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## **Training Module for Lesson Observation and Feedback**

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## Introduction

The following three areas came up as the most requested inset topics for seminar leaders and mentors in Hamburg:

- 1) Working with groups and psychology of groups
- 2) Leading a conversation and communication
- 3) Lesson observation and feedback

Whilst the first area is more of a topic for seminar leader inset work in the German teacher education system the other two fall into the work domain of a mentor.

The following proposal for a training module offers primarily the opportunity to work on areas 2 and 3 above. The training session also offers, indirectly, via the METAPLAN way of working, a starting point for work with groups.

The training module for lesson observation described below was trialled in a workshop in Porto with Portuguese mentors. Obviously the unit has to be tailored to fit the needs of the participants and the possibilities of the trainer. Each part of the module provides for an active entry into the area for the participants. Individual areas for further work and input could develop from the first set of results obtained as the work continues.

## Equipment and Materials

The module is based on a video clip from the first practice lesson of a student teacher teaching French. I deliberately did not choose a simulated lesson for the lesson observation (trainer plays teacher, mentors the pupils). Whilst video has the disadvantage of reducing observation both visually and acoustically, it also prevents the observer from being distracted through being drawn into the role of a learner.

The student teacher demonstrated many methodological «mistakes» in the sequences selected. The sequences did also show many praiseworthy competences in the young teacher. In the selection of video material such a balance should be sought as well as a similar balance between teacher and pupil activities (or «passivities»). With small groups observation of actual lessons could be considered.

## Aims

Aims of the module are:

### Part 1: *Lesson Observation*

- Comparison of one's own perceptions of the lesson observed with those of other mentors.
- Critical appraisal of observation sheets.
- Training in structuring observations.
- Training in the prioritising of observations for feedback.
- Critical reflection upon one's own behaviour as observer.

### Part 2: *Feedback Session*

- Training in feedback.
- Training in awareness of one's own and another's perceptions in the feedback session.
- Development of criteria (from self-observation proformas) for a positive feedback session.

## Process

It is recommended that one usually does a needs analysis at the beginning of a tranche of mentor training. If the participants mention the above areas the structure of the workshop could be as follows:

### Part 1: *Lesson Observation*

Overview:

- Lesson observation (video) with and without observation sheets.
- Comparison of the observations made with and without observation sheets.
- Visual illustration of observations in the group (METAPLAN technique).
- Comparison of different /similar perceptions and priorities.
- Structuring of the observations.
- Reflection upon one's own observation behaviour.

The actual plan for the trainer might look like this:

Activity	Procedure	Equipment
Getting to know the group.	e.g. after a short conversation participants present their neighbour. Or similar.	
Getting to know the programme.	e.g. lecture.	Flipchart/OHP
Observation of a five minute video sequence (here clip from a French lesson taught by a Portuguese student teacher).	Task: Note important perceptions for feedback session on a slip of paper.	Video
Short comparison in small groups or pairs.	Task: brief comparison whether your partner has noticed different things from you.	
Continue with video sequence (approx. five minutes) observation with proformas.	Task as above plus observation proformas.	Observation sheets (possibly different one).
Comparison of what has happened in small groups	Task: What could you possibly use the observation sheets for? What impressions have you got using them?	Observation sheets Put results from group on OHTs or METAPLAN cards (paper rectangles).
Possibly short explanation/exercise in the METAPLAN part.	e.g. practice handwriting (with the right size) on cards.	METAPLAN cards, felt-tip pen
Filling in METAPLAN cards and visual illustration of the most important observations.	Task; Put your three or four most important observations for the feedback session on three or four different cards.	METAPLAN cards, METAPLAN felt-tip pen METAPLAN pinboard (or: fix on blackboard with magnets or on wall with «bluetac»)
Structuring the observations.	Trainer gives overarching concepts: KEEP/REINFORCE/IMPROVE/ GIVE UP/AIM FOR. Participants sort their cards on the pinboard under the overarching concepts.	METAPLAN cards METAPLAN pinboard
<p>Comment:</p> <p>Frequently the observers tend to neglect KEEP, although there is a lot worth keeping. Dominance and neglect of areas become very visible in the structuring process.</p>		
Discussing of the structuring and observation	Task: E.g. What was your experience of the process of this observation module? What can you use in your work? Where do you think additions are needed?	METAPLAN pinboard, board or OHP

*General comment:*

The lesson observation can now be taken further with more clips, with questioning of an appropriate selection of progression of training contents with student teachers or with observations plus mini tasks (cf. Manuel Bordoy's workshop).

*Part 2: Feedback Session*

After agreeing which aspects are to be discussed with the student teacher (seen in the video clip), specific aspects of discussion with the student teacher can now be role played.

Overview:

- Training for feedback session.
- Perception of self and the other in the feedback session.
- Reflection upon what worked in the conversation.
- Visual illustration of important results.

Possible trainer's plan:

Activity	Process	Equipment
Practice feedback session with another participant.	Task: Please role play a feedback session including the most important aspects of our observation. One plays the role of the trainee observed in the clip, the other takes the role of the mentor. Swap roles after X minutes. Observe your own behaviour and that of your partner.	
Fill in the form relating to perception of self and other.	Short exchange with partner about your perceptions.	Worksheet
Discussion of positive behaviours and strategies for feedback.	Set up small groups and general experience sharing. Task: e.g. what behaviours are positive in feedback sessions and which should the mentor avoid.	METAPLAN cards, METAPLAN pinboard, OHTS, flipchart paper, etc.
Visual illustration of the group results and concluding discussion.	Groups present their results.	Various possibilities.

*For further information, this area could be studied more intensively with e.g. NLP techniques (neurolinguistic programming) or TZI. ( )*

## Worksheet 1

### Example of Structured Lesson Observation Proforma

#### 1) Teacher behaviour

(a) Language

Volume, speed, clarity.

Support by mime and gesture.

Idioms used in lesson, classroom phrases.

Teacher echo.

Mistakes in L2.

etc.

(b) Participation in talk.

(c) Tasks/explanations/examples (clear, confused, at the right time, ...).

(d) Encouragement/praise/reinforcement (question technique, emphasis, non-verbal encouragement).

(e) Correction policy (differentiated, motivating, minimal, excessive, ...).

(f) Teacher behaviour (movement, non-verbal signals, handling of the pupils, dominant, friendly, good-humoured classroom presence, etc).

(g) Flexibility, sensitivity (perception of change in situation or mood and changes in behaviour or method accordingly, etc).

#### 2) Methodology

(a) Condensing.

(b) Structuring and progression (sensible steps, choice and change of method).

(c) Aims (clear, unclear, appropriate, meaningful, ...).

(d) Handling of equipment (board writing, use of OHP, etc).

(e) Checking of results/repetition

(f) Appropriateness of social or work form for aims of lesson (teacher-pupil interaction, pair work, group work, checking by the teacher, pupil autonomy in learning).

### 3) Pupil Behaviour

(a) Activity/participation

- Speaking (repetition/reformulation/directed/free spoken production, ...).
- Writing (copying/reproducing/producing: Lexis, grammar, texts).
- Listening (teacher/tape/fellow pupils/...)
- Reading (aloud/in the group/pronunciation practice/reading comprehension /...).

(b) Attention (discipline, boredom, enthusiasm, ...).

(c) Observed motivation/observed atmosphere of lesson.



## Worksheet 2

### *Giving and Receiving Feedback*

#### *Perception of Self*

On **receiving** feedback, I felt confident/good in the following situations:

When the mentor ...

When I ...

I felt less good/unconfident in the following situations:

When the mentor ...

When I ...

I felt bad/frustrated/stuck:

When the mentor ...

When I ...

**Worksheet 3**

*Giving and Receiving Feedback*

*Perception of Self*

On **giving** feedback, I felt confident/good in the following situations:

When I ...

When the student teacher ...

I felt less good/unconfident in the following situations:

When I ...

When the student teacher ...

I felt bad/frustrated/stuck:

When I ...

When the student teacher ...