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Introduction: The rationale for the reflective approach.

'Are teachers born, or made?'

Paraphrasing the well-known saying, we might stop to wonder what makes a "good" teacher. Is it a matter of vocation, or a skill that can be learnt? Some people seem to have a natural gift for teaching, 'a vocation'. People who possess this gift intuitively know how to get on well with students and how to get meanings across in the classroom. Yet, a person who does not seem to have this 'feel' for teaching is not doomed to failure; teaching skills can be developed as well. At least this is an assumption of the recent reflective approach to the language teaching pedagogy, for which the rationale and principles are going to be given below.

Historically, the craft model, which now seems to have been abandoned, appeared first. It assumed that a trainee teacher should accompany the 'master' in his every day routines, imitate his behaviour, and perform actions as instructed until one reached the ideal. Professional competence was understood to be an ability to perform a set of instructions, a mastering of certain behavioural procedures. As a consequence, it failed to recognise that each classroom situation is different and that the teacher's actions operating within a class are not, and cannot be, automatic or repetitive.

Another approach, the applied science model, still widely used and according to which most teachers have been trained, puts great emphasis on scientific knowledge and lays trust in scientists being able to investigate any problematic situation, to explain it with a theory and devise a set of ideal guidelines aiming to solve a situation. Whenever science fails to solve problems in a classroom situation, it is the teacher, i.e. the practitioner who is to blame for it, either for wrong application or for misunderstanding the guidelines. This model, in turn, fails to recognise the gap between research and everyday classroom situations. The scientist is usually detached from classroom experience, while the practitioner himself is rarely engaged in scientific knowledge and often lacks the theoretical background, as a long time may have passed since he / she graduated from university and occasional update courses do not provide sufficient theoretical knowledge.

The reflective model of teacher education, the most recent innovation, attempts to utilise both theoretical and experiential knowledge. It was first popularised by Schoen in his book The Reflective Practitioner (1983) and Educating the Reflective Practitioner (1987), and then very much developed by M. Wallace (1991). Schoen first pointed out that professional knowledge of a teacher consists of two elements: knowledge which is research - based (i.e. facts, data and theories often related to some kind of research) and 'knowing - in - action', that is knowledge gained from professional experience. The latter can be neglected or be a source of *reflection,* and thus give deep insights into classroom situations and especially into which events were successful and which were not, thus giving rise either to improvement or repetition of successful actions. The teacher becomes his own researcher and a practitioner who is able to implement his own findings (from reflection or action research) in a classroom situation. The reflective model recognises the experiential expertise, which scientists often lack, on a par with scientific knowledge. It also assumes that learners (here teacher trainees both in pre - and in- service courses) rarely come to a methodology class with blank minds, but they have certain beliefs about what actions to a problem should be taken. These beliefs, attitudes and ideas which shape our classroom behaviour are called 'conceptual schemata' or 'constructs', and as McAllen and McIntntyre (in Wallace, 1991:50) notice, 'they largely explain the phenomenon of the complexity and immediacy of professional decision making'. Others, including Wallace (1991:97) perceive these schemata as nothing else but *strategies* which are distinct from *skills.* He believes

teaching skills (performance skills) are procedures one can learn to perform, whereas strategies are human capacities which include cognitive processes and affective learning, neither of which should be neglected. Thus he believes that any learner possessing these abilities is able to critically analyse one's behaviour, modify it, and draw conclusions, which should enrich the teacher's competence.

This view led Wallace to believe self - development is an ongoing process which follows an established pattern. This pattern, ' a reflective cycle' constitutes the basis for cognitive or reflective learning and explains how people learn themselves and how they should be taught on reflective courses (See Fig.1).

The reflective model

Stage 1
GOAL
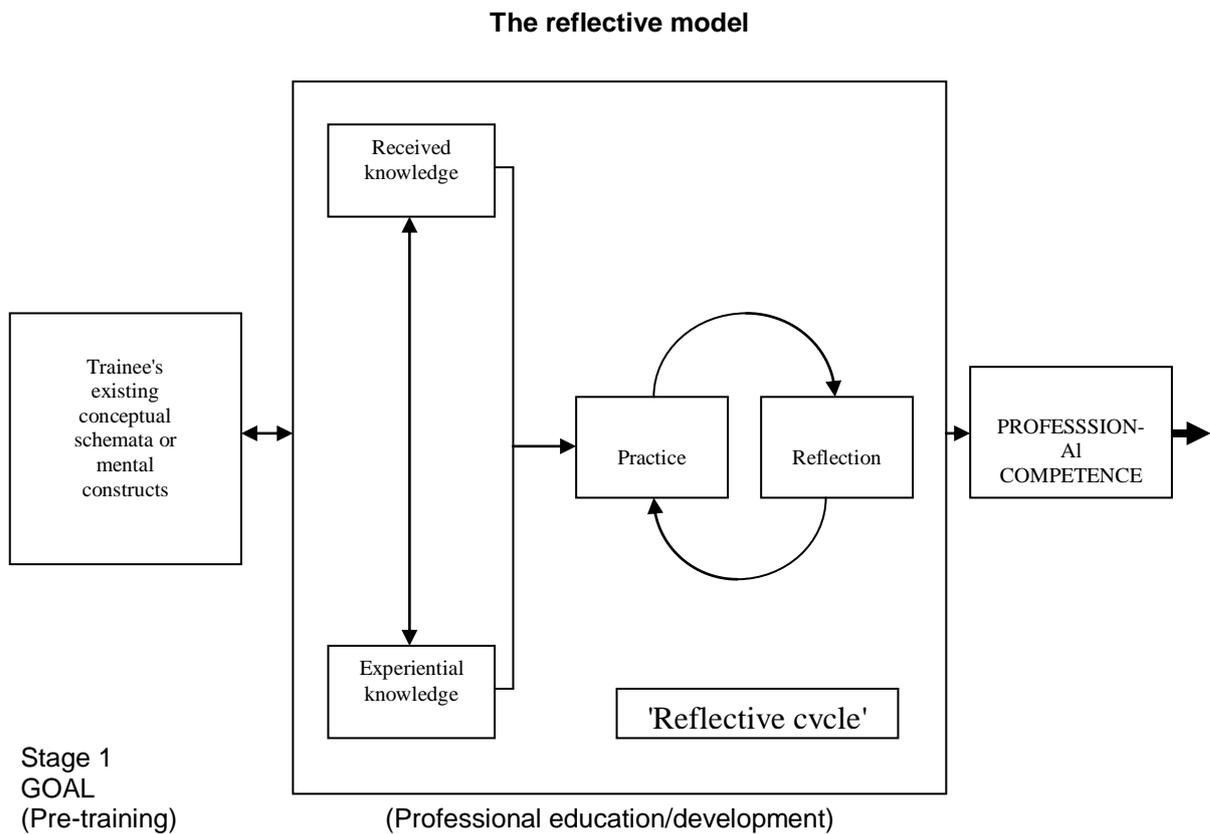(Pre-training)   (Professional education/development)

Fig. 1. Adopted from Wallace, 1991:49.

In this model, similarly to Schoen, Wallace (1991) distinguished between *received* and *experiential* knowledge. He considers the former to be data, facts, theories etc. and the latter to be practical experience gained in professional action in the same way as Schoen. Teaching practice is a foundation for reflection, thus some scientists claim it is impossible to teach reflectivity to inexperienced teacher trainees. Yet, as the figure 1 shows, the trainees (especially of the teaching profession) usually enter a training course with certain conceptual schemata developed through their own school experience. Therefore they can and should apply their existing mental constructs to the received knowledge of the training course, for example having learnt a new technique, they should be able to evaluate it, and decide either to reject it or try it out when an opportunity for implementation occurs (in case of pre-service teacher trainees it can take place during school practicum); this is a case of reflection 'before the event.' In turn, having implemented a technique, the trainee may wish to analyse the cases of failure or success and then reach for some theoretical data to support his / her beliefs as an explanation of the phenomenon. This is an example of a reflection based on recollection. And finally, there is a third kind called 'reflection - in - action' , which takes place during the

teaching process itself and allows the teacher to change the course of the lesson according to the demands of a specific situation.

Whatever the type of reflection, it is clear that the relationship between the received and the experiential knowledge is reciprocal and neither of them can exist alone. Therefore, on various teacher - preparation courses it is imperative to emphasise the theoretical background for language teaching, but what is more, the trainees must be shown how to relate this knowledge to the oncoming teaching experiences, so that "classroom experience can feed back into ' the received knowledge' sessions of methodology classes" (Wallace, 1991:55) . This should be done for two reasons:

Firstly, it is wrong to assume that the trainees will be able to apply the knowledge they have gained by themselves, not having been shown how, which is an 'applied science ' approach. This means one cannot demand that learners be reflective if their trainer is not reflective either, and has not encouraged reflection on the training course.

Secondly, as Wallace rightly notes (1991:55), 'students have a natural tendency to 'compartmentalise' knowledge which is received in different learning contexts and from different tutors' , so reflection, especially if conducted in writing, could help the learners see the relation between various kinds of knowledge gained not only in methodology but also psychology, pedagogy and linguistics classes. But it must be noted that ' being reflective involves risk - there are no right answers - it also requires an effort and ways of thinking which have perhaps not been required in previous educational experiences, ' says McGrath (2000:101).

After Barlett (in Richards and Nunan 1990:205) we may repeat that becoming critically reflective 'means that we have to transcend the technicalities of teaching and think beyond the need to improve our instructional techniques.' What he means by that is that the focus from *'How to?* ' questions (which dealt with practical applications of the procedures) should be shifted to the *'Why* ' and *'What ?'* questions. Changing the questioning perspective gives teachers a certain power over their teaching and independence in their decision making, i.e. autonomy. This is also to say that as long as the teacher is sensitive to the learners needs, and can justify the choice of classroom procedures, there are no single right or wrong steps to be followed. It is impossible to predict and give precise prescriptions for handling various class situations.

Nunan and Lamb (1996:120-121) define a reflective teacher as one ' who is capable of monitoring, critiquing and defending their actions in planning, implementing and evaluating language programs'. After van Maneen they suggest which knowledge / skills should be developed within these three areas (Fig. 2). And although they admit that teacher trainees in preparation will not have achieved these goals by the time they begin teaching, since ' reflective teaching is predicated on lifelong professional renewal', they claim that 'novice teachers should have developed an essential attitude of reflectivity by the time they have begun teaching.' The attitude justifies the application of reflection into early stages of pre - service teacher training courses.

Fig.2 **Knowledge and skills required for reflective language teaching.**

CURRICULUM AREA	KNOWLEDGE / SKILLS
PLANNING	Sensitive to a range of learner needs (objective and subjective) and able to use these as a basis for selecting and organising goals, objective, content, and learning experiences of language programs. Knowledge of the nature of language and language learning and ability to utilise this knowledge in selecting and organising goals, objectives, content, and learning experiences of language programs.
IMPLEMENTATION	Technical competence in instruction and classroom management Ability to analyse and critique their own classroom behaviour and the behaviour of their learners
EVALUATION	Ability to assess learners in terms of a program's goals and objectives. Ability to encourage learners to self - monitor and self - assess Ability to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching.

Adopted from Lamb and Nunan, 1996:121.

To sum up, I would like to quote a number of statements underlying the principles of the reflective approach, namely:

1. *An informed teacher has an extensive knowledge base about teaching.*
2. *Much can be learned about teaching through self - inquiry.*
3. *Much of what happens in teaching is unknown to the teacher.*
4. *Experience is insufficient as a basis for development.*
5. *Critical reflection can trigger a deeper understanding of teaching.* (Richards and Lockhardt, 1996:3)

The statements above prove that the teacher having an extensive knowledge about teaching is much more capable of self - inquiry and thus makes informed decisions in the classroom. Experience which often develops into routine automatic decisions in class may not constitute a sufficient basis for professional growth, bearing in mind that each situation is different and the fact that once established procedures do not always work well in other teaching contexts. Since the teacher rarely gets feedback on his / her teaching from other observers, it is essential to develop the skill of self - inquiry which is conducive to teacher development. It also makes teachers self-reliant and autonomous. Reflective teaching is the furthest stage of teacher development. As McGrath says (2000), ' inexperienced teachers teach the book (level 1) whereas more experienced teachers teach students (level 2)'. At the highest level (3) of development teachers are able to focus on self - development. Attaining this level is very often a question of choice as it is a stage which requires a lot of time and dedication. This is why probably some teachers decide not to proceed beyond the first two levels. Yet, it must be said that the teacher's autonomy is crucial in developing the learner's autonomy.

McGrath also argues (2000:101) that teacher autonomy, understood as ' self - directed professional development' (2000:100), requires of teachers a certain level of preparedness - attitudinal and technical'. Ability to self-reflect can be an inherent capacity, but it can also be developed.Therefore the goal of the current publication is preparation of the teacher trainees for self-directed professional development via the fostering of self-observation and self-reflection. The most common tools for enhancing reflection have traditionally been diaries (cf. Appel, J. 1995), portfolios, video and teacher / peer observation. They are frequently supplemented by observation tasks which focus one's attention on specific aspects of teaching.

The tasks provided in this booklet serve a similar function. Although prominent examples of collections of observation tasks (e.g. Wajnryb, R.1992, Tanner and Green, 1998) exist, they have been prepared mainly for in-service training and thus are rich in professional terminology. Moreover, they require experience which pre-service trainees obviously lack. These tasks have been written to specifically meet the needs of the pre-service trainees who, while being able to draw on their learner experience, will have to adopt a new look on the teaching profession: learn to think how language acquisition theory applies to classroom experience.

Organisation of the tasks

The goal of the tasks provided in this publication is to teach insight and informed reflection to teachers-to-be. Therefore they are meant to be used during school observation practicum when the trainees have a chance to observe other, hopefully good, teaching models. For this reason they have been designed in such a way as to encourage acute observation and data collection which will help the teacher trainee form critical conclusions. Another objective is to reinforce the 'received knowledge' gained in the TEFL methodology class, so that the trainees gain confidence in applying the theory to their own practice. Thus the questions in the tasks may be somewhat prescriptive, i.e. assuming presence of certain elements, stages and features which are taught in the methodology class. This is quite an idealistic assumption as in reality not all methodological guidelines can be observed, yet it seems that in initial stages of training, the trainees need precise theoretical information, a point of reference, in order to gain confidence in teaching and to develop their own judgment. This is the main feature which distinguishes this publication from others; however, it must be acknowledged that the aforementioned publications have been used as models and reference.

Altogether there are 20 tasks in this booklet and two additional evaluation sheets for the lessons conducted by the teacher trainee (self – and peer observation). The topics of the tasks have been determined by the most common topics in the syllabuses for TEFL methodology courses (principles and techniques for teaching language skills) as well as the needs and interests of the trainees themselves, which have been derived from observation sessions over several years. They deal mainly with pedagogical skills such as maintaining discipline, assessment, giving instructions and other pertinent areas.

Each task is devoted to a different problem. Some are more complex and therefore more elaborate. The tasks are organised in the following way:

- **aims** of the observation tasks to be achieved by teacher trainees,
- **technical terms**, of which knowledge is required for the task and is an integral part of the received knowledge of the teaching profession; these are explained in the glossary,
- **related reading**, which includes references to the theory underlying the task,
- the **task(s)** proper
- **summary** section, which requires the observers to summarise the data collected and draw conclusions, make generalisations about an issue discussed (at times the students will be asked to produce generalised maxims in the form of do's & don'ts, e.g. *Do write clearly on the board, Do not come up to the student you are talking to.)* It is important that they are self-generated rather than imposed, by e.g. a teacher trainer.

- and/or **reflect** section, which requires students to draw on their learning or observation experience so as to modify their beliefs about teaching and learn to suggest alternative solutions to teaching problems.

This booklet is meant to be treated as a workbook thus allowing for photocopying; therefore ample space for notes has been provided. It is also acknowledged that answers to all questions may not be found and not all phenomena observed. Where indicated, the teacher trainees should make the questions in bold print a priority, which should usually be answered during the observation session; the remaining questions may require some reflection and therefore should be referred to after the session.

The second part of the book includes a commentary, an explanation of the rationale behind each task the author of the publication had in mind. They offer some expected outcomes, yet these should be treated only as suggested solutions and not as the only acceptable answers. They also provide some theoretical background for the observation tasks, which is hoped to foster the trainees' ability to combine SLA theory with the teaching practice. For more data, precise references to the TEFL methodology books are made. It is hoped that they will be used or consulted by the trainees on the regular basis.

The following abbreviations have been used where there was little space for full terms (e.g. charts)

> T - the teacher
> S - student
> SS – the students
> C – the class
> Q / Qs – a question / questions

The observation task sheets may in the end constitute a record of learning progress done by a teacher trainee and so can be included in a teacher trainee's portfolio and be considered for assessment. They may also provide an invaluable record of one's personal development as a teacher or be used as reference material for revision.

It is hoped that the tasks will provide a useful reference guide for future teaching practice as well as inspire an insightful and critical look into one's practice, thus leading to professional development and autonomy.

Conclusion

To sum up, it is important to restate that professional competence is not achieved the moment one obtains a diploma. To quote Wallace (1991:58), " professional certification is not a terminal point but a point of departure'. Such view of competence, which includes both formal education and experiential expertise, puts emphasis on the ongoing process of self - development. Being competent then will mean the ability to restructure one's current status of knowledge. Thus pre - service teacher trainees will have to be equipped with appropriate techniques to continue their development. Bearing in mind that in order to pursue certain principles, and here a reflective way of teaching, one should experience it first. Therefore this publication aims at facilitating the implementation of the reflective approach to pre - service teacher training courses. By the same token the trainees should become familiar with tools facilitating reflective practice, such as journals, self - evaluation worksheets, observation and evaluation of peer teaching etc.

Getting to know the class and the teacher; qualities of a good teacher

Aims: to become familiar with the students' learning interests and abilities, teacher's teaching style and the relationships between them
to learn elements conducive to good classroom atmosphere
to get to know the teaching style of the observed teacher

Knowledge of the following terms required: teaching style, teaching strategy.

Related reading: Komorowska, H. pp.81-89
Prodromou, L18-32, Prodromou, L.(1992) pp.28-39

TASK 1:

During first observation session try to collect as much information as possible about
a) the class itself, the level of English, strengths and weaknesses of the students
b) the classroom atmosphere
c) the teaching style of the observed teacher

a) What class is it? What is their estimated level? _____

How many students are there in the group? _____

How many hours of English do they have per week? _____

What is the title of the coursebook they are using? _____

Where are they in the book? _____

Do they use other materials? What kind of things? _____

Are there any particularly good / weak students in the class? How does the teacher deal with them?_____

b) Is the classroom atmosphere generally relaxed/ friendly / tense/ disciplined, etc.?

_____

How does the teacher react to discipline problems / misbehaviour?

_____ _____

Are there any students who volunteer to answer much more than others? Why do you think they do it? What does the teacher do in response? _____

_____

Are there any students who remain silent? Why do you think it is so? What does the teacher do about it? _____

What is the relationship between the students themselves like? How do they react to one another's mistakes / lack of knowledge? _____

_____

Was the classroom decorated? How?_____

c) Did the present teacher teach the class in the previous year ?_____

How does she feel about the class? _____

How does the teacher feel about teaching in general? _____

Is the teacher's (lack of?) enthusiasm visible? How? _____

Does the teacher use humour? For what purposes? _____

How does the teacher address the students? Does the teacher know and use students' _____

names ?_____

Does she smile a lot? _____

Does she maintain eye contact? _____

Does she vary her intonation? _____

Does she use a lot of body language, acting, facial expressions? _____

Does she praise the students often? _____

How does she express her disapproval? _____

TASK 2 :Note down 3 things that you liked about the class;(say them to the teacher after class)
Note down 3 questions that you would like to ask the teacher (and ask them after class!)

TASK 3 : Komorowska (2001:81-86) distinguishes the following teaching styles: *autocratic, laissez –faire, paternal, consultation, participatory, democratic* and strategies of: *group therapy, routine, power, ignorance, fraternity and negotiation.* Study the descriptions of the styles in the book indicated. Can you identify which style and strategies the teacher you observed possesses?

Reflect
Write down a few comments on the first impressions of the class, the teacher and the relationship between them. Try to conclude with a list of factors that contribute to creating a nice class atmosphere. Which of the qualities do you already posses? Which ones would you have to develop? (Refer to the *interactional, pedagogical, linguistic and didactic* skills described by Komorowska2001:86-89). To help you recognise these, you may wish to do a SWOT test in Prodromou, L. 1992:28-39.)

Lesson planning

Aims: to learn how to guarantee the continuity of the teaching process by observing the stages and transitions between the activities in the lesson

to become aware of how good lesson planning enhances the effectiveness of a lesson (and how a bad one is conducive to failure)

to realise the importance of setting clear objectives and communicating them to the learners

to foresee and be prepared for unexpected difficulties which force the teacher to change his /her lesson plan

Knowledge of the following terms required: variety, flexibility, transition, PPP model

Related reading: Harmer, J. (2nd ed.) pp. 256-275, (3rd ed.) pp.308-320
Ur, P. Ch.16, pp.213-226

TASK1

While observing the lesson, note down the activities that took place during the lesson and find answers to the questions below the table.

	Activity (Give a name of a technique or state briefly what happened in class)	Aim of the activity	Pattern of interaction (e.g. T->C)	Estimated time
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				

1. How does the lesson start?_____

2. How does the lesson end?_____

3. Is the topic given? _____ If yes, what is it? _____

4. How does the teacher move from one activity to another? Does he comment on what has just been done or what will follow? _____

5. Note down an exemplary transition between two activities.

_____

_____

6. Does the teacher tell the students directly why they have been doing a particular activity?

_____

7. Does the teacher sum up the lesson, stating its aims?_____

8. What is given for homework assignment?_____ Is it evident

of previous planning and does it complement the lesson naturally? How? _____

After the lesson

Reflect on the collected data and answer the following questions:

1. Could you clearly identify the stages of the lesson, such as presentation, practice, production (or

others)? What activities did they involve?

_____

2. Did the teacher follow any routines in the classroom? (e.g. checking the attendance list, asking for

the person on duty etc.) What were they?

_____

3. Was the lesson varied and interesting?

_____

4. If yes, was it because of (tick the right answer):

- a variety of techniques_____
- a variety of skills practised (what were they ?) _____
- a variety of topics
- quick pace of the lesson_____
- varied patterns of interaction_____
- variety of aids used (what were they?) _____
- other, please specify _____

5. Did you feel that the pace of the lesson was at some points particularly slow (and so creating

boredom) or too quick (and thus making some students unable to catch up with the lesson)? When?

_____

6. What were the aims of the lesson? (complete the phrase: " By the end of the lesson the students

should be able to

_____

_____)

(You can consult this answer with the observed teacher)

7. Were the aims of the lesson made clear to the students? How?

_____

8. Were the aims of the lesson achieved? _____What makes you think so?_____

9. Was the lesson logically sequenced, i.e. easier activities before more complicated ones? _____

10. Did the students have a sense of purpose of activities due to their logical order?_____

    Would you have introduced any changes? _____

11. Did you feel that the teacher had to change her/his plan in the course of action? If so, was it because

    of (Tick the right answer):

    *   the time of the day_____
    *   difficulty of the material_____
    *   lack of equipment_____
    *   physical conditions of the classroom _____
    *   students' misbehaviour_____
    *   others.....................

12. Finally, do you feel that the lesson was well planned? Why?

    _____

TASK 2

After class, if there is a possibility, ask the teacher

*   if s/he writes lesson plans (why (not) ?)

*   how she prepares her/himself for the lesson ?

*   how long the preparation takes ?

*   what aspects(age, level, interest, exams, discipline problems etc.) s/he particularly considers

    when planning a lesson ?

*   if the teacher had to change /omit something which s/he had planned before the lesson ? What

    made him/her do so?

Summary

Note down six Do's and Don'ts in reference to lesson planning.

Reflect

Why is it useful and important to plan a lesson carefully? What is the benefit of writing lesson plans

especially to novice teachers?

Classroom management; teacher roles

Aims: to realise how varying patterns of interaction can change the amount of student talking

time (STT), and so students' involvement, effort and interest.

to learn how varying patterns of interaction influence the pace of the lesson

to become aware of different roles the teacher may assume in the classroom

Knowledge of the following terms required: lockstep, individual work, pair work, group work; teacher as an organiser, controller, prompter, assessor, tutor, participant, investigator;
closed-ended teacher questioning ("IRF'), open-ended teacher questioning, collaboration vs. pair work, self-access, individualisation

Related reading: Harmer, J. (2nd ed.)pp. 235-248., (3rd ed.) pp.114-125
Ur, P. Ch.16, pp.227-241

TASK:

During the lesson observe and note down the activities that take place during the lesson and corresponding student groupings, and teacher roles.

Activity	Approx Time	Student grouping	Teacher role

After the lesson
Reflect on the observation session and jot down the answers to the following questions:

1. Why do you think the teacher assigns pair work / group work and individual work, if any?

_____

2. How appropriate is the chosen interaction pattern for the teaching objective of the activity?

_____

3. Is an appropriate amount of time given to each activity ?

_____

4. Is pair/group work really effective, i.e. do all students do the task? If not, why?

_____

5. How does the pace of the lesson change depending on the pattern of interaction? In what interaction patterns is it quicker / slower?

_____

6. Does maintaining a quick pace reduce or increase students' involvement?

_____

7. What roles of the teacher are predominant? Why?

_____

8. How do the varying roles of the teacher influence the participation of the students?

_____

9. Who has the power in the classroom, i.e. who is the main decision maker? Can you think of parts of the lesson/tasks when some control could be delegated to students?

_____

Summary

All in all, is it a teacher – centred or student – centred classroom? Support your opinion with a summary of the points discussed above (ca.50 words).

Second language acquisition theory and classroom practice.

Aims: to observe what teaching approaches and methods are popular among practitioners
to learn how to make informed decisions as to the methods and techniques employed in the classroom.
to try to link SLA theory with classroom practice.

Knowledge of the terms required: approach, method, technique, eclecticism, communicative competence

Related reading: Larsen-Freeman, D. (1986)
Lightbown,P. and N.Spada (1999:-145)

TASK

While observing the lesson, note down information on the following:

1. List all the techniques the teacher uses in class. Can you associate them with any teaching method?
   _____

2. Which language skills seem to be emphasized the most? Which ones seem to be neglected?
   _____

3. Does the teacher speak the target language most of the time/half of the time /nearly never?
   _____

4. What is the teacher's attitude to errors? Does he tolerate them / correct them immediately / punish for them?
   _____

5. Does the teacher express genuine interest in the students' opinions? Do the SS have a chance to express them?
   _____

6. Are there varied interaction patterns in class, i.e. not only teacher – class but also student –teacher, student – student?
   _____

7. Does the teacher try to show real –life applications of the language taught through e.g. authentic texts, role-play, contextualizing new language in real life stories, etc
   . _____

8. Does the teacher use drills and choral repetition?
   _____

9. What is the classroom atmosphere like? Rather relaxed or tense?
   _____

10. Who explains the new language items (grammar structures, vocabulary)? The teacher or are the students made to discover the meaning?
    _____ _____

11. What makes the basis for the lesson? A text? A grammar structure ? A task ? Others?
    _____

12. Does the teacher make SS memorise whole chunks of language, e.g. sentence heads, collocations, dialogues?

_____

13. Does the lesson follow a structured plan, i.e. first the teacher explains, then the students practise, or does the lesson develop from prior students' production? (writing/speaking task etc.)

_____

14. What roles does the teacher perform during class activities? Do they change?

_____

For answers 3-12 try to identify them with a method/approach they could refer to, e.g. Q.4: punishment for errors can be associated with the audiolingual method and their tolerance with the communicative method.

Summary
1. On the basis of the data gathered try to judge what kind of approach / method seems to be the most influential on the teacher? Is it rather a student- centered or a teacher – centered class?

2. After the lesson interview the teacher on the items you couldn't observe in the session; also ask him/her what approach /method they believe they follow. Does it agree with your presuppositions? Why (not)?
Do you think teachers decide to follow a single method? Why so?

Introducing Grammar Structures

Aims: to realise the importance of teaching meaning of the structure over its form
to get familiar with ways of creating context for the new grammar structure

Knowledge of the following terms required: Inductive vs. deductive grammar teaching; grammar lead-in, elicitation, explanation, accurate reproduction, immediate creativity

Related reading: Harmer, J. (2nd ed) pp.56-91.
Ur, P. pp.75-89
Hedge, T. pp.143-183

TASK
While observing the lesson, try to distinguish the following stages and note down answers to the following questions:

Lead – in

1. How does the teacher present a new structure? Does he explain it directly or does he make the SS discover it? _____

2. Do the students have a chance to see the structure in real life context first? If so, what constitutes the context?

   (Tick the right answer)

   - personalised examples _____
   - an invented story _____
   - a reading text_____
   - a dialogue _____
   - pictures _____
   - realia _____
   - song _____
   - others, please specify_____

3. How does the teacher manage to create interest in the structure? (aids, tone of voice, interesting content etc.)_____

4. Does the teacher present only one meaning of the structure or more? _____

5. Is the meaning and function of a new structure clear to you? _____ What is it?
   _____

6. If the meaning and function are not clear, what solution could you suggest? (more examples, using the mother tongue, comparison to other structures etc.)
   _____

Elicitation

7. How does the teacher check if the students have understood the meaning of the structure?
   (Tick an appropriate answer)
   - T asks the Ss to supply further examples of a given structure_____
   - T asks the Ss questions with a new structure_____
   - T starts sentences, suspends his / her voice and asks the Ss to finish them_____

- T asks Ss directly for the rule_____
- T asks the Ss to complete a rule in a coursebook / on the board etc.
- Other , please specify.

8. Does the teacher ask mainly specific (wh-) or general (yes/no) questions? _____

9. Does the teacher use any aids (blackboard, charts, pictures etc.) to elicit the rule from the students ?_____

10. Is elicitation successful? If yes, then thanks to what? If no, why not?

_____

Explanation

11. Does the teacher speak the target language to explain the meaning and the form of a new structure?

_____

12. Does the teacher use meta-language to present the structure, i.e. grammatical terms? _____ What effect does its use (or lack of it) have on the students' comprehension of the structure?

_____

13. Does the teacher involve the students in the explanation stage, by e.g. eliciting from them the examples from the lead – in?_____

14. How does the teacher organise the blackboard to make the form of a new structure clear? Does he use any aids (cards, coloured chalk etc.)?_____

15. Does the teacher explain all possible forms of the structure (statements, questions, negations, and irregular spelling)?_____

16. How long did each of the stages last? Do you think any of them was prolonged unnecessarily or was too short? Think why the teacher might have taken a decision to do so.

_____

Accurate reproduction and immediate creativity

17. Does the teacher make the students repeat the new structure in chorus? Or individually?

_____

18. Does he do it before the new structure is written on the board or after?_____

19. Are the students made to produce further examples with a new structure under teacher's control?

_____

Summary

All in all, do you think the grammar presentation observed was effective?
Has any of the stages been omitted? Can you think of the reason for the omission?

Reflect:

1. Do you prefer explicit presentation of grammar rules or would you rather induce the meaning of the new structure from context? Is the choice of the teaching approach (either deductive or inductive) justified by e.g. age, level, size of the group? Justify your opinion.
2. Do you think it is possible to explain grammar using the target language only? What conditions would have to be met to make a grammar explanation effective?

Practising grammar

Aims: to realise the difference between mechanical and meaningful practice
to learn how to integrate grammar practice with other language skills

Knowledge of the following terms required: mechanical practice, meaningful practice, Q& A drill, repetition drill, chain drill, backward build – up drill, transformation drill, single – slot substitution drill, multiple –slot substitution drill;
fill-in-the-blanks exercise, re-ordering words, sentence completion, sentence transformation,
Information gap

Related reading: Harmer, J. (2nd ed.) pp. 92-120
Ur, P. Ch.6, pp.83-84

TASK

While observing the grammar lesson, tick the techniques which took place during the lesson and indicate a student grouping in which it was conducted

Technique of grammar practice	Yes	Student grouping
1. Choral repetition after the model.		
2. Other drills, please specify…..		
3. Recognition of the structure in the reading/listening text.		
4. Gap filling		
5. Sentence transformation		
6. Reordering words		
7. Making up sentences with the model		
8. Translating sentences		
9. Other written exercises, please specify……		
10. Dialogue practised in pairs.		
11. 'Find sb who'……. or any other survey.		
12. An interview		
13. Writing a few sentences / a paragraph using a model.		
14. Other communicative practice, please specify………..		

After the lesson reflect on the collected data and note down:

1. Was the practice mainly written or oral? _____ Which one do you think helps to reinforce the form of

   the structure more?_____

2. How many times did each student actually practise the structure (i.e. has said or written it)? Which

   interaction patterns do you find the most suitable for grammar practice?

   _____

3. In what real life context did the students have a chance to use the new structure?

   _____

4. How was this real life context created (through Ts instructions, materials, task etc)?

   _____

5. Was   the   practice   varied   and   interesting   to   the   students?

    _____

6. If not, what could have been changed to make it more interesting? (patterns of interaction, varied skills,

    information gap etc.) _____

7. Was the practice stage successful, i.e. could most of the students by the end of the lesson produce the

    form of the new structure without problems?

    _____

8. Could the students distinguish between different uses of the structure and use it appropriately in

    context? _____

9. Were the students given an appropriate amount of practice? Did it aid their understanding of the

    meaning and function of the structure? _____

10. Did the students need more practice? Of what sort?

    _____ _____

Summary

What is the basic difference between mechanical and meaningful practice? Why is it important to practise
grammar meaningfully as well? What criteria could you try to establish to make grammar practice
meaningful?

Managing oral error

Aims: to distinguish between accuracy and fluency practice in the classroom
to learn non – intervening techniques of error correction
to realise what typical mistakes Polish learners of English most often make

Knowledge of the following terms required: communicative efficiency, mistake vs. error

Related reading: Ur, P. pp.246-250
Harmer, J. (3rd ed.), pp. 100 - 109

TASK

While observing the lesson, collect the following data:

1. **Did the teacher correct all mistakes?**
(Tick an appropriate answer)
   - in fluency exercises _____
   - in grammar practice activities_____
   - in other activities_____

2. Did his /her decision whether to correct depend on the kind of a student (good/poor etc.)?
_____

3. What type of mistakes did s/he correct?
(Tick an appropriate answer)
   - grammar_____
   - pronunciation_____
   - factual_____
   - vocabulary (wrong word / collocation) _____
   - word order_____
   - other – specify_____

4. Were the mistakes corrected in L1 or L2? _____

5. How were they corrected ?
(Tick an appropriate column and provide an example)

Correction technique	Tick (V) if applicable	Example of an error and the teacher's response
a) T indicated verbally the kind of mistake (e.g. 'tense').		
b) T repeated the student's response with a correct form ('echoing').		
c) T asked another student (or class) to correct the student.		
d) T used gesture to indicate a mistake (e.g. finger correction).		
e) T used the blackboard to indicate a mistake.		
f) T indicated an error by starting a sentence and making the student finish it.		

g)	T asked the Ss to choose from two answers the correct one.		
h)	T used other techniques– specify.		

6. Was the teacher friendly when correcting or did s/he express his /her disapproval?

_____

After the lesson think of answers to the following questions:

7. Did the students commit mainly mistakes ('slips of the tongue') or errors

(resulting from the lack of knowledge of a rule)? What was the T's response to mistakes and errors

respectively?

_____

8. How were the mistakes worked on? What did the T do about those made in fluency practice?

_____

9. Was there any further practice related to the mistakes assigned (or perhaps homework)?

_____

10. Do you feel the T corrected all errors? Why (not)? How did the students react to it (or its lack)?

_____

11. Were there any errors that could have been overlooked?

_____

12. What was the main focus of the lesson: developing accuracy or fluency?

_____

13. Was there a link between the amount of error correction and the focus of the phase of the lesson?

(practice vs. production)

_____

Summary
From the observations made how much correction would you like to do as a teacher? Would the choice of the correction technique be dictated by the type of student, age, level, etc.? By means of which techniques? Do you think you could utilise the mistakes learners make for further practice or would you leave them to the learners' knowledge and care?

Reflect
How did you like to be corrected? Did you profit from the teacher's correction or did you prefer self - correction? What kind of feedback did you profit from the most: praising, criticism, precise explanation of an error, a grade, etc.? Which of these has an influence on the positive motivation towards learning?

Teaching vocabulary

Aims: to become familiar with techniques for vocabulary presentation and practice.
to realise the importance of vocabulary practice and learning strategies for vocabulary
retention in memory

Knowledge of the following terms required: active & passive vocabulary, connotation, denotation, concept checking, learning strategy: repetition, deduction, grouping, inferencing, resourcing, imagery, auditory representation, contextualisation, elaboration,

Related reading: Harmer, J. (2nd ed.) pp.153-180
Ur, P. pp.60-74
Hedge, P. pp.109-140

TASK

While observing a lesson, note down:

1. How many words does the teacher introduce during one class? (List them). Are they meant for active or passive knowledge?

   _____

   _____

2. What are the reasons for the introduction (preparation for reading a text, speaking practice etc.)?

   _____

3. What techniques for presenting meaning does the teacher use?

   (Tick an appropriate answer and provide an example of a word presented with the technique)

   - translation _____

   - giving a definition _____

   - using realia _____

   - gesture/mime _____

   - drawing /picture _____

   - giving an example _____

   - enumeration _____

   - antonyms/synonyms _____

   - using mathematical symbols _____

   - word-formation _____

   - coinages _____

   - looking a word up in a dictionary _____

   - guessing meaning from context _____

4. Does the teacher vary the techniques? Why (not)?

   _____

5. How does she organise the presentation on the blackboard (a list, a table, a mind map etc.)?
_____

6. How does the teacher make sure the students understand the word if other techniques than translation have been used? _____

7. What other information about a word (apart from meaning) does the teacher give (spelling, part of speech, word grammar, etc.)? Note down relevant examples.
_____

8. Does the teacher emphasise the pronunciation of the word? If so, how does s/he do it (transcription, choral/individual repetition)?
_____

9. Does the teacher use any discovery techniques, e.g. deducing meaning from context, using dictionaries, matching exercises etc.?
_____

10. How is the newly introduced vocabulary later on in the lesson practised / reinforced?
Does it reappear in e.g. reading / writing passages?
_____

11. What are the techniques the teacher uses for practice? Do they call for recognition or production of words?
_____
_____

12. How effective do you think this practice is? How many words will the students remember during the lesson?
_____

13. Does the teacher refer to / revise any vocabulary from previous lessons? If so, on what occasions? For what reasons?
____ _____

14. Does the teacher implicitly or explicitly encourage the use of vocabulary learning strategies (e.g. grouping, resourcing, inferencing, etc.)? How?
_____
_____

Reflect

- How many times do you have to encounter a word in order to remember it?
- What are the learning strategies you use to facilitate vocabulary learning?
- Recall your school days; did you remember most/half/none of the words introduced during the lesson? What was the teacher's contribution to that?
- To what extent do you think the teacher is responsible for the vocabulary acquisition of his / her students?
- How can he facilitate effective vocabulary learning?

Summary
Having observed the lesson and reflected on your learning experience what suggestions about vocabulary teaching would you give to the observed teacher?

Teaching pronunciation and spelling

Aims: to realise the importance of teaching pronunciation and spelling and correcting errors in those skills for the development of communicative competence
to become aware of pronunciation errors Polish learners of English most often make

Knowledge of the following terms required: communicative competence, communicative efficiency, minimal pairs

Related reading: Ur, P. Ch.4 pp.47-59

TASK 1

During the lesson concentrate on observing two most active learners, possibly a good and a weaker one, and take down the following information on their pronunciation:

	Student A	**Student B**
Language level of the student		
Words mispronounced		
Examples of wrong word stress		
'Polish – like ' sounds		
Characteristics of English pronunciation (glottal stop, aspiration, linking etc.)		
Varied intonation (rising and falling in questions, expressing emphasis etc.		

After the lesson, reflect and write down:

1. What type of mistakes do the students most often make? In sounds, stress or intonation?
   _____

2. If the students have made plenty of these / or few/, can you think of the reason for this?
   _____

3. How does the teacher deal with students' pronunciation mistakes? Does he correct them?
   _____

4. Is there any conscious attention paid to pronunciation, such as choral repetition, reading aloud, listening exercise on distinguishing sounds? _____

5. Does the teacher ever use the phonetic alphabet? Are the students acquainted with it?
   _____

6. Does the teacher try to indicate pronunciation patterns, i.e. most probable pronunciation of a cluster of words? If yes, give an example of a rule that s/he gives.

___ _____

7. How much does the teacher use the blackboard to write down new words?
_____

8. Are the students made to write down/ copy things to practise spelling indirectly? On what occasions?
_____

9. Do you think dictating words/ things to students at higher levels can substitute writing them down on the board? _____

TASK 2

After the lesson if there is an opportunity, interview the teacher:

1. How much time does s/he devote to deliberate practice of pronunciation?
2. What kind of techniques does s/he use then?
3. Does she introduce the phonetic alphabet? How does she do it?
4. How does the teacher explain to his/her students the pronunciation of difficult sounds?
5. What is the teacher's attitude to spelling mistakes in essays, vocabulary tests, etc.?
6. Does the teacher use deliberately any spelling exercises, e.g. dictations?

Reflect

1. How did classroom instruction (or lack of it) influence your present pronunciation? Is there anything you could have done yourself to improve it? How do you evaluate your teacher's instruction in this respect?
2. Try to think critically how the use of aids (blackboard, handouts, computers) may affect the students' spelling.

Teaching reading

Aims: to become aware of how texts can be exploited in the classroom
to realize how comprehension of texts can be facilitated by means of reading strategies
to learn the principles of effective reading and how these should be taught in class
to observe phases of a good reading lesson

Knowledge of the following terms required: receptive skills, discourse, authentic texts, intensive vs. extensive reading, roughly – tuned input,
reading skills: scanning, skimming, predictive skills, reading for detailed information, understanding discourse patterns and the function of words, deducing meaning,
reading strategy: inferring, advance organisation, selective attention,

Related reading: Ur, P. pp.138-158
                          Harmer, J. (2nd ed.) pp.181-234, (3rd ed.) pp.210-227

TASK
Arrange to observe a reading lesson; while watching it, note down the following information:
(Answer the questions **in bold** during the observation session and the remaining ones after class.)

Before reading:
1. **Was there any vocabulary pre-taught?**
    - How? _____
    - What? _____
    - How much?_____
    - What do you think was the reason for this? _____

2. **Did the teacher try to gain students' interest in the text before they read the passage**
    (Tick an appropriate answer)
    - by predicting vocabulary _____
    - by predicting the content of the text_____
    - by personalising i.e. relating the topic of the text to students' own lives _____
    - by using visuals_____
    - by eliciting from the students what they already know about the topic _____
    - by using quotations/proverbs/part of a story/ other written texts _____
    - by providing an introductory listening text (dialogue, song etc.) _____
    - others, please specify _____

3. **Did the teacher provide clear instructions as to what to do while reading the text?**
    _____

4. Did the teacher give the students any guidelines as to how to do a task more efficiently (i.e. did he explain/model to them any reading strategies)? If yes, how did s/he do it?
    _____

    While reading

5. **Did the students read silently?**_____ Why (not)? _____

6. **How many times did they read the text?** _____ Why? _____

7. What reading tasks were the students given?
(Tick the right answer)
(a) answering general questions _____
(b) answering detailed wh-questions _____
(c) summarising _____
(d) matching paragraphs / sentences _____
(e) multiple choice _____
(f) jumbled text _____
(g) summarising _____
(h) information transfer (i.e. filling a grid/map/ table) _____
(i) jigsaw reading (SS exchange information about the texts they have read) _____
(j) others, please specify _____

8. What reading skills were practised (e.g. skimming, scanning, for detailed information etc.) through

each of the tasks assigned?

_____

9. **Was a time limit set?** _____

10. **Was the text authentic or specially written?** _____

11. Was it suitable for the level/ age/ interests of the students?

_____

Feedback

12. How were the answers checked? Was there any pair work consultation before whole – class

check? _____

13. **Did the teacher ask the students to support their answers with examples from the text?**

_____

14. **Did all the students manage to get the right answers in the end? Did they profit from the**

teacher's / peers' comments i.e. did they understand the justification for the answers?

_____

Text –related activities

15. Was any vocabulary still unknown to the students after reading? _____Was it checked and

explained? _____Why / why not? _____

16. Did the reading lead to any other activity? If not, could you suggest one to practise speaking, writing,

pronunciation, vocabulary?

_____

_____

17. What do you think the purpose of such a follow-up should be?

_____

TASK 2

After class if there is an opportunity, ask the observed teacher

18. Does s/he encourage learners to read more outside classes? If yes, how?

_____

19. Is there a school library of books in English? _____

20. Does the teacher assign project work requiring from students independent work with texts?

_____

21. Does the teacher bring to class out of coursebook texts (authentic ones?) _____

22. From what sources? _____What kind?

_____

23. How often? _____

24. For what purposes (i.e. other than teaching reading, perhaps teaching culture)?

_____

Reflect
1) Reading is a passive and silent activity, thus a lesson may seem to be a bit boring. How could it be enlivened? Do you think any of the stages above can be lengthened or shortened if necessary?

2) Why do students read in class silently? What is the purpose of reading aloud then? Can you think of opportunities for reading aloud in class, not necessarily of long texts? What items can be read aloud?

Summary
3) How has your idea of teaching reading changed after the methods classes?

Teaching listening

Aims: to become aware of the differences in listening in real life and in the classroom
to learn the strategies of effective listening and how these should be taught in class
to observe phases of a good listening lesson

Knowledge of the following terms required: receptive skills, discourse, authentic texts, intensive vs. extensive listening, roughly – tuned input,
listening skills: scanning, skimming, predictive skills, listening for detailed information, understanding discourse patterns and the function of words, deducing meaning,
listening strategies: inferencing, advance organisation, selective attention,

Related reading: Ur, P. pp.105-119
Harmer, J. (2nd ed.) 181-234, (3rd ed.) pp.228-242
Hedge, T. pp.227-257

TASK

Note: If you are not observing a regular listening lesson, concentrate on Part A only; if this is a listening lesson do parts A & B.

PART A
What or who did the students listen to?
(Put one tick **(V)** if the SS listened to an item only once or two ticks **(V V)** if they listened to it more than once)
- the teacher
- other students
- cassette recording
- video
- other

What was the purpose of the listening exercise?
(Put one tick (V) if the SS listened for one reason only or two ticks (VV) if they listened for more than one task)

- to take notes
- to check their answers to a task
- to get some information from a colleague
- for dictation
- for instructions
- to understand new material
- to check for mistakes
- other, please specify…………….

Which of these types of listening are real – life and constitute an example of genuine communication?
_____

Part B
(Answer the questions in bold during the observation session and the remaining ones after class.)

Before listening

1. **Was any vocabulary pre-taught?**

   - How? _____
   - What? _____
   - How much?_____
   - What do you think was the reason for this? _____

2. **Did the teacher try to gain students' interest in the text before they listened to it:**
   (Tick an appropriate answer)

- by predicting vocabulary _____
- by predicting the content of the text_____
- by personalising i.e. relating the topic of the text to students ' own lives _____
- by using visuals_____
- by eliciting from the students what they already know about the topic _____
- by using quotations/proverbs _____
- by providing an introductory reading text _____
- others, please specify _____

3. **Did the teacher provide clear instructions as to what to do while listening to the text?**

   _____

4. Did the teacher give the students any guidelines as to how to do a task more efficiently (i.e. did he

   explain to them /model any listening strategies)? If yes, how?

   _____

   _____

5. To what extent did the pre-listening tasks aid comprehension? Would you suggest another pre-
   listening activity to facilitate the task?
   _____

While listening

6. **Did the students hear the whole text at once? If so, was that helpful?**

   _____

7. **How many times did they listen to the text? Why? _____ Would**

   they understand the text better if they listened to it once more?

   _____ _____

8. **What listening tasks were the students given?**
   (Tick the right answer)
   (k) answering general questions _____
   (l) answering detailed wh-questions _____
   (m) summarising _____
   (n) matching paragraphs / sentences _____
   (o) multiple choice _____
   (p) jumbled text _____
   (q) summarising _____
   (r) information transfer (i.e. filling a grid/map/ table) _____
   (s) jigsaw reading (SS exchange information about the texts they have read) _____
   (t) others, please specify _____

9. What listening skills were practised (e.g. skimming, scanning, for detailed information etc.) through

   each of the tasks assigned?

   _____

10. **Did the teacher use tapescript ? If yes, how? What for?**

    _____

    _____

11. **How long was the listening text? (_____min.) Was it appropriate for the level and attention**

    span of the students?

_____

12. Was the text authentic, i.e. did it have all the characteristics of natural speech?

_____

Feedback

13. How were the answers checked? Was there any pair work consultation before the whole–class check?

_____

14. Did the teacher ask the students to support their answers with words from the text?

_____

15. **Did the teacher rewind the tape to listen again in case of doubt?**

_____ _____

Text –related activities

16. **Was any vocabulary still unknown to students after listening? Was comprehension checked and explained? Why / why not?**

_____

17. Did the listening task lead to any other activity? If not, could you suggest one to practise speaking, writing, reading, pronunciation, vocabulary?

_____

Summary

Think of three advantages and disadvantages of using the above model for teaching receptive skills (i.e. reading and listening)

Reflect

Why is listening comprehension one of the most difficult skills to master? What advice would you give to your students during the lesson to help them understand listening texts better? What strategies do you yourself use when listening in English?

Questioning techniques

Aims: to familiarise students with types and functions of questions teachers ask their students
to realise how the type of questions influence student participation in the 'IRF" mode of teaching

Knowledge of the following terms required: 'IRF" (Initiation-Response-Feedback), yes / no questions, retrieval style questions, open-ended questions, display questions, referential questions, personalised questions, non-retrieval questions.(See **After class** section for the explanation.)

Related reading: Ur, P. Ch.16, pp.229-232
Wajnryb, R. pp. 47

TASK 1

While observing the lesson:

Note down 10 questions asked by the teacher. State the reasons why the teacher asked each of them:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

TASK 2

Also record three short exchanges between the teacher and a learner:

Teacher:_____

Learner:_____

Teacher: _____

Learner: _____

Teacher:_____

Learner:_____

Teacher:_____

Learner:_____

Teacher:_____

Learner:_____

Teacher:_____

Learner:_____

TASK 3

 OBSERVE

1. Are the questions clear, i.e. do the students immediately grasp the meaning of the question and the required answer? _____

2. Do the questions stimulate thinking or are they irrelevant to the learning of the target material? _____

3. Do the questions invite and encourage extended answers? _____

4. Can most of the students answer the questions? _____

5. Are weaker students encouraged? _____ How? _____

6. If there are volunteers, are they always the same? _____

7. How does the teacher react to students' answers? _____ Can they be sure that their answers are not mocked, ridiculed etc.? _____

8. Are the questions asked before appointing students to answer? _____

9. How long does the teacher wait for the answers?_____ sec

10. Is the teacher aware of 'blind spots' (i.e. students one tends to overlook)? _____

11. Do students direct questions to the teacher? _____

12. Do students ask other students? _____

After the lesson
look at the collected data and answer the following questions:

1. What sorts of questions are the most common?
(Indicate the type next to each question recorded.)
- *Yes/no* questions, e.g. "Have you been to the circus?"
- *Retrieval –style* questions, e.g. "What did she say about the film?" (requiring repetition of the information previously said)
- *Open –ended* questions?, e.g. "What might she be thinking about ?" (allowing for a variety of acceptable answers)
- *Display questions*, e.g. "What is the capital of Poland?" (questions requesting information already known to the questioner)
- *Referential questions*, e.g. "How old is your mother?" (questions requesting new information, not known to the teacher)
- *Personalised questions,* e.g. Where do you like spending your holidays ?(asking for personal information)
- *Non-retrieval, imaginative questions*, e.g. Where do you think the scene takes place? (questions that require the learner to draw on inferred information)

(From : Wajnryb, R. 1992:47)

2. Is the choice of the teacher's questions justified by any factor, e.g. the stage of the lesson, level of the student, etc?

    _____ _____

3. What type of questions causes most difficulty to the students?

    _____ _____

4. Which questions invite the most extended answers and thus should be used if speaking skills are to be practised? _____

Summary

How would you evaluate the teacher's questions against the following criteria?
(Give a grade from 1-5):

(a) clarity (the SS immediately grasp the meaning of the question) _____
(b) learning value(the Q stimulates thinking and contributes to learning of further material) ___
(c) interest _____
(d) availability (most of the SS can try to answer it) _____
(e) extension (the Q encourages extended and / or varied answers) _____
(f) teacher's reaction (acceptance and tolerance of **all** answers by the teacher) _____

        (Criteria adopted from Ur, P. 230)

Teaching speaking

Aims: to become aware of the amount of teacher and student talk in class
to become familiarised with techniques for enhancing the latter
to realise why students do not want to speak in class and find solutions to overcome these
to learn conditions for successful pair/group work

Knowledge of the following terms required: 'IRF', elicitation, accuracy vs. fluency practice, information gap, simulation, role –play, ranking activity, communication strategy

Related reading: Harmer, J. (2nd ed.) pp. 92-108, 122-138(3rd ed.) pp.271-276
Ur, P. Ch.16, pp.120-132
Hedge, T. Ch. 8, pp.259-298
Brown, H.D., p.128

TASK

While observing the lesson, note down (You can base some of the answers on the observations of the previous lessons):

1. Does the teacher establish an 'English only' policy'?_____ In what situations does s/he accept Polish ? _____
2. What kinds of interaction patterns prevail in class? _____Is interaction only teacher initiated (Teacher initiation-Response-Feedback)? _____
3. In 'IRF' mode of teaching do the teacher's questions stimulate longer student utterances? (Refer to the task on questioning techniques) _____
4. Does the teacher teach 'helping ' language to the students, e.g. 'How do you say.... in English ?' _____

5. What speaking tasks does the teacher assign?
   (Tick 'V' an appropriate answer)
   (a) a question – answer exchange _____
   (b) whole – class discussions_____
   (c) information – gap activities_____
   (d) interviews_____
   (e) role – plays_____
   (f) story telling_____
   (g) personalised monologues_____
   (h) guessing games_____
   (i) prepared dialogues_____
   (j) retelling a story_____
   (k) prepared monologues_____
   (l) others (please, indicate) _____

6. Which of the activities above make the students talk the most? _____ Why?
   _____

7. Is there any pair / group work? _____ How long does it last? (_____ min) Do the students really speak English then? If they don't, is it because
   (Tick an appropriate answer):

   (a) the task is not interesting _____
   (b) there is no – information gap_____
   (c) the students lack vocabulary_____
   (d) the topic is too sophisticated – the students do not know what to say_____
   (e) they do not want to co-operate with one another (they do not like their partners) _____
   (f) the instructions to the task were not clear_____
   (g) too much time assigned _____
   (h) the students are stressed because they lack confidence in their language competence _____

8. What kind of solutions could you offer to these problems respectively?

a) _____
b) _____
c) _____
d) _____
e) _____
f) _____
g) _____
h) _____

9. What roles does the teacher assume during speaking practice? _____

10. How does the teacher monitor pair work? _____

11. Does he ever correct any errors? _____ When and how? _____

12. How does the teacher encourage the students to speak? (Note down 3 expressions or phrases of encouragement)

    _____

    _____

    _____

13. Does the teacher pre – teach any vocabulary before pair/group work (e.g. discussion)? If yes, note it down. Is the choice of words appropriate for the requirements of the activity?
    _____
    _____

14. Does the teacher introduce any text on a related topic or a model of spoken language before the speaking activity takes place? If yes, what is it about and how does it relate to the speaking task?
    _____
    _____

15. Do the students obtain any help (in the form of materials, information on blackboard etc.) what and how to talk about things when working in pairs? If yes, of what sort?

    _____

16. What is the seating arrangement during speaking activities? (Make a sketch of it below.) Does it enable eye contact between interlocutors?
_____

REFLECT

How much does each individual student actually talk; is there any student who did not speak up at all? Why not? Is there any possibility of enhancing the amount of student talking time (STT)?

Summary
Write down 3 Dos and 3 Don'ts for making students speak in class.

Teaching writing

Aims: to realise the importance of explicit teaching of a writing skill
to learn ideas for writing tasks in class
to become aware of how teaching writing can be integrated with teaching other language skills

Knowledge of the following terms required: controlled, guided, free, communicative writing, creative writing, cohesion, coherence

Related reading: Ur, P. Ch.11, pp. 159-174.
Harmer, J. (3rd ed.) pp.255-268
Hedge, T. Ch. 9, pp. 299-334

TASK
In this task try to get answers while observing a few consecutive lessons. You may also find it useful to consult some students' notebooks (upon their and the teacher's permission).

1. How much do the students write in class? Is the amount of writing tasks related to the level of the students?
   _____

2. What items do the students write down during the lesson?
   (Tick (V) an appropriate answer)

   a) examples of new language copied from the blackboard _____
   b) a grammar exercise _____
   c) new words _____
   d) answers to reading/listening comprehension task _____
   e) a definition _____
   f) feedback answers to a speaking task _____
   g) dictation _____
   h) reordering words in sentences _____
   i) correcting factual mistakes _____
   j) self- evaluation _____
   k) a diary entry _____
   l) a note / letter which the SS exchange with other students _____
   m) an essay _____
   n) a paragraph (e.g. a continuation of a story) _____
   o) a project (poster, leaflet, magazine etc.)
   p) a piece of creative writing (poem, story, reaction to music etc.)
   q) other (specify)...

3. What is the purpose of each task done respectively?

a) …………………………………………………..
b) …………………………………………………..
c) …………………………………………………..
d) …………………………………………………..
e) …………………………………………………..
f) …………………………………………………..
g) …………………………………………………..
h) …………………………………………………..
i) …………………………………………………..
j) …………………………………………………..
k) …………………………………………………..
l) …………………………………………………
m) …………………………………………………
n) …………………...

o) ………………………………………………
p) ………………………………………………
q) ………………………………………………

3. In which of these tasks are the writing skills really practised? What do you consider as writing skills?

_____

4. What type of things do you write most often in real life? How do classroom tasks relate to those in real life? _____

5. How are writing tasks conducted? In pairs? Groups? Individually? _____

What is the choice of interaction pattern justified by? _____

6. Is there any preparation done for classroom free writing tasks or homework assignments? What is it?

(Tick (V) an appropriate answer)

(a) pre-teaching of vocabulary
(b) analysing the model
(c) brainstorming of ideas
(d) reading/listening to a passage on a related topic
(e) practice at linking sentences/paragraphs
(f) other, specify ……………………………………….

7. How is writing corrected?
(Tick (V) an appropriate answer)
• through peer correction
• self – correction
• T collects SS' work

8. How are written errors dealt with? Is there any correction / re-writing administered?
_____

Reflect
Do you think writing needs to be deliberately taught or can it just be picked up? What are the best ways to master good writing skills? Do you think the writing tasks should be assigned for class or homework? Why?

Summary
How can students be prepared for writing essays? What skills do they need to master before they learn to write exam – type essays?

Integrating all skills

AIMS: to realise how language skills are interrelated in real life and in L1
to learn how to integrate the language skills in the classroom
to learn how to enhance the variety and interest in a lesson through integrating the skills.

Related reading: Tanner, R. and Green S. (1998), 76-82.

Remember: skill integration does not mean a mish-mash of unrelated activities. On the contrary, the students while practising different language skills should feel the purpose of each activity and sense that they all constitute a whole, thus skill-integrated lessons will largely rely on macroskills and so will focus on the meaningful communication and its content rather than mastering a language form (Thus no formal focus on grammar can be found in the lesson).

TASK
Arrange with the teacher to observe an integrated skills lesson, preferably a task – based one; a reading or listening lesson will be suitable as well.

While observing the lesson complete the table with class activities, specify the aim of each one and note down how the teacher moves from one activity to another (transitions).

Activity	Skill (s) practised	Aim of the activity	Transition

After the lesson, on the basis of the gathered data try to find answers to the following questions.

1. What was the overall theme/topic of the lesson? _____

2. What was the main organising principle of the lesson? A topic, a text (reading or listening) or a final outcome (e.g. a project)?

    _____

3. Was the choice of the skills practised varied and justified? Would you have done the same tasks differently? If so, why?

    _____

4. Were the students aware of the connection between the activities? How? (Through transitions, topic, explicit explanation of the purpose, graded sequence etc.)

    _____

5. What was the position of grammar and vocabulary in this lesson?

    _____

6. What were the patterns of interaction? Were they appropriate for the skills practised?

    _____

7. What was the overall goal of the lesson? Do you think it was achieved? Why?

    _____

    _____

Summary
Why do you think it is important to integrate different language skills in a lesson?

Using audiovisual aids

Aims: to realize the importance of using audiovisual aids as tools for increasing lesson effectiveness
to become aware of how A-V aids help sustain interest/motivation of the students
to learn how to use and organize A-V aids effectively
to realize how much learning time can be lost/gained when using A-V aids.

Knowledge of the following terms required: flashcard, OHP, realia
learning styles (visual, auditory, kinesthetic)

Related reading: Harmer, J. (3rd ed.) pp.134-153
Ur, P. pp.189-196

TASK

1. Tick those audio-visual aids which were used during the lesson:
(Use **V** if an aid was used only once; use **V V** if an aid was used more than once)

   a) blackboard _____
   b) flashcards _____
   c) coursebooks _____
   d) pictures/posters _____
   e) realia _____
   f) charts/maps _____
   g) CD/cassette-player _____
   h) Video _____
   i) Worksheets/handouts _____
   j) OHP + transparencies _____
   k) Teacher (gesture, varied tone of voice etc.) _____
   l) Other students (used for demonstration) _____
   m) Other, please specify…………………………………

2. Can you specify the reason for which the teacher decided to use each aid respectively?

   a) …………………
   b) ………………
   c) ………………
   d) ……………
   e) ………………
   f) …………………
   g) ………………
   h) ………………..
   i) ………………..
   j) ……………………
   k) ………………..
   l) ……………………
   m) ……………………

   After the lesson, think:

3. Which aids were used most often?_____ Why? _____

4. Which aids were not used at all? _____ Why? _____

5. What are the most common reasons for using A-V aids?

    _____

6. How did the use / or lack of it influence the effectiveness of the lesson, i.e. enhanced skill practice? Was there any stage where no aid was used but would be required?

    _____

7. The use of which aid(s) stimulated the students' interest the most?

    _____

8. The use of which aids would arouse **your** interest the most? _____
    Why?_____

9. Were all the aids used effectively, i.e. big/loud enough for everyone to see/hear?_____

10. Were all aids prepared before the lesson e.g. tape rewound, worksheets cut etc.? If not, what effect did the lack of preparation have on the course of the lesson? _____

TASK 2

In the diagram below try to copy the contents and organization from the blackboard in class.

	Lesson	

1. How did the teacher organise the blackboard? Can you see any deliberate pattern in its organisation? _____

2. If there is no pattern, could you suggest an alternative arrangement?

    _____

    _____

3. How does the teacher work with the board? Does he speak when writing? _____Can all students see what T is writing? How does he stand then?

    _____

4. Is the writing on the board legible? _____

5. Do the students have enough time to copy data from the board? _____

6. Is the board used only for writing? Could you suggest any other uses?
    _____

Summary

How should the knowledge of various learning styles influence your choice of aids for the teaching classroom?

Reflect

The most common teachers' complaint about their use of A-V aids is the difficulty and time consumption of finding them when needed. Can you suggest ways of collecting, producing and storing such aids for future use?

Homework assignment

Aims: to realise the importance of homework as a tool for enhancing motivation and providing additional language practice
to become familiar with a range of possible tasks for homework assignment
to learn effective ways of homework giving and checking.

Note: this task can be done after observing a few (preferably consecutive) lessons.

TASK

1. Having observed a few consecutive lessons (or having interviewed the teacher), note down, what sort of tasks have been given for homework assignments:

   (Tick an appropriate answer)
   - a grammar exercise from workbook / studentbook _____
   - a writing passage/letter etc. _____
   - an essay_____
   - retelling of a text read in class_____
   - an oral presentation_____
   - a dialogue learnt by heart_____
   - a work of art (a poster/picture/leaflet etc.) _____
   - reading a passage _____
   - reading a book _____
   - practising reading aloud _____
   - conducting a survey _____
   - learning a song / poem by heart _____
   - finding resources _____
   - other _____

2. What sorts of tasks prevail? Oral or written?_____ Why?

   _____

3. Does homework naturally complement the contents of the lesson? _____ How?

   _____ _____

4. Does the teacher try to enhance the language practice of the skills neglected in class?

   _____

5. What language skills are these? _____

6. Do you think the students find the assignments interesting, stimulating to do? _____

7. If yes, is it because of
   (Tick the right answer.)
   (a) real – life topics _____
   (b) open-endedness (each SS can provide his/her own answer) _____
   (c) a chance to show off his/her abilities _____
   (d) involvement of extralinguistic skills (e.g. technical, artistic etc.) _____
   (e) being cross-curricular (i.e. extending into the knowledge of other subjects) _____
   (f) ability to cooperate with other students _____
   (g) others, please specify_____

8. Does the teacher ever give a homework assignment which constitutes preparation for the next lesson?

_____

9. What sort of tasks are these?

_____

10. How does the teacher inform SS of the homework assignment? Orally or by writing on the board?

_____

11. Does the teacher take extra time and pay special attention to this procedure? _____ What

does he do exactly? _____

12. Does the teacher explain the task in detail, provide examples?

_____

13. How does T check the homework assignment in the following lesson:
    (Tick the right answer)
    (a) T goes round the class to see if everyone has it _____
    (b) One SS reads it and the others check their answers _____
    (c) Most of the students read it _____
    (d) Students exchange notebooks (peer correction) _____
    (e) Ss compare it to the model (self correction) _____
    (f) T collects it from everyone _____
    (g) T examines everyone _____
    (h) Other, please specify _____

14. What way of checking homework do you find

    • the most useful (providing constructive feedback)

    • the most interesting

    • the easiest /fastest

15. How long did checking the homework take? _____ min. Was the amount of time devoted to it

appropriate / necessary? _____ Why? _____

Reflect
Why are SS often unwilling to do homework and copy it ? Is there anything that could be done to avoid this problem?

Assessment

Aims: to become aware of different forms of student assessment
to learn criteria for oral and written assessment
to realize the motivating function of assessment

Knowledge of the following terms required: assessment vs. evaluation, summative vs. formative assessment, communicative efficiency, accuracy, fluency, split marking

Related reading: Komorowska, H.(2001) pp.188-196

TASK
This task is recommended to do during the lesson in which a class or student assessment (oral answer, test, essay writing) takes place; if there is none, arrange to interview the observed teacher using the questions below.

1. Which language skills does the teacher assess?
   (Tick (V) an appropriate answer)
   - Grammar
   - Vocabulary
   - Speaking
   - Writing
   - Reading
   - Listening
   - Pronunciation
   - Spelling

2. How do the grades in each skill add up to the final semester grade?

   _____

3. Are any skills emphasized by the teacher more than others? Why?

   _____

4. How often are the students assessed in each of those skills? Once a fortnight? A month? A

   semester? _____

5. What forms of assessment are preferred by the teacher? Why? _____

   (Tick (V) an appropriate answer)
   - Tests
   - Short quizzes
   - Oral answers
   - Written homework assignments
   - Projects
   - Others, specify…………………………………

6. How clear are the instructions for the task? _____

7. Is it only the teacher who assesses or do the students have a say as well?

   _____

8. Are the criteria for assessment clear to the students? When were they introduced? At the beginning

   of the school year? Before each assignment? (if possible get acquainted with the assessment

   criteria developed by the school)

   _____

9. What are the criteria for assessing speaking and writing? When can a student obtain a 'very good'

   grade and when a 'failing' one? (Find out from the teacher).

   _____ _____

10. Do the criteria entail any of the following? (Tick an appropriate answer) What is the distribution of points in each category?

- Grammatical accuracy _____
- Fluency _____
- Vocabulary (appropriate use in context, use of synonyms, correct collocations etc.) _____
- Communicative interaction (knowledge of routines for interactional patterns, use of communication strategies to compensate for a lack of knowledge, ability to maintain conversation by reacting to the interlocutor, asking questions etc.) _____
- Pronunciation (correct production of sounds, words) _____
- Spelling_____
- Interesting, original content _____
- Text cohesion and coherence _____

11. Are the requirements appropriate for the level and ability of the group / individual students? Does the teacher vary the requirements according to the ability of individual students? If yes, do you think it is fair?

_____

_____

12. Does the teacher justify his / her grade to the student? _____ What effect does this have on the student? _____

13. What is the overall goal of teaching in the observed group and thus emphasis on: passing exams (and so grammatical accuracy) or achieving communicative competence (and so fluency and vocabulary)? _____

14. Do the observed forms of assessment comply with the goal of teaching?

_____

15. Do the students have a chance / are obliged to improve the grade if performance is poor? How?

_____

Summary

How do the assessment criteria compare to those applied to your oral and written performance in the Teacher Training College? Are there any criteria you would apply or give up as a teacher? Why?

Reflect
What is in your opinion the role of assessment? To motivate the students to regular work or provide information about student's current level of L2 competence?
What do you think is the influence of assessment on motivation to learn? How often should it be given then? Support your opinion with examples from your own learning experience.

Giving instructions

Aims: to learn the principles of giving clear instructions
to realise how poor / good instructions affect the course of the lesson
to learn how to guarantee the smooth flow of the lesson

TASK

While observing the lesson:

Note down as precisely as possible a few examples of teacher's instructions:

I. _____

II. _____

III. _____

IV. _____

V. _____

VI. _____

VII. _____

VIII. _____

IX. _____

X. _____

And observe

1. Does the teacher signal (verbally, e.g. raise his/her voice, or non-verbally) the change of an activity and thus focus the SS attention on the instructions? What does s/he do exactly?
_____

2. Are the verbal instructions accompanied by any gesture? Of what sort?
_____

3. Does the teacher use any visual aids (blackboard, textbook, pictures) to make the meaning of his / her instructions clear? If yes, of what kind?
_____

4. Does s/he organise seating/groups before or after instructions giving? _____ Why so? _____

5. Does s/he distribute any materials before or after giving instructions? Why so?
_____

6. Does s/he provide examples of the task to do? _____

7. Does s/he make sure the students understand the instructions? How?
_____

8. Does the teacher explain the purpose of the task when giving instructions? (Provide an example)
_____

9. Does the teacher connect the task with the previous one or the topic of the lesson by means of a transition? (Provide an example)
_____

10. In general, do you think the instructions given by the teacher were effective or not? Did they influence the success or failure of the subsequent activities?
_____

After the lesson
Try to analyse the following data and answer the following questions:

1. What kind of sentence patterns does the teacher use most often? What does the simplicity / complexity of instructions depend on (level, age of the students)?

2. What kind of vocabulary does the teacher use (complex, simple, varied, specific terminology)?

3. What modifications, if any, in the teacher's pronunciation did you observe?

Reflect
Should giving instructions be treated as an act of genuine communication, thus the teacher should speak English only and clarify the task only if asked by the students?
Or should the instructions constitute only a managerial function, thus be as simple and clear as possible?

Summary
Make a list of **Dos and Don'ts** for instructions giving, e.g. *Do provide examples of the task to do.*

Maintaining discipline

Aims: to become aware of the factors conducive to discipline problems
to learn how to prevent the above
to observe ways of dealing with discipline problems
to learn how the teacher's power is established in class

Related reading: Harmer, J (2nd ed.) pp.249-252 (3rd ed.) pp.126-133

TASK

While observing the lesson, note down:

1. Were there any of the following problems present?
    (Tick an appropriate answer)
    a) late students _____
    b) too high noise level _____
    c) dominant students (who, for example, interrupt others and shout out the answers) _____
    d) students chatting while the teacher or other students are talking_____
    e) students not concentrating_____
    f) students doing something else_____
    g) 'bright' students who seem to find it easy and (e.g.) complain because it is boring_____
    h) students responding rudely _____
    i) generally disruptive students_____
    j) others - specify_____

2. What do you think the reasons for these were?

    a) Boredom (e.g. caused by too much teacher talk) _____
    b) Unclear instructions (students didn't know what to do) _____
    c) Too slow pace of the lesson_____
    d) Teacher's lack of confidence (quiet voice, etc.) _____
    e) Teacher's ignorance of earlier signals of misbehaviour_____
    f) Student's desire to be noticed _____
    g) Others – specify_____

3. Do   you   think   these   problems   could   have   been   prevented   somehow?
    _____

4. Once discipline problems appeared, how did the teacher deal with these? What would you have done ?

    (For each problem mentioned offer a different solution)

Problem	Teacher's reaction	Your suggested solution

5. Were the problems dealt with in English or Polish? _____ Do you think it matters which language is used?

_____

6. Was any punishment given? _____ Of what sort? _____ Did it solve the problem or lead to its escalation? _____

7. Was the teacher consistent in dealing with particular type of problems, i.e. reacted in the same way to the misbehaviour of different students? _____

8. How did the teacher express disapproval /praise? (Verbally, smiling, nodding, other – specify.)

_____

9. If you observed a class which was well disciplined, decide who the main decision maker was:
   (Mark T for teacher, SS for students)
   - Who chose the aims?
   - Who chose the topic?
   - Who created the pairs or groups?
   - Who wrote on the board?
   - Who cleaned the board?
   - Whom did the students speak to?
   - Who decided when to stop the activity?
   - Who decided which questions or problems in the lesson were explored?
   - Who gave explanations / meanings of new words?
   - Who asked questions?
   - Who answered student questions?
   - Who repeated what was said if others didn't hear it?
   - Who created the silences?
   - Who broke the silences?
   - Who chose the seating arrangements?
   - Who chose and prepared the materials?
   (Adopted from Wajnryb, 1992:120)

10. Do you think handing over some decision-making power to the learners is possible in any of these areas without losing control over class?
   _____

11. If so, in which areas and how should it be organised?
   _____

Reflect
Are the students always to blame for the rise of discipline problems or the teacher as well? Justify your answer with examples from class observation .

Summary
Write **6 Dos** and **Don'ts** for maintaining discipline in the class.

Lesson observation evaluation sheet

Name of the teacher:……………………………………………………………………………
Date of the lesson:…………………………………………………………………………
Topic of the lesson:………………………………………………………………………..
Aims of the lesson (Try to specify these after observing the lesson; you may consult with the teacher later):
………
……………………………………………………………………………

While observing the lesson try to obtain data for each of the following categories and tick the appropriate column. Leave the columns empty if the data for them could not be found. Provide evidence for the items you ticked .

	Yes	No	Evidence /comment
Planning			
1. The T prepared a variety of activities			
2. The activities were suitable for the level, age and interests of the students.			
3. Practice at a variety of language skills was provided.			
4. The aims of the lesson were clear to the students (via the topic, transitions, summary of the lesson, other)			
5. The T prepared a variety of teaching aids.			
6. The activities and aids were directly relevant to the aims of the lesson.			
Presentation and development.			
1. The T explained the new material efficiently.			
2. The Ss showed understanding of the new material by its proper use in the practice activities.			
3. The T efficiently engaged SS in the lesson by skillful elicitation (questions, examples, comments, definitions etc.).			
4. All the activities were relevant to the main objective of the lesson.			
5. The activities were logically sequenced, e.g. easier before more complex ones etc.			
6. The T used available aids efficiently (e.g. the board.)			
7. The T varied interaction patterns to guarantee equal participation of all SS.			
8. The T spoke loudly and clearly.			
9. The T made references to L2 culture.			
Language command			
1. The T spoke L2 most of the time.			
2. The T used L2 as a tool of genuine communication (and e.g. not only to give instructions).			
3. The T was able to adjust his/her			

	language level to the level of the SS.			
4.	The T did not make vocabulary or grammatical mistakes.			
5.	The T provided a good model of pronunciation and spelling (e.g. when writing on board)			
6.	The T did not hesitate to correct SS errors.			
Class management				
1.	The class started on time.			
2.	The T introduced her/himself			
3.	The T followed routines, e.g. wrote the topic on board etc.			
4.	The T gave clear and precise instructions to the tasks.			
5.	The T organised effective seating arrangement for the activities.			
6.	The T monitored pair/group work closely and provided help if necessary.			
7.	The T checked answers to the tasks precisely.			
8.	The pace of the lesson was accurate.			
9.	The class was disciplined.			
10.	The T reacted to any misbehaviour, e.g. ss chatting.			
11.	The class finished on time.			
Interpersonal dynamics				
1.	The T was friendly and smiling.			
2.	The T used SS's names			
3.	The T gave SS a lot of positive reinforcement, either verbally (praising) or non-verbally (nodding etc.)			
4.	The T showed genuine interest in SS' answers by verbal (e.g. 'That's wonderful!) and non -verbal reactions (eye contact, gesture etc.)			
5.	The teacher made a conscious effort to pay attention to all students equally.			

Having observed the lesson, suggest three ways of improving the lesson to the observed teacher trainee:

………………………………………………………………………………………........

………………………………………………………………………………………........

………………………………………………………………………………………........

Lesson observation evaluation sheet

Teacher self – evaluation form

Name of the teacher trainee: ……………………………………………………………………………………
Date of the lesson: ……………………………………………………………………………………..
Place of the lesson (class, school) : ……………………………………………………………………………..

Planning

What were my objectives of the lesson?

………………………………………………………………………………………

 What did I take into account when preparing it?

…………………………………………………………………………………………...

Presentation and development

Did I manage to achieve my aims, i.e. did the students show a clear understanding, proper usage of what I presented?

………………………………………………………………………………………

Did I have to change my plan of the lesson? What was it influenced by?

………………………………………………………………………………………

Language command

Did I feel confident about the use of L2?

………………………………………………………………………………………

Was I able to provide feedback to students' questions and / or errors?

………………………………………………………………………………………

Class management

Did I manage to do everything I had planned?

………………………………………………………………………………………

To what extent was I responsible for any interruptions that took place in class?

………………………………………………………………………………………

Did I manage to organise the activities effectively, i.e. the instructions were clear, the pair/ group work were closely monitored and successful etc.

………………………………………………………………………………………

Interpersonal dynamics

Did I feel comfortable working with the group? What did I do to establish good atmosphere in class?

……………………………………………………………………………………………...

Part Two : Commentary

TASK 1: Getting to know the class and the teacher; qualities of a good teacher

This introductory task can be assigned, whenever the trainees visit new classes for the first time. Its objective is to familiarise the trainees with the students, the teacher and the learning conditions. This information may influence conclusions from further, more precise observations and be vital for the trainees in planning further teaching sessions. Therefore the trainees should gather such essential information as the year of learning, class, number and level of the students. They should also inquire about the learning experience the students have (communicative vs. traditional), materials they are familiar with and the coursebook. Finally, they may collect information about students of outstanding ability who therefore may need more challenging activities or students with language learning problems who, in consequence, require more attention and assistance.

In addition, if the class observed exemplifies a good atmosphere which is conducive to learning, the trainees should note those elements contributing to it. This is the role of the guiding questions in section 2, which draw attention to maintaining discipline, controlling the level of acceptable noise and overactive students. Another important element is the supporting attitudes of the students towards themselves which the teacher may help develop e.g. tolerance of errors and intolerance of mutual criticisms, mockery etc. Also the role of the learning environment (e.g. enough space for the activities, cleanliness) should be indicated and the possibilities of catering for it, e.g. by rearranging the seats, decorating the walls with student work etc.

Finally, the trainees should analyse the qualities of the teacher, who him/her self is an important factor contributing to a good class atmosphere (section C). To start with, this is evident in the teacher's positive attitude towards the students and visible enthusiasm towards teaching, which can be demonstrated via vivid body language, a smile, varied intonation, humour, and, last but not least, good preparation for the lessons. Needless to say, using these, the teacher explores him/herself as a teaching aid too.

As a summary to this task, it is suggested that the trainees try to assess the qualities the observed teacher possesses. A good language teacher, according to Komorowska (2001:86-89) should show linguisitic, pedagogical, didactic and interactional skills. In brief, linguistic skills, denote the teacher's competence in L2 evident in accuracy, close to native like pronunciation, wide range of vocabulary etc. as well as his/her interest in L2 culture. Pedagogical skills describe the teacher's ability to organise and manage class activities in a varied and effective way, proper amount of correction, lively pace etc. Didactic skills are demonstrated by the ability of the teacher to innovate and adjust his / her teaching to the needs of the students and not merely follow the coursebook and interactional ones refer to the development of a friendly attitude towards students which is visible in praising them, readiness to help, loyalty and discretion about personal things, and the elements indicated in section C of the observation task.

As a supplementary task other teacher quality checklists are suggested, available from e.g. Prodromou, L. (1992). Additionally, on the basis of the collected data the trainees may analyse the teaching style of the observed teacher after consulting a relevant chapter in Komorowska (2001:81-86). All in all, the goal of such evaluation is the reinforcement of the theoretical knowledge in respect of the qualities of a good teacher rather than being judgemental about the teacher observed.

TASK 2: Lesson planning

While observing a lesson in this task, the trainees are to look for evidence of good lesson planning, which takes into account the needs and abilities of the students with the aim of achieving effectiveness. Thus such factors as age, level, interests, exams, background, learning experience and difficulties should be taken into account, even if they are not clearly evident in the lesson. Therefore the trainees may elicit this information from the observed teacher in *Task 2.* Besides, the teacher should insure that his /her teaching meets both short- and long term goals of teaching, which will partly reflect the students' needs, and partly the demands of the institution in which teaching takes place, i.e. the syllabus, exams, frequency and length of the lesson units etc. Thus it is essential that the teacher shows awareness of these goals in his / her lesson planning, and what's more, communicates them either directly or indirectly to the learners. It may manifest itself in the topic of the lesson, transitions or explicit explanation of the purpose of the activity (Qs.6, 7, 8). Such awareness increases the intrinsic motivation of the learners, who thus feel more responsible for the achievement of the goals.

Secondly, a well planned lesson is evident in good organisation, which is marked by clear stages of the lesson (Q.1) or logical sequence of activities, which are of graded difficulty, or in a cause – effect relationship (Q.9). The stages may include *a warm-up*, the goal of which is to introduce the students to the topic or revise some material, *presentation,* which is devoted to the explanation of new language forms, *practice* aimed at developing accuracy in the use of the new form, and *production,* the goal of which is fluent use of the new language in productive activities. However, it must be noted that not all lessons follow the PPP model. Additionally, the teachers may follow certain established routines, which although not planned, add to the good organisation of the lesson (Q.2). This includes such regular activities as greetings, checking the register / homework, assigning homework, giving the topic of the lesson. By observing these as performed by experienced teachers, the trainees should realise their importance in establishing a class atmosphere which facilitates learning.

Thirdly, advance planning allows the introduction of variety, and thus sustains interest in class activities. Variety, according to Harmer (1991), is a key feature of well planned lessons. It can be created by introducing a variety of techniques and methods, a variety of aids, topics, skills practised, varied patterns of interaction and a varied work pace (Q.4). These elements are to be traced by the trainees in the observation task 1, when they are to note the activities, their goals, time, and patterns of interaction for subsequent evaluation. Yet, it is not mere variety which makes the lesson effective but conscious and justified use of the above elements which, in consequence, brings about active involvement of the students and effective learning.

Finally, flexibility is also characteristic of good lesson planning, i.e. the ability to give up or modify the plan if the situation requires it. The teacher should take into account such elements as the time of the day (and so tiredness of the students), difficulty of the material, physical conditions of the classroom, lack of equipment, students' misbehaviour etc., and handle them appropriately before pursuing the prepared plan. Teacher trainees need to be prepared for such unexpected difficulties and aware of the necessity to adjust their plan to the current needs of the students and the situation. It would be too idealistic to assume that all lesson plans can be fulfilled without change. If teaching is to be effective, meeting learners' needs is more important than realising, sometimes unrealistic, plans. At this point the trainees can be reminded of the lack

of efficacy of the plans prepared for general usage and not specific students, which are available from various sources (e.g. the Internet)

TASK 3: Classroom management; teacher roles

Changing patterns of interaction is one way of introducing variety into the language class. Apart from this different patterns of interaction influence the pace of the lesson: work in lockstep is usually faster as it is set and controlled by the teacher while pair, group and individual work require more time as the students are allowed to work at their own pace, and on finishing the task, additional time for a feedback session must be allocated. Lockstep is useful for presentation of new language when the same speed of work is necessary or practice in accuracy where teacher dominance or intervention for correction is required. Yet, it does not guarantee equal amount of student participation and some may either fall behind or tend to work faster than the pace set (Q.5,6).Only choral repetition involves the work of all students at the same time, yet it may lead to some students switching off. Thus if the student talking time is to be increased, the teacher must give up his dominating role of a controller and assessor and allow the students to talk more, volunteer with questions, and participate in correction and assessment (Qs.7,8,9). This can, however, take place if other forms of interaction than lockstep are introduced. The teacher's roles which facilitate student participation would be that of a prompter, resource and manager (Q. 8).

Yet, in order to be truly effective, changing patterns of interactions should not be introduced for the sake of mere variety of the lesson but be a justified means of increasing the amount of student participation and their talking time (Q.1). Therefore it is really important for the trainees to observe whether in the interaction patterns set each individual student makes a conscious effort in doing the task. This is guaranteed if a proper amount of time for the task is given, i.e. enough for the slower students to do most of the task and not too much for the good ones who could become too bored and relaxed (Q.2). Also the trainees should distinguish between collaboration and pair work, of which only the latter fosters language use e.g. in speaking activities while the former relies on consultation on difficult tasks, e.g. when checking answers to comprehension questions. Too often collaboration is wrongly mistaken for pair work and thus considered to provide an adequate amount of language practice, while it does not. Another important point is that such individualised instruction as pair/group, and even individual, work require close monitoring, precise instructions and a purposeful task as well as a careful feedback session if it is to prove successful (Q.4).

In the **Summary** section the trainees are to judge whether the class they observe is more teacher or student centered taking into account the points discussed above, i.e. the variety of interaction patterns, varied pace and teacher roles. They are likely to conclude that the class is rather teacher –centered , which is typical of many classes, therefore they may be also invited to give suggestions to the ways of involving students more in the class decision making process, e.g. choosing the materials for the lesson, preparing presentations of new language (partly), preparing aids for the lesson (charts, flashcards, audio recordings etc. via project work), and communicative language practice (problem solving, role-play etc.).

TASK 4: Second language acquisition theory and classroom practice.

This task requires the trainees to combine their theoretical knowledge about second language learning, which they should have gained in the methodology class, with classroom practice. The basic

rationale behind the task is to make the trainees conscious of the fact that the teacher, who is aware and mindful of different teaching and learning theories, can make his instruction more varied, and thus more effective and appealing to individual learners. The importance of such awareness is visible, for instance, in the fact that many teachers claim to follow the communicative approach while their instruction resembles actually a more traditional instruction. While this is true that current teaching is mainly eclectic, i.e. it does not follow any method or approach solely, the trainees should become aware that eclecticism does not stand for the mish-mash of randomly chosen activities, but on the contrary. In order to be truly effective, the choice of activities should be based on thorough knowledge of principles of different methods and the needs of the students. By and large, the trainees should be able to distinguish between traditional teacher –centered approaches represented by grammar translation and audiolingualism on the one hand, and naturalistic or communicative approaches which focus on the learner and his / her functioning in real life on the other. In order to identify the prevailing approach in the observed classroom, the trainees are asked to pay attention to the main skills, tasks and techniques that are utilised, the stages of the lesson (in deductive vs. inductive teaching), teacher roles, the teacher – student relationship, amount of error correction and the amount of target language.

In summary, the trainees are to conclude what kind of language acquisition theory the observed teacher seems to be driven by. Does s/he believe in cognitive, behaviouristic or natural learning? In the table below some key characteristics of the approaches are collected in order to ease the identification of an approach. Following that, the trainees may also compare their observation with the teacher's belief.

Cognitive approach	Behaviouristic approach	Communicative approach
Teacher dominance (controller, assessor)	Teacher dominance (controller, assessor)	Enhanced student participation (teacher is a facilitator, manager, prompter, resource)
Goal: linguistic accuracy	Goal: linguistic accuracy	Goal: communicative efficiency; fluency
Focus on grammar and vocabulary	Focus on grammar and vocabulary	Focus on macroskills
Immediate error correction	Immediate error correction	Tolerance of errors
PPP model (Presentation-Practice - Production)	PPP model (Presentation-Practice - Production)	OHE (Observe-Hypothesise-Experiment) Task-based teaching
Explicit presentation of language (deductive approach)	Implicit presentation of language rules (inductive approach)	Implicit presentation of language rules (inductive approach)
L1 accepted as language of instruction	L2 used as language of instruction	Authentic L2 use; genuine communication takes place in class
The students are alert to teacher questioning.	The students are alert to teacher questioning	Relaxed class atmosphere; students take responsibility for their learning

TASK 5: Introducing Grammar Structures

This task aims at familiarising the trainees with the model for teaching grammar inductively, and therefore the task is organised in such a way that it parallels the stages of the grammar presentation. It is hoped the trainees will have a chance to observe a well organised lesson, in which all the stages will be present.

The major tenet of the inductive approach to teaching grammar is that the learners should be engaged in self discovery of the function and meaning of the new structure, which are learnt before its form. It is believed that if the learners learn the meaning of the new structure in context, they are more likely to use it correctly in proper social contexts as well. This approach indicates a shift in focus from the grammatical form, as was the case in audiolingual tradition onto the meaning, which is the tenet of the Communicative tradition. Needless to say, such presentation stimulates students' interest much more in the grammar lesson.

Therefore while observing the phase of the lead- in, the trainees should become familiar with different techniques for setting the context (Q.2), such as an oral story, a reading/listening text, a song, a dialogue, pictures, realia, personalised examples and others. They should also be able to judge how clear and realistic the meaning and function of the structure are (Qs.3,6). In addition, they should realise the importance of introducing one meaning at a time, which should also be pursued consistently in the practice stage of the lesson. Such presentation helps to develop a proper concept of the structure from the very beginning. In addition, the trainees should pay attention to non-linguistic features of a successful lead-in, such as the variety of aids, tone of voice, use of gesture etc. which help to focus students' attention on the new structure, and also indirectly aid in discovering the meaning. This is in line with the current trend in this area, which emphasises that deliberate attention to the structure in language input is essential for its acquisition.

The next stage of the inductive lesson is elicitation, the purpose of which is to find out if the SS have worked out the meaning and form of the new structure from the presented context. Here the trainees should develop different elicitation techniques (Q.8 -11) and should realise the importance of skilful elicitation in inductive teaching. If it is not done properly or omitted, the lesson usually changes into deductive teaching when the students are simply told the rule, and thus any kind of introductory context seems to be irrelevant. Besides, they should also perceive this stage as a way of activating the students (Q.15).

Having established the meaning and function of the structure, the teacher then draws attention to the form, which takes place at the explanation stage. Here the trainees should focus their attention on the features which make it effective, which determines the success of further practice. This is usually a teacher – dominated phase, thus it is extremely important that s/he immediately monitors the students understanding and reacts accordingly. The trainees may reconsider the necessity and or plausibility of using the target language and meta-language for the explanation (Q.12, 13). Although this teaching situation creates opportunities for genuine communication in L2, the criterion of clarity should take a prominent place here, thus it is important that teacher talk provide finely-tuned input. Thus ways of simplifying instruction should be considered, such as the use of a limited amount of structures, and the use of visual aids (Q.16). Alternatively, the use of the mother tongue can be acceptable where comprehension constitutes a priority.

The trainees should also realise that it is unrealistic to provide ss with all the information about the structure at one time, i.e. all forms and irregularities (Q.17). The SS are unable to handle so much information at one time and utilise it at the practice stage. Besides, if the time limit for the explanation stage is extended, less time is left for practising the structure, and the lesson will end in failure (Q.17).

Finally, the trainees should observe the stages of accurate reproduction and immediate creativity, brief though they are. The purpose of the former is to reinforce the form of the structure, usually through repetition, while the latter calls for creation of further examples of the structure which the students are supposed to provide by substituting elements in the pattern provided. If the instances are provided by the

majority of the SS correctly, it may be assumed that the whole presentation has been successful and the teacher can proceed to the practice stage of the lesson.

In the Reflect section the trainees are asked to compare this model of teaching grammar to the deductive one, i.e. when the grammar rules are explicitly taught and there is more focus on the form of the structure. They are to think whether the choice of an approach to teaching grammar is justified by any particular factor e.g. age, level of the students etc.

As a second task the trainees are to express their opinion on the use of the target language for the explanation of grammar. They may also think of plausibility and ways of simplifying teacher input so that grammar could be taught in L2 even at elementary level.

TASK 6: Practising grammar

This task is devoted to the techniques of practising grammar, which takes place in the practice and production stages of the PPP model.

The practice stage is sometimes called controlled practice or accurate reproduction (Harmer 2001:156). As the name suggests its major goal is gaining the mastery and confidence in using the form of the new language structure. Thus the techniques rely heavily on mechanical repetition. They entail a wide variety of drills, derived from the Audiolingual method, as well as controlled writing tasks, which rely on copying and recombining the sentence patterns given.

This stage is usually teacher –controlled as the T has to act as an evaluator and a corrector if accuracy of the structure is to be achieved. Thus the prevailing interaction pattern is lockstep, although individual work for writing tasks or pair work is possible at this stage as well. Yet, in the absence of teacher control the materials will have to impose the structure to be used and thus limit the amount of possible mistakes. An example of such pair work activity may be rehearsing a dialogue where certain items would have to be substituted with some prompts.

The production stage is, in turn, sometimes called immediate creativity. It is assumed that having mastered the form of the structure in the practice stage, now the SS can also work on its fluency. The students will be asked to construct their own sentences on the basis of the model provided. Needless to say, it involves much more creativity and thus interest in learning grammar. This stage also provides scope for a variety of contextualised grammar practice whereby the SS can use the structure for meaningful communication in the situations similar to those in real life (Qs.3-6). Such practice is possible if the activities contain an information gap, i.e. the students will have the natural desire to communicate either in speech or in writing with other members of the class, which is caused by the need to obtain the information they do not possess. Whilst having a genuine communication the SS are likely to observe other contexts of use of the new structure and grasp its meaning fully (Q.8). However, apart from fluency, accuracy is still recognised as an important objective of the production stage. While focusing on practising meaning, the students will still practise the form. However the grammar at this stage arises naturally within the materials and the students often pick it up implicitly.

All things considered, in this task the trainees are to become familiar with different kinds of grammar practice, both mechanical (Items 1-10) and meaningful (Items 11-14) and their different objectives. They should also think about preferred types of interaction which will enhance the amount of practice received by each individual in class (Q.1, 2). Initially choral repetitions, and subsequently individual and pair work seem

to increase student participation considerably. At the same time they must realise that the practice and production stages most often will and should extend over a few lesson units after the presentation. The teacher must take into account the students' problems and progress in mastering the structure and adjust the amount of practice accordingly (Q.7,9,10).

TASK 7: Managing oral error

While observing the learners in this task the trainees should become aware that mistakes and errors are an unavoidable element of the learning process. They provide important information on the learner's progress and difficulties. Here the trainees should become aware of the difference between an error which derives from lack of knowledge of the language rule, and a mistake which signifies knowledge of the rule but failure to apply it in performance. The former may originate from the lack of understanding of the rule which perhaps was not clearly explained and the teacher may be partly responsible for it. In consequence, any recognised errors would require from the teacher and / or learners additional explanation of the rule. The mistakes, on the other hand, usually result from lack of practice of the new rule, which therefore has not been automatised.

It is evident from the above that errors and mistakes should be handled differently. The former require an intervention of the teacher while in case of the latter self- and peer correction may be encouraged since, it is assumed, the learner can utilise his / her knowledge of the language rule. In this task the trainees are to become familiar with different techniques for managing error, which either involve teacher correction (Items a), b), c)) or by indicating an error prompt the learners to do it themselves (Items d), e), f), g), h)). At the same point the trainees are to observe whether the use of a correction technique and its subsequent treatment are conditioned by any significant factor, such as the linguistic ability of the learner (Q.2), the type of error (Q.3) or the phase of the lesson (practice vs. production – Q.13).

Besides, the trainees should be aware that if correction is to play a facilitative role for language learning, it is important that it is conducted in an approving manner (Q.9). The teacher should show patience and understanding of the language problems of the learners, giving informative feedback rather than mere criticisms. In addition, if the errors are to work for the learners' benefit, apart from correction, additional work on them should be assigned, which would reinforce the correct form.

Also at times under-correction rather then overcorrection can prove more beneficial for the subsequent improvement. Thus the trainees should realise the importance of resisting correction of all errors and limiting its amount according to the level of the learner and the seriousness of error in respect of communicative efficiency (Qs.10-13). This means that as long as the learner's errors do not hinder communication they can be accepted. The choice of what and when to correct will be made individually and depends on individual teaching circumstances, thinking of which is partly fostered by the *Reflect* section at the end of the task.

TASK 8:Teaching vocabulary

Vocabulary is a skill which seems to be most widely present in a language class. For one thing, we need words for effective communication. On the other hand, vocabulary teaching appears to many teachers to be the easiest teaching material to provide the students with.

The reality is quite the contrary; it is extremely difficult to present vocabulary in a varied and interesting way, which will facilitate understanding and subsequent retention of new vocabulary items. Too often vocabulary lessons leave the learners with lists of items to be memorised at home while little time for their reinforcement is given in a language class. In this respect it is vital to remind the trainees of how the memory works and the role of attention in selecting the information and storing it in short- and long-term memory.

The role of attention consists in selecting from an abundance of information only what is vivid, relevant and understandable. Acknowledging this fact, we must realise that similarly in a language class the learners cannot internalise all the information they are given. Therefore if we give priority to vocabulary teaching, at the level of presentation such techniques should be used which will focus the learner's attention on the new language forms. The more noticeable and meaningful the new word is and the more attention the learner puts into deciphering its meaning, the higher the chances of selecting it for subsequent processing in the working (short-term) memory. However, even in the short-term memory the word may stay only for about 30 sec. if it is not reinforced. Only further rehearsal of the word can prevent its forgetting and can aid moving the lexical item to long –term memory storage. Once the word is there, it is bound to be easily retrieved even after many weeks or years.

However, even in case of well memorised items, problems with retrieval from long-term memory storage may occur. This process largely depends on the strength of neural connections between items in the mental lexicon, which is a mental system containing all the information a person has about words and which cooperates with memory. The connections between words in the lexicon are formed on the basis of mutual relations, which can be synonymous, hyponymous, antonymous, coordinate, collocational and others. The strength of the connections depends on the frequency of encounters with the word in either speech or writing. The most frequently occurring words are immediately recognised and even easily and spontaneously used by L2 speakers and learners. For less frequent words the L2 user needs some time to retrieve the word from the long-term memory, in other words associate the form of an item with its meaning. This explains 'the tip of the tongue' phenomenon, when the speaker feels s/he knows a particular word but cannot recall it at the required moment, i.e. cannot get access to it in the mental lexicon. The speed of retrieval also accounts for our knowledge of vocabulary, which can be either active or passive. The former denotes the ability to use the word in language production (speaking or writing) while the latter the ability to recognise, but not produce, the meaning in context.

The knowledge of the stages the lexical item should go through before it is stored in long-term memory and the structure of the mental lexicon, has important implications for teaching methodology. It emphasises the importance of the presentation stage and the necessity of using a variety of presentation techniques, which stimulate interest and effort in discovering the meaning of the word, thus getting the attention of the learner (Qs3, 4, 9). The trainees should also pay attention to the fact that the very organisation of the presentation stage may foster or inhibit memorisation. Namely, if the vocabulary is presented via techniques which reflect the organisation of the mental lexicon, i.e. in lexical groups, collocations, synonymous or antonymous pairs etc., the process of building internal connections between words is facilitated. Thus the use of mind maps, tables etc. should be encouraged here (Q.5). Besides, such reorganisation of vocabulary complements presentation and gives practice at different aspects of lexical knowledge: part of speech, connotation, register, pronunciation, spelling, word grammar, word formation

(Q.7,8) as the learners should realise that much information about the word should be learnt if it is to be used correctly, not only its meaning.

Another important point to remember is the limited working memory capacity, which calls for a realistic amount of lexical items to be introduced within one lesson unit. The learner can usually handle +_ 7 totally new items at one time (Miller 1956 in Dakowska 2001). Therefore if we aim for effective in-class teaching, the amount of vocabulary presented should not exceed this level (cf. Q.1). However, organising presented vocabulary in larger units by means of the techniques mentioned above considerably increases working memory storage, which is yet another argument for effective presentation.

Apart from varied presentation, some practice at newly introduced vocabulary should be provided in class, bearing in mind that in order to be stored in the long-term memory the word has to be recycled in different contexts and on different occasions. Such initial practice is provided via concept checking (Q.6), when the teacher checks understanding of new items by asking SS questions with or about a new word. The required response which calls for correct use of the word in context should prove or disprove understanding the meaning. The recycling of the word immediately after its presentation prolongs its stay in the working memory, thus facilitating its retention. Yet, in order to be stored in long-term memory, subsequently practice activities of different aspects of lexical knowledge should be given (Q.10, 11). These will include gap filling, sentence completion, matching tasks, dictations, making up sentences with new words, translations of words, sentences and passages, multiple choice tasks, and a wide range of vocabulary games. The presented vocabulary may also reappear in the following reading/ listening passage or is required to be used in a speaking /writing task. In such cases vocabulary has a subsidiary role of preparation for the oncoming task (pre-teaching). What is more, comprehensive revision of vocabulary should be conducted at regular intervals, not only immediately after presentation (Q. 13). In this respect it is important to realise whether active or passive knowledge of vocabulary is practised in a given task (Q.11). The trainees should become aware that for long-term memory storage the techniques which aim at active use of lexis prove to be more profitable, while for testing purposes it is good to include tasks for passive knowledge as well, which will motivate the students and provide them with a feeling of success.

Needless to say, varied presentation and practice techniques are also a way of implicit teaching of vocabulary learning strategies (Q.11):

- grouping – when presenting the words in lexical sets,
- inferencing – when deducing the meaning from context, from a provided definition etc.
- imagery – when trying to associate the form of the word with its meaning, e.g. by means of pictograms, or picture presentation, visualisation.
- resourcing – when looking up a word in a dictionary
- contextualisation- putting a new word in sentential context
- auditory representation – trying to associate the sound of the word with its meaning;
- repetition of the word

The last two strategies are particularly useful in the retention of the word in the short-term memory, therefore repetition of a newly introduced item is advisable, e.g. either for pronunciation practice or as a means of concept checking (eliciting from ss answers which will demand from them proper use of the items in sentential context –Q.6). The other strategies, which consist in elaboration, i.e. organising the newly acquired items into the already existent lexicon, will particularly aid the long- term memory storing processes.

In the Reflect section the trainees are asked to draw on their own experience of vocabulary learning, possible difficulties in memorising as well as means of facilitating these. They may come up with suggestions for other than observed effective vocabulary learning strategies, which they subsequently could explicitly teach to their learners.They are also asked to reflect on the teacher's responsibility for regular revision of vocabulary and motivating students to do this as well.

TASK 9: Teaching pronunciation and spelling

Pronunciation and spelling are the microskills which are very often given too little attention in a language class as it is often believed that their mastery is to a large extent acquired subconsciously without much formal focus. However, mistakes in these skills can very often produce communicatively inefficient L2 users, i.e. the mistake they make in pronunciation or spelling often hinder communication in speech or writing, particularly in the absence of precise contextual clues or if the number of errors is abundant. While it is true that the students may improve these skills indirectly when practising other language skills, it seems to take place only if a lot of contact with L2 is provided. In this respect pronunciation can be considerably improved via conversations with good language models, which can be native, but also non-native speakers of L2. (The teachers therefore should particularly aim at excellence in this skill if their students are to benefit from the model they provide) Whereas spelling is to a large extent acquired via extensive reading and writing.

However, in a formal setting when language contact is limited to a few hours a week, it seems that explicit attention drawn to the teaching of these skills should enhance the learning process. While native speaking teachers can provide good pronunciation models, a sole imitation of them may not be adequate for post-puberty learners (See a Critical Period hypothesis), who often cannot discern the differences in sound articulation. A non-native teacher shows an advantage in this respect as having had a qualifying training s/he possesses knowledge of the manners of the articulation of the different sounds as well as knowledge of the possible difficulties a Polish learner of English may have. Thus it is important that the trainee is aware of the most typical pronunciation errors made either in sound production, stress, or intonation and how they affect the communicative efficiency of the learners. Therefore the purpose of Task 1 is to closely observe the output of two language learners. While the task may not be too easy, it is assumed the trainees should utilise their knowledge gained in their phonetics class.

It is rather unlikely that the trainees will observe a regular phonetics class as few teachers find time for that in a usually tight syllabus. Yet, the learners should become aware of other approaches to teaching pronunciation, namely:

- Predicting the difficult aspects of pronunciation and explicit focus on these areas only
- Practising pronunciation whenever the opportunity arises, usually as a means / accompaniment to teaching something else.
- Working on the mistakes the students make.

In the first approach it is assumed that the teacher devotes at least part of the lesson to the explanation of the pronunciation problem. It may limit itself to utilising pronunciation sections, nowadays present in almost every modern coursebook rather than omitting these. They usually correspond to the grammatical / lexical problems presented in the unit, e.g. voiced and devoiced –ed endings when teaching

regular forms of the simple past tense, so that the pronunciation practice is an extension and reinforcement of the new language presented.

Another approach implies indirect practice of pronunciation at different stages of the lesson. To a large extent it will consist in oral repetition of newly introduced items: vocabulary, sentence patterns etc., sound discrimination tasks in the listening comprehension practice, and finally reading aloud (e.g. instructions, reading comprehension texts etc.)

Lastly, pronunciation can be improved by direct teacher correction and by providing instruction and extensive practice in the areas which prove to be problematic. This would illustrate a top-down approach to teaching pronunciation, i.e. taking error as a basis for subsequent analysis and teaching rather than starting with phonetic rules.

Another aspect the trainees are asked to pay attention to is how much value is drawn to developing correct spelling. The trainees should become aware of the techniques which practise spelling deliberately, such as dictations or vocabulary practice activities (crosswords, jumbled letters, gap filling etc.) and observe which of them are most common in coursebooks.

While the aforementioned approaches to teaching pronunciation could be applied to teaching spelling as well, it is most important to realise that the skill is mainly practised through writing. Therefore the students should often be asked to write and re-write language items, even if they are short, such as vocabulary, sentence structures, grammar exercises etc.. A look into a student's notebook would give a good account of how much the learners write in class and outside class. This is an argument in favour of using a blackboard as an aid more than handouts. The overuse of the latter often leads to mistakes in linguistic forms which have not become automatised via practice. Also computer technology may seem to be conducive to the problem. The spell checkers often make the learners less sensitive to the spelling rules. These problems may be indicated by the trainees in the *Reflect* task.

In conclusion, the trainees are asked to identify these opportunities to practise pronunciation (Qs.1-6) and spelling (Qs. 7-8) on a daily basis. Realising that not all the aspects can be observed within one lesson unit, the trainees are also asked to interview the observed teacher on his/her attitude to teaching these skills (Task 2), which may give more insight into how the teacher approaches these.

TASK 10:Teaching reading

This task is organised in stages which reflect the model for teaching receptive skills, and which was proposed by Harmer (1991). Such an organisation was dictated by the fact that the trainees should become familiar with the model, even though it seems to be idealistic and cannot be observed in all reading classes. If the model is followed, the lessons are guaranteed to have a smooth flow, interesting content and effective exploitation of the reading text.

It would be preferable if the students could do the task before having an introduction in a methodology class, thus the observation task would foster self – discovery of the model.

The trainees are requested to collect data on pre-reading (Qs.1-4), reading (Qs. 5-14) and post-reading stages (Qs.15-17). The questions on the *pre-reading phase* focus students' attention on its importance as a means of facilitating comprehension. This can be achieved by pre-teaching vocabulary, predicting the content of the text and gathering information related to the content of the text. Other activities which aim at raising interest in the text awake the students' desire to read the text and relate it to the

students' experience and in this sense also foster comprehension. It is also important to be aware of the necessity to give precise instructions to the comprehension task which direct the students' attention during reading. Another beneficial pre-reading activity could be explicit teaching of reading strategies. Although many of them are taught implicitly through pre- and while- reading tasks, they may require additional emphasis and explanation such as indicating topic sentences, discussing the function of linking words, and assigning a time limit to foster faster reading.

In the *while –reading* section the students should understand that reading skills are best developed through *extensive* and *silent* reading of a variety of texts, yet they should constitute roughly- tuned input, i.e. slightly (n+1) above the level of the students. Only such texts leave enough scope for students' speculation and guessing but on the other hand do not hinder comprehension. The trainees should become familiar with different kinds of reading techniques that are offered in coursebooks and tested in exams. They should also be able to associate the techniques with the reading skills which they aim to practise as such an awareness allows the teachers to appropriately prepare students for the reading texts by giving them hints as to the strategies to employ. The trainees should also realise that improvement of reading skills depends on the thorough analysis of the text and how feedback of the comprehension task is conducted. If the students are to improve their reading skills, any answers to the comprehension questions should be justified with examples from the text and sufficient explanation about the contextual clues must be given so that all students could not only know the correct answers but also the justification for them (Qs.13, 14)

Finally, the trainees should be aware that the key element to success in reading lies in the interest and motivation to read. The teacher has an influence on that by ensuring that the reading lesson is not restricted to text analysis only, but discussion and reaction to the content as well. Hence the importance of the appropriate choice of interesting, stimulating, (and at least occasionally) authentic texts. They should be accompanied by creative and imaginative pre-reading and text – related activities which allow the learners to explore the message of the text at length and combine it with the practice of other language skills, which varies and enlivens the lesson. The trainees should also be aware of other motivational strategies towards reading available in a school setting, for which they should try to interview the observed teacher (Task 2). They entail organising a school library of English books, using graded readers, and administering project work, which requires independent reading and using out-of-class resources.

In *Reflect* section the students are to think how to modify the stages of the model for teaching receptive skills in order to enliven and vary the reading lesson. The trainees are expected to recapitulate on the importance of the pre-reading and text-related activities, which should exercise other language skills and so guarantee variety.

As a second reflective task the trainees are to think on what occasions and for what purposes the students can read aloud in class if not for mastering the reading skills. The anticipated answers may be: pronunciation practice, dramatisation (when reading poems, evocative stories), instructions, definitions etc. (to focus attention), answers to the task, homework assignments (for feedback, to share information), etc.

TASK 11:Teaching listening

The task on teaching listening is organised in the same manner as the one on teaching reading and follows the model of teaching receptive skills. Such an organisation is aimed at reinforcing the knowledge of

the model among the teacher trainees and to draw their attention to the similarity in the techniques and skills necessary to develop in a listening class (Qs. 1,2,8,9,).

In part A of the task the trainees should become aware of the fact that the listening skill is practised most of the time throughout the teaching process, e.g. when listening to the teacher (provided all instruction is carried out in L2) or other students. Yet, they should also realise that these sources of L2 do not provide realistic language input, since it is very much modified, and the reasons for listening and the situations do not resemble those in real life when we usually listen in order to receive some information, out of curiosity or in order to communicate with others. Thus in order to prepare the learners for real-life encounters the class activities should attempt to create similar situations. In addition, the students should be exposed to recordings presenting a variety of discourse patterns (speeches, interviews, commercials, conversations etc.) in a variety of accents (native and non-native), which can be guaranteed if authentic (or semi-authentic, i.e. modified level) texts are provided. Such texts are characteristic of natural speech phenomena, i.e. hesitation, reformulation, topic change, redundancy, of which a written text, even if read aloud, is deprived. The learner who listens to such texts must learn how to disregard such distractors in the listening text and be able to extract the necessary information from it.

What the students may find helpful are different learning strategies which should be presented explicitly, even though they may be sometimes taught implicitly as well (Qs. 4,5) when the teacher repeatedly uses the strategies as teaching ones. For example the strategy of selective attention will make the learners identify the most important information already before the listening task and while listening will make the learners pay attention to the pre-selected items only. The strategy of advance organisation requires the students to preview the comprehension task and gather the information they possess on the subject of the recording and on the basis of this they try to predict its content while the strategy of inferencing asks the learners to discover the meaning of unknown language items or fill the gaps in understanding on the basis of contextual clues, knowledge of L2, and predicting the following message.

What distinguishes the listening lesson from the reading one is the difficulty in performing the former. Thus the trainees should be familiar with ways of facilitating it. Apart from the techniques, strategies and appropriate staging of the lesson, attention should be drawn to the importance of an appropriate choice of the text (not too long and difficult-Q.11), clear instructions to the comprehension task, grading the difficulty of the task (listening to the text a few times, each time for a different purpose – Q. 7), detailed, corrective, yet uninhibiting feedback to the comprehension task (Qs. 13-15), and the possibility of using the tapescript to clarify any doubts and ambiguities after the comprehension task (Q. 10).

Finally, an important point should be made that an authentic listening text can be used as a model of pronunciation and thus used for appropriate practice.

TASK 12: Questioning techniques

As a major tenet this task takes the fact that questions constitute the most significant part of teacher talk, and can considerably influence the students' involvement in class activities and acquisition of L2, most notably speaking. (Therefore it is suggested that this task be done as an introduction to teaching speaking).

Class discourse analysis has received considerable recognition in second language acquisition studies. It aims to show that there is a clear interdependency of linguistic interaction and language acquisition. For one thing, teacher language is the major source of language input the learners receive and

also the most available L2 model. If the students are not exposed to a good language model, their chances of subconscious acquisition are limited. Secondly, while being addressed questions in L2 the trainees are able to negotiate meaning, i.e. ask for clarification, paraphrase their output, etc., via which they practise a range of communication strategies.

I have observed that teachers with poor L2 knowledge lack confidence in using it, and therefore they tend to limit the amount of questions directed at their learners. As a result, such lessons are not only less interesting, but also less effective in terms of speaking development as a lot of language is acquired subconsciously via interaction with the interlocutor, here the teacher. Thus the trainees should realise that the teacher's linguistic competence has a direct relevance on the development of the students' competence, and in consequence they should in particular cater for the mastery of L2.

I have decided to focus on questions as this is the kind of language most frequent in all classes, which are usually taught in the IRF mode. They are most often used either as a means of eliciting data from the students or as a means of genuine communication. Through these tasks I would like the trainees to discover that even in such a teacher dominated interaction pattern, student participation and / or speaking can be fostered, provided the teacher asks appropriate and stimulating questions. Therefore the trainees are asked to record a few questions and teacher – student exchanges in the class observed (Task 1&2), and subsequently establish the reasons why the teacher asks them as well as identify the types of questions (Task 3). The expected answers about the reasons for questioning are:

- Practising language forms,
- Comprehension check
- Eliciting information (asking for the information known to the teacher)
- Communication (asking for unknown information)

The students should be familiar with different types of questions and evaluate the teacher's questions (Task 3) with the criteria adopted from Ur, P. (1996:230). According to her, well formulated and stimulating questions are characteristic of:

- *Clarity,* namely their linguistic form is not too complex and does not cause ambiguity
- *Interest* , which is often achieved by personalisation
- *Learning value*, i.e. the questions prompt students to thinking, drawing conclusions etc.
- *Availability*, i.e. most of the students can try to answer them, which is typical of questions asking for opinions and not information
- *Extension,* i.e. call for extended and varied answers, which is usually achieved by open ended and personalised questions
- Teacher's reaction,

From the analysis of the types of questions available, the trainees may conclude which questions foster extended answers and so the development of the speaking skill (open-ended, personalised, non-retrieval-imaginative questions), which questions elicit / check information and so are aimed at involving the students in a lesson (yes/no, retrieval, display and referential questions).The trainees should also be aware that the types of questions and the teacher's attitude have an impact on the amount of student talk in class.

In summary, the students are asked to assess the questions they gathered in the observation session. This task is aimed at increasing the trainees' awareness of the difficulty of asking appropriate questions in

class, and may even provoke some trainees to think of and prepare some questions before their teaching lesson.

TASK 13: Teaching speaking

The goal of this task is to make the trainees aware of the predominant role of the teacher in conducting class activities, which often results in his/her dominance, and in consequence, limits the amount of speaking practice students can obtain in class. In order to observe this, the students are asked to notice interaction patterns (speaking dyads) (Q2,3) and types of speaking activities that may take place in class (Q. 5). If little student involvement in speaking is observed, the task suggests possible solutions.

In the case of the predominant 'IRF' mode (Teacher initiation – response- feedback), the task on questioning techniques seems to be a more useful source of information.

At the same time an important point should be made that the IRF mode of teaching and oral production which derive from the audio-lingual tradition prove to be useful teaching techniques in developing language accuracy, a considerable degree of it is necessary to achieve before extensive work on fluency can be done. ("Accuracy first, fluency later.") Fluency-oriented activities, in turn, derive from the communicative approach and are characteristic of the information gap, which gives the students a purpose and reason to communicate. This characteristic makes the students most eager to speak (Q. 6) and often guarantees the success of the speaking activity. It should be noted here that teaching situations have plenty of opportunities for the naturally arising information gap, provided the teacher engages not only in passing on knowledge but in genuine communication with students. This is most visible in casual conversations, lesson transitions, introductions etc. To exploit these opportunities, it is important that the teacher insists that L2 be a language of class instruction. The students have then more chances to negotiate meaning, i.e. initiate conversations, ask for clarification, repetition etc. However, to make negotiation of meaning plausible even at the lowest levels, the teacher has to teach exponents of 'helping' language, such as defining, elicitation, etc. (Qs. 1, 4)

As a result of the task, the students should be able to distinguish between the non-communicative and communicative speaking practice and the fact that the former contributes more to developing accuracy while the latter to fluency. Non-communicative, i.e. rehearsed oral activities help gain automaticity in correct use of L2 forms and should dominate in elementary and pre-intermediate levels of L2 learning. As the command of L2 forms increases (i.e. the linguistic competence), more and more time should be devoted to communicative activities, which are unrehearsed/spontaneous, and thus allow to exercise language use in more naturalistic conditions. Such activities prepare the learners for the unexpected and thus develop not only the linguistic but also strategic competence, both of which comprise communicative competence.

The presence of an information gap does not solely guarantee the success of an activity. In question 7 other typical problems in speaking tasks are indicated. The trainees are initially asked to provide the solutions themselves (Q. 8). Yet, if the task is to cause difficulty, the questions 9-16 are suggestive of the solutions. The most important factors which have an impact on student speaking are teacher encouragement/praising, attitude to error, preparation of the activity (pre-teaching of vocabulary, collecting ideas, teaching exponents of functional language.), proper monitoring and instructions to the task .Attention is also drawn to non – verbal elements facilitating speaking, such as the seating arrangement, eye contact, gesture. (Q. 16).

All in all, the goal of the task is to convince the trainees of the necessity to provide a sufficient amount of speaking practice in class by assigning mainly communicative tasks in pair work and group work.

TASK 14: Teaching writing

The goal of this task is to make teacher trainees aware of the importance of explicit teaching of writing skills (Q.3). At an advanced level these will comprise:

- the mastery of discourse markers and their appropriate use in organising the text which will guarantee its cohesion and coherence
- awareness and proper use of different registers
- usage of variety of sentence patterns and vocabulary which will clearly indicate a type of reader and convey the intended meaning.

These skills are particularly evident in essay writing, which is an ultimate goal of teaching writing and shows a comprehensive view of one's L2 proficiency. Yet, the development is preceded by extensive stages of preparation and modelling, hence the importance of the pre-writing phase which will involve collection and organisation of ideas and proper vocabulary as well as practice in the use of discourse markers. Student trainees should become acquainted with the importance of this stage and appropriate techniques for these (Q.6)

Proficiency in writing is achieved over a few years and is pre-conditioned by the mastery of other skills:

- sentence construction,
- spelling and punctuation and
- linking sentences and connecting words

These should be particularly developed in early stages of learning L2. Children who have only started schooling should additionally receive practice at handwriting: forming and joining letters.

These skills are primarily developed through controlled and guided activities in which the students become accustomed to the very form of L2 and gain confidence in using it, since they heavily restrict the number of possible mistakes the learners can make. What is more, they are suitable for self- and peer correction. Thus the trainees should become aware of the variety of writing tasks available, which can be conducted in class and integrated with teaching other language skills (Q.2,3), such as grammar, vocabulary, reading or speaking. Introducing writing adds variety to class activities, changes its dynamics (as writing usually calms the class down) and provides indispensable practice if the skill is to improve. Teachers often limit the amount of writing tasks as they believe they should be the only readers of student output. While there is no denial about the value of teacher correction and feedback, the trainees should become aware that they can read their own work as well. This denotes correction but also feedback on content which can be provided either orally or in writing, which, in turn, necessitates and justifies using writing in class.

What stimulates the students to write the most is the purpose and prospect of having a reader, similarly to real life situations, when we usually write for someone and expect an answer, a kind of feedback. This would be a goal of communicative writing tasks (Q. 4), which consist in exchanging notes or cooperation on the task. Information gap or equal participation in a group task make writing enjoyable and involving, and

develop fluency in this skill (though accuracy is limited, it must be acknowledged). Often reformulation of instructions to the task may make it communicative, e.g. a description can be changed into a guessing game.

Another motivating alternative is creative writing. These are pieces (poems, paragraphs, stories etc.), which are created on a stimulus of evocative music, image, etc. and call for students' imagination and self expression. The very process of writing encourages reflectivity and thinking.

Finally, the trainees should become aware that there is little progress in the development of writing if proper care about errors is not taken. Correcting written work lays down a heavy burden on the teachers, yet, the responsibility for the writing progress is shared: students should be encouraged to self- and peer – correction whenever possible, which at times, though not always, may exclude the teacher's intervention. Additionally, these procedures teach students to proofread their work before handing it in. If correction is to be profitable, subsequent work on errors (discussion, restructuring) should follow, which will also call for rewriting the piece of work (Q.8).

In the *Reflect* and *Summary* sections the students are likely to draw attention to the reading process which fosters writing skills through text analysis or subconscious acquisition of language, which is conducive to the natural 'flow' in writing.

TASk 15: Integrating all skills

This task is aimed at recapitulating on the previous tasks based on skill observation. It also aims to pinpoint to the trainees that the majority of the lessons they will observe and teach especially at higher levels will not be devoted to the introduction of new language forms (grammar, vocabulary) but to the extensive and integrated practice of macroskills (reading, listening, speaking, writing). This is often dictated by the necessity to develop fluency in the skills mentioned once a certain level of linguistic accuracy has been achieved as well as the existence of similar interrelatedness in real life. One may quote the following examples of real life situations and their consequences: when one reads a high telephone bill, s/he telephones the customers office to ask for the explanations or writes a letter of complaint (so an act of reading is followed by speaking or writing), or similarly having received a call from guests coming, one may consult a cookery book in search of a quick recipe. In this case speaking is followed by reading.

Quoting the above examples may be conducive to the trainees understanding of the notion of skill integration and may inspire them to more careful lesson planning. It may also inspire them to restructure their instructions to the tasks which will make them sound more like real life, e.g. instead of writing a summary of the text read, the learners may be asked to write a letter to a friend in which they describe and recommend the story they have recently read. Such reformulation of aims sets it in a clear and realistic context, which has a motivating effect on the learners.

Yet, the trainees should become aware through this task that a skill-integrated lesson is not a mishmash of accidentally chosen activities. On the contrary, the order is dictated by the cause –effect relationships. Such a lesson must have as its organising principle either a topic or a reading/listening text or an outcome to achieve, such as a project, a piece of writing etc.(Qs.1,2) After it is chosen, other activities can be organised around it which either prepare the students for the main task or consitute the realistic follow up (Q.3). It is also important that the learners be aware of the purposeful and deliberate choice of the activities and skills practised. The learners can be told the purpose of each activity explicitly (via lesson topic and transitions) or they may often sense it indirectly if the tasks are logically sequenced. With this goal in

mind, the trainees are asked to note down the activities, their aims, skills and transitions between them. It is assumed that if the trainees, and so the learners, are able to sense the overall objective of the lesson as well as of the individual activities, the lesson may be considered as well planned.

The trainees are asked to lay focus on the types of skills which can be practised during one lesson and how they can be combined to reflect real life relationships. Also it is vital to emphasise that in such a lesson there is no place for an explicit focus on grammar. The result of this is that more focus is put on the content of the task and its communicative use. The lesson thus arouses more interest in the students who can use the language for authentic communication rather than mechanical repetition with a view to remembering the structures (Qs.5,6).

Task 16: Using audiovisual aids

Using a variety of teaching aids seems to be the easiest way of creating interest in a language class, and therefore seems also to be the best indication of a well planned lesson. Another argument for using the variety of audiovisual aids is catering for the needs and preferred learning styles of different students: visual, auditory and kinesthetic/tactile ones. Visual learners need to see the illustration of what they hear, auditory ones require oral accompaniment to what is written and the tactile ones profit from hands-on activities. This variety in perception should be particularly recognised in groups of older learners where varied learning styles are more firmly established. Unfortunately the older and /or more advanced the group becomes, the more limited the use of aids is. Only lessons for young learners seem to be varied in this respect with the aim of showing the concrete meaning of the language.

Therefore through this observation task the trainees should realise the plentiful ways of using aids in a language class. The reasons for the use of aids go beyond mere variety and sustaining interest in class. They make presentation of new language more contextualised, they provide meaningful language practice, they help elicit vocabulary/ideas, they prompt the students to speak /write, they exemplify authentic language use, they use classroom time more effectively, they entertain, etc. All in all, they enhance the learning / teaching process. The reasons are numerous and the trainees are to think of these while observing the teacher's use of aids (Q.2).

In addition, in this task the trainees should realise the variety of available aids (Q.1). Too often a coursebook, and a cassette player are the only aids used while the use of the blackboard is diminished. One should not forget that even the teacher himself may constitute an important aid if s/he uses a lot of body language, vivid mimicry, emphatic intonation etc. The reasons for the limited use of aids may be lack of availability, lack of teacher preparation, lack of creativity etc. By reflecting on these issues in the post-observation section (Qs. 3-10), the trainees are to realise the importance of using a variety of aids as a means of enhancing lesson effectiveness.

As another important point the trainees should pay attention to the pragmatic use of various aids, i.e. whether they are used efficiently, which is demonstrated in their legibility, size / sound which makes it available to all learners and advance preparation which allows them to save time. Additionally, the trainees should think whether the use of particular aids is really justified, e.g. it really facilitates the language practice it aims to. For instance learners are often given pictures for pair work to stimulate the discussion but if the instructions are not formulated in such a way that they create an information gap, the learners may feel they

have nothing to say and be unwilling to speak. Similarly, worksheets with grammar exercises are often given to learners so that they do more of them and thus get more practice. But if such practice is organised in lockstep, when one learner reads / does only one item at a time, the actual amount of practice each individual learner receives is rather small. The trainees are to think of such instances which illustrate lack of thorough exploration of an aid.

Task 2 is devoted to the use of the most commonly available aid, i.e. a blackboard. Too often its use seems to be undermined and limited to e.g. noting down a few key words whereas it can be used not only for the presentation of new language but also for presenting / attaching (by means of pins, self-adhesive tape etc.) stimulating material: pictures, drawings, graphs, prompts, etc. which can be further utilised for language practice. The trainees should also look at the organisation of the information on the board and realise its importance for the learners: legibility of teacher's handwriting, orderly organisation of language data have an impact on what and how the learners copy the data into their notebooks. Needless to say, a lot of learners' errors are induced by inadequate language models obtained from the board. This problem may be partially prevented if the teacher speaks while he writes on the board and if he consistently divides the board into sections which he subsequently uses for the same purposes: e.g. the main part for the lesson presentation, the side ones for the issues arising in the course of the lesson.

Finally, in the **Reflect** section the trainees are encouraged to think of themselves as materials developers. They should be aware that one does not have to rely only on published material which is more and more available but also quite costly. They should rather think how to adapt and use readily available realia, pictures from magazines, catalogues, etc. They should think of and suggest ways of collecting, organising, and storing these as well as preparing their own recyclable OHP transparencies, flashcards, worksheets, charts etc.

TASK 17 : Homework assignment

This task should be done on the basis of observation of a few consecutive lessons and calls for reflections and conclusions rather than direct observational experience. Thus it may be done as an accompaniment to other tasks or at the end of the observation course. Its major purpose is to make the trainees realise how homework assignments can be varied in terms of skills practised and tasks assigned, which would motivate the learners to complete the homework assignments more willingly on the one hand , and which would complement integrated skill practice on the other. Too often as a homework assignment the learners are asked either to finish the task begun in class or to do one in a workbook. These tasks most typically require single word answers, which makes it convenient for self- and peer correction. As a result, they consist in mechanical repetition and leave no scope for creativity. No wonder such homework seems dull, not motivating or challenging to the learners.

It is hoped that while observing experienced teachers the trainees will have a chance to observe a variety of stimulating ideas for homework tasks, either via observation or an interview with the teacher. Yet, even if such information is not obtained, the task itself is suggestive of a few ideas (Q.1) and indicates the features of a good homework assignment (Q. 7), which are:

- **complementation/ elaboration on the lesson content** (Q. 3)

- **variety of skills involved** (not only writing or grammar) so as to guarantee integrated skill practice (Q.4,5)
- **interest and challenge** (Q.7), which are achieved via *relevance of the topic to real life, open-endedness, integration with other, also non-linguistic, skills or school subjects, ability to cooperate with others, challenge etc.*)
- **precise instructions and modeling** (Qs. 10,11,12)
- **purpose** (e.g. preparation for the next class, a prospective audience – Q.13)
- **availability of feedback** (from teacher and / or peers- Qs.13,14,15)

To conclude, it is believed that even if the above points may not be observed in every teacher's homework assignment, they may serve as a useful frame of reference to evaluate the kind of observation experience the trainees will receive. This, in consequence, should also improve the homework assignments they will give in their teaching experience.

TASK 18: Assessment

Assessing learners' progress is an integral part of every language course which verifies its effectiveness, hence the necessity of including an observation task on this issue, although it may not lend itself to single-class observation but may require the collection of data from a few consecutive lessons and / or an interview with the teacher. Nevertheless, its objective is to increase the trainees' awareness of the techniques and opportunities for assessment. By the same token the trainees should realise that formative (regular) assessment provides systematic feedback on the learner's language ability and progress, and thus increases learners' motivation and fosters improvement. The goal of assessment is information, motivation for further learning and not punishment, therefore it should give the learners an opportunity to show off different language skills so that both successful and unsuccessful results are shown. It must be borne in mind that it is success that boosts motivation and further achievement and not failure.

In traditional approaches measuring the learners' language level is restricted to linguistic competence, i.e. grammar and vocabulary. The measurement of these skills, however, does not give a comprehensive view of the person's language ability. For one thing, they are administered because they require single answers, and so are relatively easy to design and correct. As a result, they give insight only into a small proportion of the learner's knowledge and do not provide information on the performance of the skills in writing and speaking. For another, such testing appeals only to the learners of the analytical learning style.

More recent approaches advocate assessing a person's communicative ability, where the learner can demonstrate how s/he uses the acquired language in production and also how s/he can compensate for the lack of language knowledge with learning and communication strategies. The learner's performance in this respect is compared with that of native speakers. Thus focus on certain skills in assessment may reflect a teaching approach the teacher is directed by.

It is hoped that during observation sessions the trainees will have a chance to observe the assessment of different language skills which give the students an opportunity to demonstrate different aspects of their ability: not only grammar and vocabulary, but also the macroskills (reading, listening, writing,

and speaking). Different forms of assessment should be observed as tools for these: apart from tests and quizzes, oral presentations, pair work communicative tasks, written assignments, projects etc. so that the learners can associate assessment not only with judgment but interest, challenge and reward.

Another important aspect the trainees should observe is the criteria for assessment. At this point the trainees should distinguish between impression and split marking. According to the former an assessor gives a mark for an overall impression of student work, whereas according to the latter individual components of the work are awarded with marks /points which are later summed up. Such an approach helps to make assessment of language production (open-ended answers) more objective and just. It must be emphasised here that such criteria for assessment must be communicated to the learners before the task is assigned as often poor student performance originates from lack of focus on appropriate elements of assessment or incomprehension of instructions for the assessment task. If the criteria are clearly explained in advance and referred to when justifying the grade, assessment has a chance to be perceived as informative feedback and not stress, which is often caused by fear of the unexpected.

The importance of clear assessment criteria is enhanced in the Summary section in which the trainees are to compare the assessment criteria applied in the class observed and in the Teacher Training College with a view to suggesting alternative solutions for the school environment. In the *Reflect* section the trainees are encouraged to ponder on the role of assessment in their own experience and to what extent it provided instrumental motivation for study.

TASK 19: Giving instructions

The way instructions are formulated affects subsequent task effectiveness, particularly if the task is assigned for individual, pair and group work. In this respect, however, two different approaches can be distinguished. According to some teachers giving instructions can be treated as an act of genuine communication, thus they use solely L2 and do not adjust their speech to the level of the students. They rather encourage the students to negotiate meaning, i.e. ask for clarification by means of the target language in case of lack of understanding. On the other hand, there are teachers who cater for efficiency of instructions, which guarantees a smooth flow of the lesson, prevents confusion and, in consequence, loss of time or even discipline problems. In this case they even allow the use of mother tongue.

While the first approach seems to be effective only in case of advanced students, it seems possible to combine the two approaches, so that even elementary students are given instructions in L2. The key to it is simplifying teacher input, i.e. modifying teacher's instructions (teacher talk) to the current level of the students in the same manner as parents modify their speech to their children learning the mother tongue. Skillful modifications allow the use of L2 to a large extent even in an elementary class. Thus provided the trainees receive a good observation model, the trainees are to collect examples of the teacher's instructions for subsequent analysis. From the data gathered they are to conclude what the ways of simplifying language input are. They might enumerate the following: *slow speed of speech, increased volume on key elements, separate word / syllable pronunciation, short sentences, simple vocabulary and grammar structures (e.g. imperatives instead of indirect questions), repetition of key words, use of gesture or visuals to illustrate meaning (e.g. examples on board), few contractions, fewer word modifiers, etc. (*The questions 1-3 in the post-observation section are indicative of these.)

Additionally, the trainees should become familiar with other strategies of giving careful instructions. The teacher should first of all, signal verbally (changing intonation) or non-verbally (clapping hands, etc.) the change of an activity in order to focus students attention on what is going to be said (Q. 1). Only after the full attention of the students is drawn, can the teacher proceed to the instructions. Secondly, it is advisable to organise any seating arrangement before the instructions as reorganisation of the classroom usually causes some mess. Besides, in new seating arrangements it is easier to model examples before the students proceed to do the task (Q.6). Instructions are also more effective if accompanied by visual demonstration (Qs.2, 3,) i.e. if the teacher points to the examples on board, exercises in the coursebook etc. This guarantees that the learners are able to compensate for lack of oral comprehension with visual information. At this point it may be indicated to the trainees that it is better to distribute any materials after the instructions are given so as not to distract students' attention from them (Q.7). Thirdly, if possible, the instructions should be followed by an example.

Another point worth mentioning is that it is both useful and motivating if via instructions the teacher states the overall goal of the task and links it to the work done before. The students who know what the purpose of a particular task is feel more responsible for its outcome and thus more inclined to do it well (Qs.8,9).

Finally, it is important for the teacher to check if the instructions have been understood. Yet, this should not be done by direct questioning but by overt performance of the task. Thus, if possible, the instructions should be followed by giving an example (Q.4). If it is performed correctly, the students may proceed to doing the task, if not, the teacher may reformulate the instructions or even translate them into L1. As an alternative way of checking understanding of the instructions, one of the students may be asked to paraphrase or translate them.

In the *Reflect* section the trainees are asked to think which of the approaches to giving instructions indicated above the trainees believe in. In consequence of their beliefs and observations they are to devise a list of Dos and Don'ts for good giving of instructions. Such guidelines may be of use in future teaching practice.

Task 20: Maintaining discipline

Maintaining class discipline seems to be the most serious problem the trainees face during the school practicum. Although bordering on the field of pedagogy, the problem has serious methodological repercussions. Namely, the failure to establish discipline results in the inability to realise the teaching goals. Unfortunately, the teacher and his / her teaching are often conducive to this. Thus the goal of this task is to draw the trainees' attention to the fact that they are responsible for securing conditions for effective learning in class.

A few guiding principles can be quoted to the trainees with a view to initiating a reflection or a discussion of the problem:

'Prevention is better than cure.'

'First, discipline them, and then teach.'

'Don't smile till thanksgiving' (An American proverb).

The same principles constitute the basis for the task. The trainees are to trace the lesson development and note down cases of misbehaviour and how they were dealt with or what other consequences they have led

to (Q.1, 4). Question 1 draws the trainees attention to class events which are often not regarded as signs of misbehaviour and thus ignored by the teachers, e.g. late students or students not paying attention. These activities, silent though initially they may be, often evolve to more visible signs of misbehaviour, and become more difficult to handle. The trainees are also expected to think what the possible causes of the discipline problems are and which of them are teacher -generated and therefore could be prevented (Q.2,3). The important argument in favour of prevention is that once problems appear, it is much more difficult to restore order and such a situation often leads to unnecessary confrontations. Punishment often does not solve the problem but causes a lot of anger and sours the atmosphere in class, which the trainees may discover when evaluating the teacher's measures in class. (Q. 4) Finding these, may convince the trainees of the necessity of immediate reaction to discipline problems in order to prevent their escalation. Preventive measures, in turn, will denote good preparation for the class to maintain a steady pace in the lesson and the interest and participation of the students, improving pedagogical skills (by attending workshops, training sessions, or self – reflection and self-evaluation), reading psychological literature on the games students play with a view to recognising them and not getting involved in them.Another point which could be raised is probably the fact that the teachers notoriously have very little time and may be unwilling to spend it on solving troubling issues.

Finally, the trainees are asked to do question 9, which requires them to think who has the most influence on the decision-making process in class and how this role may influence class discipline. It is often observed that those classes are particularly disciplined, in which the teacher marks his/her authority by being the major decision maker in the teaching process. Yet, such behaviour seems to be a useful strategy only in the initial stages, as students who blindly obey teachers exercising their authority, tend to reciprocate such behaviour. A better solution is to delegate some power and thus responsibility for the class activities to the students. However, if this procedure is to bring success a clear code of conduct should be established which should be observed consistently by both the teacher and the students, e.g. neither of them can come to class late. If that happens consequences would have to be born by both parties. Needless to say, such an approach to education requires a lot of time spent on negotiations and clarifying the rules. It also requires a certain maturity in the students to use the delegated power and responsibilities wisely. If that does not seem to be achievable, the activities indicated in Q.9 may be a good starting point for involving the students in the decision making process.

Glossary

Accuracy practice – practice aimed at developing grammatical correctness of language forms.

Accurate reproduction – a phase in the lesson which aims at developing accuracy of a new linguistic form, usually by choral repetition and drills.

Active (knowledge of) **vocabulary** – the ability to actively use vocabulary in speech and in writing

Advance organisation – a learning strategy; making a preview of the organising principle in the anticipated activity

Approach – a theory about the nature of language and how languages are learnt built on the findings in psychology, linguistics, sociology and pedagogy.

Assessment – the measurement of the ability of a person or the quality or success of a teaching course.

Assessor – teacher's role in which s/he identifies and corrects students' errors

Auditory representation – a learning strategy; retention of the sound of a word, phrase or longer sequence which helps to memorise its meaning.

Authentic texts - texts which originate from real life and have the qualities of original speech.

Backward built-up drill – a technique in which the learners are asked to repeat chunks of a sentence pattern from its end.

Closed – ended teacher questioning – a questioning activity in which only one correct answer is accepted.

Coherence – the relationship which links the meanings of utterances in a discourse; they may be based on the speakers' shared knowledge.

Cohesion – the grammatical and / or lexical relationships between the different elements of a text; this is evident in the use of e.g. the same pronouns, linking words.

Collaboration – student grouping in which the students work on the same task as in individual work but in pairs they may achieve better results, i.e. when answering comprehension questions; this does not entail interaction.

Communication strategy – a way of compensating for the lack of language in order to maintain communication either verbally, e.g. by circumlocution, transfer from the mother tongue, or non-verbally, by gesture.

Communicative competence – the ability to use correct language forms in appropriate social contexts. It entails: linguistic competence (the knowledge of the language rules, i.e. grammar and vocabulary), the ability to recognise different speech acts (such as complaints, invitations, criticisms etc.) and how to respond to them, the ability to use the language appropriately (grammatically correct and suitable for the situation), the knowledge of the rules of speaking (how to start and finish the conversation, different styles and registers), strategic competence, i.e. the ability to compensate for breakdowns in communication by means of various verbal and non-verbal communication strategies.

Communicative efficiency – an ability to communicate despite some errors; even if they take place, they do not hinder communication

Communicative writing - a writing technique in which there is an information gap between the learners, which makes them exchange information in writing, e.g. by passing notes, letters or writing a story cooperatively.

Concept checking – a technique in which the teacher asks the learners questions with or about a new word / concept with a view to checking the learners understanding of it, which is inferred from the learners' responses.

Connotation – additional meaning(s) that the word may have beyond its central meaning, which shows people's emotions and attitudes towards what the word or phrase refers to.

Contextualization – a learning strategy; putting a word or phrase in a meaningful sentential context.

Controlled writing – a technique of teaching writing in which the learners are exposed to the language and ideas with a view to mastering language forms (structure, vocabulary, spelling,) and controlling the amount of errors.

Controller – teacher's role in which s/he controls the class, when they speak and what language they use.

Creative writing – a technique of writing poems, stories and plays as a means of self-discovery, self-expression and fostering imagination often upon a stimulus, such as evocative music, picture etc.

Deduction – conscious application of the rule in active use

Deductive teaching – an approach in which the learners are taught language rules explicitly before they apply them in practice.

Denotation – a core meaning of a lexical item

Discourse – language which has been produced as the result of an act of communication

Display questions – questions requesting information already possessed by the questioner, e.g. *What is the capital of Poland?*

Drill – a technique for practising sounds or sentence patterns, which consists in repetition or substitution of items in a pattern given.

Eclecticism – combining elements and techniques from different methods with a view to increasing efficiency of teaching and suiting it to students' needs.

Elaboration – a learning strategy which consists in relating new information to other concepts in memory.

Elicitation – a technique in which the teacher gets learners to produce required answers as a means of increasing their involvement; also the phase of the lesson in which the technique takes place;

Error - faulty use of a linguistic item which results from incomplete knowledge.

Evaluation – systematic gathering of information for purposes of decision making.

Explanation – a phase in the lesson in which the teacher explains the meaning, function and form of the new language; sometimes by eliciting the information from the students who may have gathered it in the lead-in

Extensive reading / listening – reading / listening of a high quantity of texts to develop general understanding of what is read

Finely-tuned input – language which the learner receives and is exactly at the level of the learner.

Flashcard – a card with a picture, word or phrase used as a cue in language practice e.g. drills.

Flexibility – ability to modify or even give up the prepared lesson plan according to the needs of the students and / or situation.

Fluency practice- practice aimed at developing native – like rate of speaking, intonation, rhythm, stress, and pausing, sometimes at the cost of accuracy.

Formative assessment – regular assessment of a person or a curriculum during its development in order to provide information about their current level and to foster improvement.

Free writing – essay writing; a technique which requires the learners to develop their own ideas on a given topic and the language to convey them.

Grouping – a learning strategy; collecting and labeling items to be learned based on common characteristics

Guided writing – a technique of teaching writing in which the learners are given choice as to what structures, vocabulary or ideas to use but they are free to add their own ones as well.

Imagery – a learning strategy; creating a mental picture relating to new information

Immediate creativity – a phase of the lesson which makes learners produce their own examples of use of the new structure by substituting elements in the pattern.

Individual study – a way of working in class when each student works on his own and at his/her own pace, e.g. when reading a text.

Individualisation – organising instruction in such a way that it caters for individual needs of the learners by introducing a variety of tasks and fostering autonomy

Inductive teaching – an approach in which the learners are left to discover the language rules from their context of use.

Inferencing – guessing the meaning of new items on the basis of available information

Information gap – a feature of a natural communicative situation, in which information is possessed only by some interlocutors, thus creating the reason and desire to communicate.

Intensive reading / listening – slow reading /listening which requires understanding of almost every word in a text

Investigator – the teacher's role which is pursued by teacher self- development (attending seminars, training courses, reading professional literature etc.)

IRF- 'Initiation- Response-Feedback'- interaction pattern typical of a teacher – centered class, in which the teacher initiates interaction via questions and provides feedback (usually correction) to students' answers.

Lead-in – a phase in the lesson whose goal is to set the context for the usage of the new structure and/or to raise students' interest in the presented issue.

Learning strategy – a way in which a learner approaches a task, such as vocabulary learning, in order to better understand, learn and remember new information, e/g. elaboration, inferencing etc.

Lockstep – class grouping in which all the students are working with the teacher at the same pace, rhythm and activity; whole-class work. It can denote teacher –class, class-teacher interaction (as in choral repetition) or teacher-individual student, student –teacher interaction (as in IRF mode).

Meaningful practice – the stage of the lesson in which both the form and the meaning of the new structure are practised, hence the structure is usually practised in meaningful / real life context.

Mechanical practice – the stage of the lesson which aims at developing accuracy of a new form

Method – a way of teaching a language based on a theory of how languages are best learnt and taught i.e. an approach

Minimal pair – a pair of words which differs only in one sound, e.g. chair- share

Mistake – a performance error; a faulty use of a linguistic item which is not caused by lack of knowledge of a language rule, but by lack of attention, fatigue, carelessness etc.

Non-retrieval, imaginative questions – questions that require the learner to induce an answer from the information possessed.

Open- ended teacher questioning – a questioning activity in which many answers are accepted in order to encourage student participation

Organiser – the teacher's role which is demonstrated in the management of class activities, giving precise instructions, monitoring and collecting feedback etc.

Pair work / group work – student grouping which necessitates interaction between students, i.e. exchanging information, reaching a consensus, etc.

Participant- the role the teacher may assume in communicative tasks participating in the activity to the same extent as the students.

Passive (knowledge of) **vocabulary** – the ability to recognise and understand words in context but not retrieve them for active use

Personalised questions – questions which inquire about personal information about the learner, e.g. *What is your favourite food?*

PPP model – the general model for introducing new language; It consists of:

> **Presentation** the stage in which the T presents the meaning and form of the new language structure, **Practice**-which is directed at automatisation and accuracy of use of the new structure, **Production**-which is aimed at developing fluent use of the structure.

Predictive skills – reading / listening skills which facilitate comprehension of the text by speculating about its content from knowledge of the subject, pictures, topic etc.

Productive skills – skills via which language is produced, i.e. speaking and writing

Prompter – teacher's role which consists in encouraging and helping students to participate in case of silence or confusion.

Question & Answer drill – a technique in which the learners respond to the T's questions using the same structure as in the question.

Ranking activity – a speaking activity in which the learners discuss and reach a compromise on the order of importance of values, personality traits, phenomena etc.

Realia – actual objects which are brought into class as aids to talk or write about, e.g. fruit, pieces of clothing etc.

Receptive skills – skills via which language is received, i.e. reading and listening

Recombination – creating a meaningful language sequence by combining new elements in a new way

Referential questions – questions requiring new information, not known to the teacher, e.g. *How old is your mother?*

Repetition – imitation of a language model, can be used both as a learning strategy and a teaching technique

Repetition drill – repetition of the structure after the model

Resource – the teacher's role in which s/he provides language help if needed to the students who largely work on their own, e.g. in pair work and group work.

Resourcing – a learning strategy; using reference materials, such as dictionaries to look up unknown items

Retrieval style questions – questions which require the learners to recall the information previously said, e.g. *What did your partner say about the film?*

Role – play – a speaking activity in which the learners have to assume the roles of other people in a different than class situation and act out what might typically happen in that situation.

Roughly- tuned input – language which the learner receives and which is slightly above the current level of the learner (n+1, where 'n' refers to the language level of the learner)

Scanning – reading for specific information, e.g. data, a fact, etc.

Selective attention – a learning strategy; deciding in advance to attend to specific aspects of language input

Self-access – in-class autonomous work of the students on self-selected tasks and materials.

Simulation – a classroom activity in which the learners have to simulate real situations; they are given roles, tasks or a problem to be solved and instructions to follow. What differs it from role - play is a group discussion of the outcome after the dramatisation.

Skimming – reading for general information

Split marking – a way of assessing each element in an oral or written discourse individually, such as spelling, accuracy, coherence etc., and combining them subsequently.

Substitution drill – a technique in which the learners are to repeat the sentence pattern substituting elements in it with the cues given.(Another term: cue-response drill)

Summative assessment – assessment given at the end of the course of instruction, which measures how much a student has learnt from it.

Teaching strategy – teacher's individual way of dealing with and preventing problems in the class, e.g. routine s., withdrawal s., power s., therapy s., fraternity s., negotiation s., (cf. Komorowska 2002: 84-85)

Teaching style – teacher's individual way of organising work in class, e.g. autocratic, laissez-faire, paternal, consultative, participatory, democratic (cf. Komorowska 2002: 81-83)

Technique- a classroom activity conducted either by the teacher or the students.

Transfer – a learning strategy which consists in using previously acquired knowledge or concept to facilitate a new task

Transition – teacher's comment which is used to mark the change in activities, and show the link between them, explains their purpose and focuses the students' attention on the task thus guaranteeing smooth flow of the lesson.

Tutor (facilitator) – teacher's role in which s/he provides advice and guidance to students working on their own e.g. when doing project work

Variety in lesson – a feature of a well – planned lesson, which allows to sustain the interest of the students in the lesson by varying the techniques, skills, patterns of interaction, pace, aids etc.

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