Classroom observation in teaching Practice

Partnership Workshop 2
Date: Friday 10 Jan 2014
Presenter: Dr Cheri Chan
Today’s Workshop: an overview

- **2.30pm-3.15pm:**
  - Observing mentees: the focus of the observation
  - The observation cycle:
    - Pre-lesson conference: preparing for observation
    - Lesson observation: using feedback sheets

- **3.15-4.00pm:**
  - Post Lesson conference: providing formative feedback to your mentee
Observation and feedback help the mentee

- develop skills for professional learning, thinking, and action
- Notice and learn from teaching experience
- plan effective lessons
- reflect on practice to review and assess his/her own practice independently
The observer’s role

- To observe how the mentee is implementing teaching strategies or new techniques they are trying out
- To observe how the mentee is implementing specific stages of the lesson e.g. the opening, the main task and the closing of the lesson
- To identify what worked well in the lesson, aspects which were successful
- To identify areas for development & give suggestions
We can let them know that...

• classroom life is complex
• it’s OK if the lesson doesn’t go according to plan
• Focus on development – one thing to improve next time
• Be encouraging!
Pre-observation conversations

- To help the mentee think through what they will do in the lesson
- To establish a focus for the observation
- Give feedback on the lesson plan & give suggestions to improve the draft including the lesson goal, objective, strategies/ methodology, and assessment.
Questions you can ask the ST in the pre-observation conference:

• What is the main goal of your lesson?
• What do you expect the learners to be able to know and do by the end of your class?
• What strategies/methods will you use to help the learners to reach these objectives?
• How will you assess whether the learners reached the objectives? In other words, how will they show that they know and can do what you expected of them?
• Do you have any concerns that you would like the observer to address?
Lesson observation

What to observe & how to write feedback for the mentee
We can give feedback on the following areas:

1. Lesson structure
   ▫ The way the lesson opens, organisation of activities, links between transitions

2. Classroom management strategies
   ▫ Maintaining order, setting up groups, time management

3. Types of teaching activities
   ▫ Whole class, pair and individual activities

4. Teaching strategies
   ▫ Presentation tasks, teaching techniques
We can give feedback on the following areas:

5. Teacher’s use of materials & resources
   ▫ Use of textbook, own design materials, Youtube

6. Teacher’s use of language
   ▫ Instructions, use of questions, feedback techniques, explanation of grammar/vocabulary

7. Students’ use of language
   ▫ Use of L1, problems with pronunciation, grammar

8. Student interaction
   ▫ Time on task, S-S talk

(Richards and Farrell, 2011)
Post-observation conversation

✓ To help the mentee gain a better understanding of their own teaching
  
  • Video clip: Post-observation conversation
Post-observation conversation: questions to encourage reflection

- Did you achieve the aims set?
- What worked well and why?
- What did not work so well? Why?
- What would you do differently if you teach the lesson again? Why?
- In general what are your strengths?
- In general what are your targets for further development?
Plenary

The Observation Cycle: a series of conversations
How often should observations be conducted during TP?

- Be flexible
- Negotiate with the ST
- Once a week is good
- Let students observe you teach so they can learn from you
Observations are only useful if...

✓ The lesson has been carefully planned by the student-teacher
✓ The focus is clear
✓ Constructive feedback is provided to the mentee
✓ There is a post-lesson conference to discuss the lesson
✓ The process is non-threatening
Mentoring...

Thank You for your support

it’s all about lending a hand...