

Targeted observation tasks

This section contains a range of targeted observation tasks, each of which identifies specific aspects of the teaching and learning process for the observer to focus on. These tasks can be used by all teachers, regardless of subject areas and experience.

Task 1: Analysis of teacher roles

Keep a tally of the different roles that the teacher takes on at different stages of the lesson in the chart below. If there are any additional roles that you think are not included but need to be added then enter them in the spaces at the bottom of the chart. After the lesson, compare and discuss your results with colleagues who have done the same observation activity.

Presenter												
Counsellor												
Supervisor												
Facilitator												
Listener												
Manager												
Motivator												
Coach												
Participant												
Assessor												
Corrector												
Observer												



Take three of the roles that you noted above and describe briefly the classroom activity and/or stage of the lesson that illustrates each one.

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Task 2: Observing learning styles

- Identify two learners at the start. Try to write a pen sketch of what kind of learners they are (e.g. passive, talkative, inquisitive, detached etc.).
- Make a note of some of their learning strategies. For example, do they take lots of notes during the lesson? Do they like to ask lots of questions? Do their strategies appear to be effective? Can you suggest ways that they might learn things better?

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Choose another three learners. Write their initials below, and a descriptor to suit each one's learning style. Select from the following or make up your own descriptors: *risk-taker, leader, joker, daydreamer, questioner etc.*

Name	Descriptor(s)	Reason for the descriptor
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1.

2.

3.



Task 3: Managing resources

Record at least three instances on the chart below when the teacher uses any of the following resources:

- (interactive) whiteboard, flipchart (e.g. neatness of writing, use of space)
- hand-outs (e.g. worksheet, text)
- visual aids (e.g. photos)
- coursebook

Were the resources a help to learning or were they superfluous? Could they have been used differently (make a note under 'alternatives')?

Resource	How it was used	Reason for use

Alternatives

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Task 5: ‘Storytelling’

After providing a brief overview of the subject area and learner group, imagine that you will be asked to narrate your notes of this observation in the form of a story. Here are some questions/prompts to guide your narrative:

- How does the story begin?
- What is happening as you ‘enter’ the story? Why do you think this is happening?
- Who are the protagonists in the story? Are there certain characters that stand out more than others? If so, who are they?
- What are the roles of these characters in the story?
- What seems to be the main plot of the story?
- Are there any subplots?
- What impact does the setting have on the characters and the plot?
- Is there a sense of drama to the story?
- Is there anything in the story that has puzzled you?
- Are there any questions you would like the opportunity to be able to ask some of the characters in the story? If so, can you list some example questions and the particular characters to who they would be directed?
- Is there a sense of closure to the story or is it ‘to be continued’?
- What are your thoughts on how the story might develop in the future?

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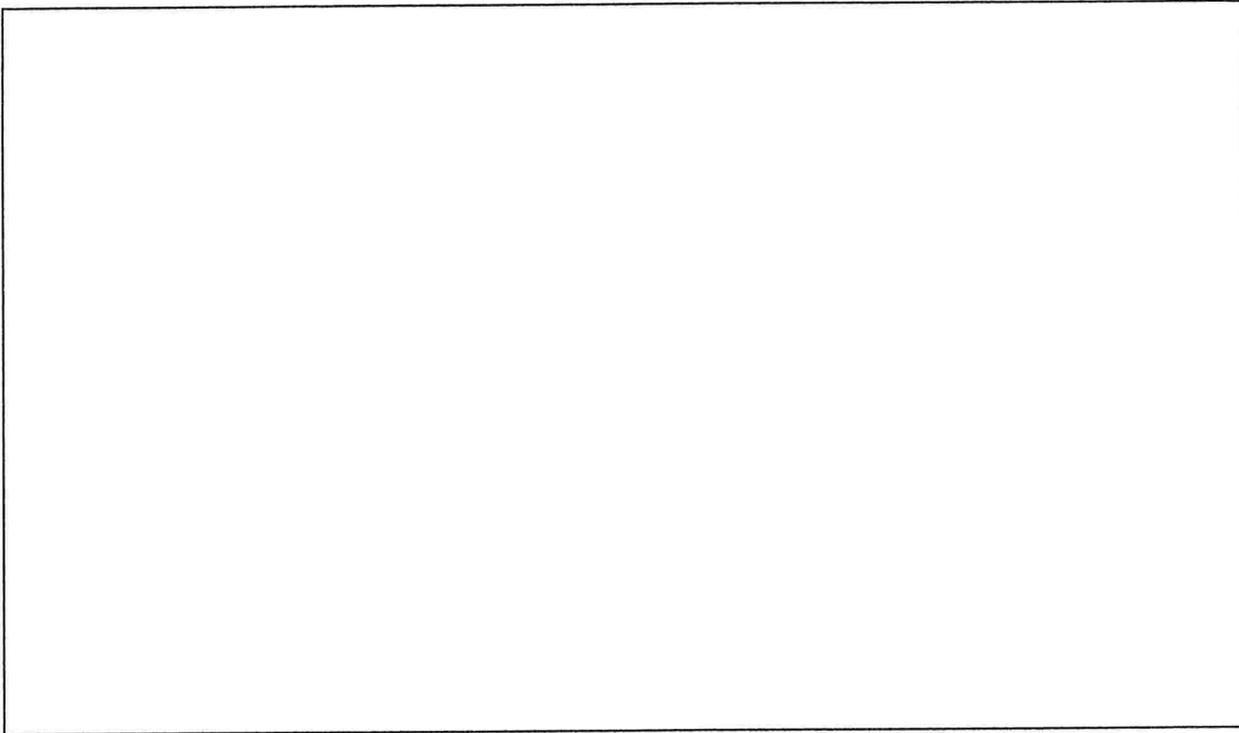
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Task 6: Analyzing classroom interaction

After providing a brief overview of the subject area and student group, draw the layout of the classroom, including the desks/tables, doors, windows, whiteboard, projector etc as well as the seating positions of the students. Use the following codes for each learner M1, M2, M3 (if male), F1, F2, F3 (if female), T = Teacher and TA = Teaching Assistants.



During a period of approximately 10–15 minutes, make a note of the teacher–learner interactions – verbal and non-verbal (e.g. use of feedback, body language, facial gestures etc.) and reflect on the following questions:

- Are you able to identify any patterns in these interactions?
- How might these patterns be explained?
- Is there a ‘clustering’ of interaction i.e. does there appear to be more interaction with some learners rather than others?
- If so, what are your thoughts on this? Are other learners aware of this?
- Are there any discernible differences in the interactions between males and females?
- Does the teacher have a particular strategy for the way in which they choose to communicate/interact with their body language/facial expressions?
- Does the layout of the room seem to impact on these interactions? If so, why and how?
- Have you learnt anything from this observation about the significance of non-verbal interaction and/or its impact?



Task 7: Teacher focus: strategies and techniques

This task focuses on the strategies and techniques that the teacher employs throughout the lesson in order to interact and communicate with the learners as well as to achieve the lesson's aims.

Number of learners	Teacher
Observer	Level
Length of Lesson	Date

Apparent Aims of Lesson

What kind of gestures does the teacher use during the lesson?
What are they used for and what is the effect on learners?

Comment on the quality and use of the teacher's voice in at different stages of the lesson. Why is it important?

How does the teacher present themselves as a professional through their behaviour and interaction with learners? What effect is achieved?

How effective is the teacher at keeping learners' attention? How do they do this?

What overall atmosphere is there in the class? To what extent is the teacher's *presence* and manner contributing to this?

What does this teacher have that you would like to incorporate into your own teaching?



Task 8: Understanding the lesson and its aims

Underpinning every effective lesson is a lesson plan with a clear set of objectives. Observe a lesson without requesting a copy of the teacher's lesson plan. Based on your observation, see if you can identify the overall aims of the lesson as well as the different stages of the lesson and how these fit together.

Number of learners	Teacher
Observer	Level
Length of Lesson	Date

Apparent Aims of Lesson

Stage Aim	Teacher activity	Learner activity	Resources	Grouping



Task 8 (cont.)

Stage Aim	Teacher activity	Learner activity	Resources	Grouping



Task 9: Teacher questions

A fundamental skill and/or strategy for all teachers to master is the ability to ask effective and appropriate questions. Teachers ask questions for a whole host of reasons i.e. to challenge and check learners' understanding, elicit their ideas and opinions, stimulate their thinking, assess their progress etc. The table below is divided into four columns: teacher questions, learner responses, purpose and comment. Make a list of at least 15 questions along with the responses (if appropriate). Try to deduce the underlying purpose to each of the questions and include additional comments.

Question	Response	Purpose	Comment

Follow-up questions

Does there seem to be any pattern to the TYPE of questions asked?

Is there any pattern to the purpose of the questions asked?

Are the questions effective in what they seek to achieve?

Are there features of the questioning skills of this teacher you wish to adopt?

Has your awareness of questioning skills changed as a result in any way?

