer should:

- \* Agree with the observee on the nature of classroom observation and the observation framework, so that they both have exactly the same idea of what is going on.
- \* Be a good and active listener.
- \* Be able to communicate successfully.

- \* Show real interest in understanding and being understood, trying not to give things for granted.
- \* Care for the observee, without jeopardising her self-esteem as a teacher.
- \* Be assertive.
- \* Be reflective.
- \* Show intuition.
- \* Be a good classroom practitioner.
- \* Have some specific training in classroom observation.
- \* Show sensitivity, sympathy, empathy, enthusiasm, flexibility, modesty, tact, receptiveness, ability to deal with distress, ...

(Cf. the list of mentor qualities in the *Profil du tuteur européen*)

## Towards an Observation Framework

It is important that we define an observation framework in order to perform the actions in a reliable, systematical, and meaningful way. Some of the major areas we will have to consider are: stages of observation, foci of observation and observation schedules.

### Stages of Observation

When we talk about classroom observation we can differentiate three **stages**: pre-observation (before the lesson); the lesson; post-observation (feedback after the lesson).

It is very important that both observer and observee prepare thoroughly for every stage planning with great care the actions they will have to perform.

The shared approach to the three stages could be condensed in the following reflections and suggestions.

#### 1 – Before the Observation

Observer and observee should comment on the following aspects:

– **the lesson plan**, which will have a certain degree of formalisation: it will state lesson aims, classroom interaction, skills to be practised, description of activities, reference to materials, etc.

– **the materials** to be used in the classroom. It is very convenient that a copy of both lesson plan and materials are given to the observer so that she can follow the lesson easily. These will be important for reference the feedback stage.

– insertion of that lesson in the unit of work and in the syllabus, i.e. **what has been taught before and what will be taught afterwards**, so that we avoid the «grasshopper effect» (the impression that we are not progressing smoothly but jumping from one place to another aimlessly).

– **relevant features of the group of learners** that are going to be taught, e.g. if it is a very homogeneous, or multilevel group, if they are accustomed to work on their own, in groups, or if, on the contrary, they prefer a more directive style of teaching, because of previous training or any other reasons. If they are highly motivated extrinsically to learn the language, or not. If there are certain common interests in the group, ...

Both observer and observee should have enough time to discuss all these aspects in detail. In fact, at this stage, a lot of ideas can be exchanged in order to improve one's actions in the classroom. It is also very important that both observer and observee agree when they will have this interview and where. It may be best to have it not very long before the day of the lesson, so that all details dealt with could be remembered. Sometimes, it could even be possible to have it right before the lesson, but this would not allow the observee to introduce any modifications on her plan, or the observer to reflect on the notes taken during the interview.

## 2 – The Lesson

It is true that the presence of a visitor inevitably affects the classroom dynamics. However, this can be minimised if learners have been well informed about the nature of observation and are regularly exposed to this situation. Together with Gower et al (1995) we offer some general guidelines for the lesson stage:

The observer should not be an obvious presence in the eyes of the learners. Both observer and observee will have agreed where the observer should be seated. The most common position is at the back of the room where the observer can see the blackboard, the teacher and the learners, and be, at the same time, detached from the rest of the students in order to avoid distraction.

Some controversy usually arises when dealing with the convenience or not of introducing the observer to the class. Senior teachers usually prefer to explain to their pupils that they will have regular visits from colleagues in order to observe their performance as a way of exchanging new ideas in order to improve their teaching. Some teachers encourage their students to reflect on the importance of learning from colleagues, the same way pupils could learn from each other when they work or study in groups. They believe that they should instruct their students to act as if the observer were not there and request that the observer should not be

invited to participate in the lesson. (Researching the pupils' perceptions of the observer and of the observation scheme is itself a field too vast to cover. Accordingly it is not discussed here).

The observer should be silent during the lesson and should not engage in conversation with the students nor intervene except in cases where the teacher invites it (perhaps when undergoing difficulties).

The observer will inevitably be the focus of attention of the teacher at some stage of the lesson. In this case, she should look relaxed and interested, showing support and confidence. However, it is very important to remember that the observed lessons should not be meant to please the observer or to show off. As a general rule, the teacher should follow her usual patterns of behaviour and use types of materials, resources and techniques her students are acquainted with.

### 3 – Feedback

It is quite obvious that no observation is totally objective because of the many parameters involved in the classroom experience. Although we tend to be objective by using quite reliable methods of data collection and analysis, we have to bear in mind that in interpreting human interaction and behaviour we inevitably use quite a considerable amount of subjectiveness.

Thus, it is important that we try to confirm our interpretations by contrasting them with other sources. It can be useful at the beginning to observe together with some colleagues the same lesson and comment on it. Also, it is useful if the first observations are guided by «expert» observers. In this case, video recorded lessons can be used to show some remarkable aspects that should be noticed and interpreted by the observer.

Approaching classroom observation from different points of view brings together the previous teaching experiences and background of observers and observee and the different foci of the observation considered. At the same time, it evaluates the usefulness and reliability of different observation schedules, making the experience more fruitful.

However, in a feedback session, the important event is the exchange of interior and peripheral perceptions and interpretations, i.e. the dialectical relationship between observer and observee, enabling them to grasp aspects of the classroom experience which otherwise would not have been noticed by either of them.

General guidelines for the organisation of feedback sessions:

- \* It is better to approach an observation from different points of view, i.e. feedback is richer and more varied when different observation schedules have been used and when more than one observer has participated.

- \* In a feedback session the atmosphere should be calm and relaxed.
- \* Do not leave very long after the observation to conduct the feedback session. However, it is recommended that before rushing into giving feedback aimlessly we organise our ideas. It is important that feedback is structured to focus on one particular thing at each time.
- \* Try to approach feedback bearing in mind the various attitudes towards observation. It is important to consider observation as a way to compare perceptions which will enrich our particular experience.
- \* Do not be in a hurry. Give yourself time enough to explain, to debate and propose teaching ideas.
- \* Try to make yourself understood and, more important, try to understand the trainee's point of view. Do not take anything for granted. Try to get into the observee's mind. If still there is something you do not quite understand, do not hesitate to ask.

So that teachers and mentors can practise giving feedback, different activities can be organised such as sessions in which they see an expert observer giving feedback on lessons they had attended.

Also useful are role plays to practise using language appropriate to feedback situations. Here is an example:

## ROLE PLAY

### Role card A: *Observer*

**Move 1:** You have just seen your trainee teacher give a really impressive lesson. In your opinion the students were motivated, the activities were well set up and the overall aims were achieved. (You can add further good points as you wish)

**Move 2:** At this stage do not say this. Instead ask the observee what she thinks of the lesson. Acknowledge what she says without interrupting. After she has finished, reflect back what you have heard her say without adding any of your perceptions. Check to see if you have heard her correctly.

**Move 3:** Now, give your opinion of the lesson. Get the observee to reflect back what you have said. When she has finished you may make any pertinent corrections and encourage her to acknowledge these corrections. It is also important for you to comment on a couple of points that you think can be improved. Offer some ideas.

### Role card B: *Observee*

**Move 1:** You have just given a lesson based around a text. Your observer has asked you how you think your lesson has gone. You are uncomfortable in this role (you can tell her this or keep it to yourself) as you feel you are being put on the spot. You tend to be very critical with yourself and think that your lesson was not very good. Tell the observer this in your own way. Phrases like : «I was OK, but...» / «I should(n't) have...» / «They didn't...» might prove useful.

**Move 2:** Your observer has just reflected back your views and asked you to check her version.

**Move 3:** Your observer now gives her opinion of your lesson. She thinks it was much more positive than you did! She asks you to reflect back her views. Do your best to focus on the negative. If you wish you can say the observer is saying supportive things «to make me feel better, not because you really think it was a good lesson».

Fig. 3.

In this role play the main objective is that the observer (mentor) finds her way to help observees (teachers/trainees) who may approach feedback sessions with a very low self-esteem by focusing on the aspects that have proved positive and effective in the classroom situation. In such situations, it may happen that some teachers/trainees feel embarrassed if we focus on their good points, or even feel that we are not being sincere. Therefore, this kind of practice can be very useful so that later on the mentor can cope with difficult situations in real feedback sessions. In fact, most mentors and teachers/trainees agree that activities like this are useful to identify certain typical situations, responses and attitudes.

## Foci of observation

Before we observe a lesson we can decide whether we want to focus on a specific aspect or not. When we approach classroom observation from a wide perspective, that is, without having a previously established aspect as the centre of our attention we say that this is a general observation. However, in general observations some aspects will come up as relevant to the observer and these will become the observation foci. If we have several observers carrying out general observation, we will note that many times the issues that capture our attention do not coincide. This will not be a problem but another proof that the classroom experience is multifaceted, complex and rich.

On the other hand, we can approach classroom observation from a narrow perspective, i.e. establishing a very concrete focus of observation. In this case, we are talking about specific observation. In specific observations we seek to apprehend a single aspect of the classroom experience so as to carry out a thorough analysis and interpretation of the data collected. However, we have to bear in mind that inevitably, at some stage of a lesson, something relevant enough may occur so that it will capture our attention dragging us away from the focus we had previously established. Then, it is very important that we take some side notes, since these focus shifts usually reveal aspects of the lesson that are worth commenting on later in the feedback session, and possible foci of future observations and study.

When we decide to carry out specific classroom observation there is the possibility that observer and observee negotiate the focus of the observation. In an autonomous teacher training scheme the motivation of choosing a certain aspect of the lesson to be observed will spring many times from the observee, and, as already suggested, from outstanding aspects of previous observations. However, the fact that the observee is aware of the aspect of the lesson to be observed may affect considerably her performance. If, for instance, she knows we are going to observe her praising strategies, it is very likely that she will do her best to praise and encourage her students. In this case, this should not be considered a problem, if it serves to remind her of the importance of praise, unless it leads to overpraising, or even praising learners' actions and responses that do not deserve it.

Participants in recent training programmes for mentors and teachers in the Valencian Community produced a long list of items that could be regarded as possible foci of classroom observations. Afterwards, through pyramid discussions in groups, the list was reduced to the aspects teachers and mentors thought most relevant.

## **SURVEY: AREAS IDENTIFIED BY TEACHERS AS FOCI OF OBSERVATION.**

<b>Classroom Management</b>	<b>Empathy</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* T-Ss Interaction</li><li>* Ss-Ss Interaction</li><li>* Pair Work</li><li>* Group Work</li><li>* Unexpected problem solving capacity</li><li>* Use of equipment &amp; resources</li><li>* Variety of working pace</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* Face language &amp; gesture</li><li>* Equality of participation</li><li>* Projection of enthusiasm</li><li>* Listens attentively to Ss.</li><li>* Praising</li><li>* Friendly correction</li></ul>
<b>Teacher Performance</b>	<b>Students' Response</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* Voice projection and tone</li><li>* Clear directions</li><li>* Clarity of explanation</li><li>* Fosters Ss. participation</li><li>* Use of creative silence</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* Interest</li><li>* Active participation</li><li>* Awareness of what they do</li><li>* Comfortable atmosphere</li><li>* Admit their errors.</li></ul>

Fig. 4.

This classification provides an interesting (though not definitive) insight into what teachers perceive as relevant foci.

Moreover, some of the foci of observation proposed have a very wide scope and could be limited to more concrete aspects. If we take a narrow scope, it is very likely that it will be less complicated to collect the data, analyse and interpret them. For example, it would be easier to work on teacher's questioning rather than on teacher's discourse.

Of course, the choice of a wide or narrow scope will depend on such things as the trainer's and trainee's purposes, i.e. what is the area of teaching we want to reflect on, the observation schedule we are going to use and the observer's proficiency and expertise.

### **Observation schedules**

One of the central ideas in any training scheme is that the importance of classroom observation lies in the exchange of ideas and perceptions on teaching and learning, through a reflective and shared approach to the classroom experience.

One of the first observation schedules we used emphasised this multiplicity of perceptions and required us to establish how we could negotiate them in the feedback session, so that the sum of perceptions of the lesson could render a more complete picture of the experience. This observation schedule (see fig. 5) was a very general and intuitive one and consisted of a self-reflection grid for the observee which would be contrasted with the observers' perceptions.

#### **OBSERVEE'S SCHEDULE**

**What I think I did best ...**

**What I would change ...**

#### **OBSERVERS' SCHEDULE**

**What I liked best in the lesson...**

**Ideas I'd like to contribute...**

This schedule serves various purposes: on one hand, it will point up the relativity of the classroom experience. Different teachers will be attracted by many different foci of observation, their perceptions of these will not necessarily coincide, aspects of the lesson most relevant to some may remain unnoticed by others. On the other hand, it will provide practice in giving feedback, keeping in mind the general guidelines previously established.

An important aspect of classroom observation is that the observers are trained in the use of the observation schedules<sup>1</sup>. Observation schedules are instruments that centre the task of the observer. They are used to remind the observer of the foci of observation, to collect, classify and even interpret or analyse data.

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<sup>1</sup> The teachers had some sessions where they were provided with different observation schedules. We worked on most of them with videoed lessons so that we could stop and explain relevant aspects of the lesson and the observation schedules. Later on we had sessions on analysing the data and interpreting them, and we also evaluated the usefulness of these observation schedules. Most of them can be found in de la Serna, M.P. (1994), Scrivener, J. (1994) pp. 201-212, Wajnryb, R. (1992) and Woodward, T. (1992) pp. 105-136. These schedules, or some adapted versions of them would be used later on in real lessons to observe peers.

Another activity for those teachers and mentors engaged in observation or observation management training actions is to analyse some of the observation schedules that you will find in the appendix. The aim is to identify the focus or foci of observation, how the schedule should be used, what modifications could be made to the instrument, and why, and offer an overall impression of their effectiveness. After this discussion, they can be used with the video «The Way we Work» and commented on afterwards.

There are many different models of schedules that can be found in classroom observation literature. Some have a very high degree of formalisation and categorisation, others are the simple expression of the observation task to be performed. Some collect quantitative data, and others collect qualitative data. There are some which employ a sign or a category system, others that do not. Some that can be used in real time, others that need to be used on video or audio recordings. Some that require the observer to interpret data immediately, others that leave interpretation for a later stage. Some that focus on a wide area of teaching, others whose focus is very specific. Some that need a considerable amount of practice until they are mastered, others that are more intuitive.

Whichever type is used on a given occasion, it is important that the observation instrument should not constrict our perceptions, i.e. we should not be too rigid and ignore any interesting perceptions we come across unexpectedly during the lesson. In fact, anything that captures our attention may demand subsequent reflection. Thus, this receptive attitude will open up new possibilities of study and research serving the ultimate goal of teachers' professional development and growth.

In the process of training the participants in classroom observation we started with schedules that were quite simple to use. In fact, in one of the first lessons the participants observed, we provided them with observation tasks, such as the following<sup>2</sup>:

**Focus: meaningful language**

Write down some examples of the language the learners produced during the lesson.

Note whether the language was required by the teacher (R) or arose spontaneously (S)

Consider whether the language was:

Meaningful (M)

Natural (N)

Correct (C)

**Focus: correction**

Did the teacher correct the learners?

In which cases did the teacher correct?

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<sup>2</sup> Here we propose that teacher trainers or mentors carrying out training on observation ask their trainees to produce in groups other tasks related to the different foci of observation established, that they discuss different ways of collecting data, analysing and interpreting them, and even devise some observation schedules. These could be used with the video «The Way we Work» and later on the reliability and effectiveness of the tasks and instruments devised by the participants could be analysed in order to introduce improvements.

If the teacher didn't, ... was there a reason?  
Note down ways in which the teacher corrected.

### **Focus: classroom arrangement**

How is the seating arranged?  
Where are the learners?  
Can they see each other? the teacher? the visual aids?  
Where is the teacher?  
Draw a plan of the classroom.  
Was the seating arrangement altered at any stage of the lesson?  
How did the seating arrangement affect the activities and interactions (learner-learner, teacher-learner) during the lesson?

In this case, teachers and mentors participated as mock learners and observers but the lesson was still a real language learning experience since the language taught, Croatian, was unknown to all teachers participating as learners.

The observers were provided with a list of 14 different observation tasks, which were distributed among them. These tasks would be briefly commented on after the lesson, which was also filmed so that in subsequent sessions we could go over it again and analyse the observation tasks and other aspects more thoroughly.

### **Conclusions**

The trialling of the above-mentioned materials took place in a series of workshops for experienced teachers in the Valencian Community. One of the very important aspects of this experience was the evolution that teachers and mentors experienced regarding their attitude to classroom observation. At first, most of them were reluctant to be observed but after the training process most of them agreed that it had been a very positive experience.

At the same time, it also served to help us identify our own training needs as teacher trainers. That is why we decided to link this professional experience with research to further our professional development, following a course of action parallel to that of the autonomous teacher training cycle. The participation of two of the Valencian Community teacher trainers, Victor Oroval and myself, Manuel Bordoy, in this ECP, «Training of Trainers» was an added motivation to claim for the necessity of a thorough training of mentors in our country from which observation would spread and become a regular practice in training actions at all levels.

After the training process most teachers, in our experience, are convinced that the introduction of classroom observation in training courses offers them the possibility of professional growth and development at a personal and co-operative level. They become more aware of the teaching / learning situation and more autonomous in regulating their own needs for continued training.

Classroom observation, in the terms defined in this training scheme, and in this paper, links theory with teaching practice and viceversa, opening up new dimensions of classroom-centred research. The introduction of classroom observation in mentor training schemes is therefore productive since it is concerned with pedagogical transposition and its impact on developing teachers.

In the current educational systems in Europe, where the conceptions of language, language learning and education in general are changing, it is necessary that teachers change too. It is true that change is a slow process and that teachers differ in knowledge, skills and experience when they arrive at a mentor training scheme. However, we all should start out with the sound conviction that changes in democratic education are oriented towards improvement, based on a solid scientific tradition and inspired by good will.

So, we believe that teachers should participate with interest in all phases of the training cycle: understanding the theoretical principles, experimenting with new materials, procedures and techniques and finally observing and analysing the impact of the proposed innovations.

In our opinion, this has proved to be an excellent way to intervene consciously and reflectively in an educational model, an exquisite way to contribute with founded criticism and a fair way to improve and offer society a better service.

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# Appendix

## EMPLOI DES GESTES

Description	Effet	Fréquence	Réponse de l'étudiant	Commentaires

**Effets:** Pour remplacer les mots, pour aider l'expression du professeur, pour attirer l'attention des étudiants, pour appeler un étudiant, ...  
**Réponse de l'étudiant:** On peut la qualifier de positive, négative ou neutre. On peut aussi la décrire avec d'autres adjectifs.

Tâche d'observation 1

CORRECTION

Erreur	Corrigé	Pourquoi le corrigé?	Qui a corrigé?	Mode de correction	Réponse de l'élève
	oui non				
	oui non				
	oui non				
	oui non				
	oui non				
	oui non				
	oui non				
	oui non				

Commentaires:

Manuel Bordoy,  
Tâches d'observation  
ECP «Training of Trainers»

[illegible]

### Tâche d'observation 3

[illegible]

	Demandée	Spontanée	Total
1. <i>Chlorophyll</i>	100	100	200
2. <i>Chlorophyll</i>	100	100	200
3. <i>Chlorophyll</i>	100	100	200
4. <i>Chlorophyll</i>	100	100	200
5. <i>Chlorophyll</i>	100	100	200
6. <i>Chlorophyll</i>	100	100	200
7. <i>Chlorophyll</i>	100	100	200
8. <i>Chlorophyll</i>	100	100	200
9. <i>Chlorophyll</i>	100	100	200
10. <i>Chlorophyll</i>	100	100	200
11. <i>Chlorophyll</i>	100	100	200
12. <i>Chlorophyll</i>	100	100	200
13. <i>Chlorophyll</i>	100	100	200
14. <i>Chlorophyll</i>	100	100	200
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50. <i>Chlorophyll</i>	100	100	200
51. <i>Chlorophyll</i>	100	100	200
52. <i>Chlorophyll</i>	100	100	200
53. <i>Chlorophyll</i>	100	100	200
54. <i>Chlorophyll</i>	100	100	200
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57. <i>Chlorophyll</i>	100	100	200
58. <i>Chlorophyll</i>	100	100	200
59. <i>Chlorophyll</i>	100	100	200
60. <i>Chlorophyll</i>	100	100	200
61. <i>Chlorophyll</i>	100	100	200
62. <i>Chlorophyll</i>	100	100	200
63. <i>Chlorophyll</i>	100	100	200
64. <i>Chlorophyll</i>	100	100	200
65. <i>Chlorophyll</i>	100	100	200
66. <i>Chlorophyll</i>	100	100	200
67. <i>Chlorophyll</i>	100	100	200
68. <i>Chlorophyll</i>	100	100	200
69. <i>Chlorophyll</i>	100	100	200
70. <i>Chlorophyll</i>	100	100	200
71. <i>Chlorophyll</i>	100	100	200
72. <i>Chlorophyll</i>	100	100	200
73. <i>Chlorophyll</i>	100	100	200
74. <i>Chlorophyll</i>	100	100	200
75. <i>Chlorophyll</i>	100	100	200
76. <i>Chlorophyll</i>	100	100	200
77. <i>Chlorophyll</i>	100	100	200
78. <i>Chlorophyll</i>	100	100	200

**Commentaires:**

## GRILLE D'OBSERVATION

Ce qui m'a plu le plus de la leçon	Idées avec lesquelles je voudrais y contribuer
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Tâche d'observation 5

## LE BON ÉLÈVE DE LANGUES VIVANTES

Observez la leçon et décidez:
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qui a été le meilleur élève?</li> <li>• Pourquoi?</li> <li>• Que faisait-il?</li> <li>• Quel a été son comportement?</li> </ul>
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Tâche d'observation 6

AMÉNAGEMENT DE LA CLASSE

Observez comment étaient placées les tables de la classe:

- Où étaient placés les étudiants?
- Pouvaient-ils se voir les uns les autres?
- Où était le professeur?
- Dessinez un plan de la classe.
- A-t-on altéré la position des tables à un moment quelconque de la leçon?
- Comment l'aménagement de la classe a-t-il affecté les activités et les interactions (élève-élève, professeur-élève) pendant la leçon?

Tâche d’observation 7

PLAN DE LA LEÇON

Objectifs généraux de la leçon:

	Temps	Activité	Habiletés Linguistiques	Interaction	Matériaux	Objectifs
1						
2						
3						
4						

Commentaires:

Tâche d’observation 8

## Appendix

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Tâches d'observation

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### STRATÉGIES DES ÉLÈVES 1

Observez un ou deux élèves et regardez les différentes stratégies qu'ils utilisent pour la production orale:

- Essaient-ils de deviner un mot ou expression (en utilisant leur connaissance de LE, d'une autre langue, ou de leur propre langue)?
- Demandent-ils la traduction d'un mot (essaient-ils d'employer la langue étrangère ou la langue maternelle)?
- Utilisent-ils des gestes pour s'aider?
- Utilisent-ils des supports de la langue maternelle?
- D'autres stratégies.

Tâche d'observation 9

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## Appendix

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ECP «Training of Trainers»

### STRATÉGIES DES ÉLÈVES 2

Observez un ou deux élèves et regardez les différentes stratégies employées pour retenir ce qu'ils ont appris:

- Emplois de la LE et la LM.
- Ecrivent-ils avant que le professeur ait utilisé le rétroprojecteur ou le tableau?
- Organisent-ils leur notes d'une manière particulière: graphiques, schémas, dessins, etc.?
- Essaient-ils de reproduire les sons par des symboles (phonétiques)?
- Essaient-ils d'en tirer des règles de grammaire?
- D'autres stratégies de l'élève.

Tâche d'observation 10

### RÉACTIONS DE L'ÉLÈVE

<p>Observez comment les élèves réagissent lors de:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• La correction.</li> <li>• La répétition d'un mot ou d'une phrase.</li> <li>• La répétition collective.</li> <li>• Questionner trop vite un deuxième élève par manque de réponse du premier</li> <li>• Recevoir des compliments.</li> <li>• Travailler en couple.</li> <li>• Travailler en groupe.</li> <li>• ...</li> </ul>
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Tâche d'observation 11

### RÉPONSES DE L'ÉLÈVE

	Très d'accord	D'accord	Sans décision	Pas d'accord	Absolument pas d'accord
Ils sont intéressés à la leçon. Ils sont motivés.					
Ils participent activement.					
Ils sont conscients de ce qui se passe dans la classe.					
Ils se sentent à l'aise.					
Ils admettent leurs erreurs.					

**Commentaires:**

Tâche d'observation 12