

# The Impact of the Pedagogical Content on the Observation Phase of the Practical Training : ( Case of the Department of English at the Teacher Training School of Constantine)

Leila Djouima, ENS Constantine, Algérie

## Abstract:

Observation can be used to help teachers develop a terminology to describe and discuss teaching, and to provide data with which to examine central concepts in their own teaching. In teacher training, it is essential to use observation of language classes in order to orient student teachers to the nature of the second language classroom (its organization, practices, and norms) and to enable them to develop an awareness of the kinds and levels of interaction that happen in language classrooms. The teacher training school of Constantine gives great importance to observation as an essential step in the practical training. In the training guide, it is stated that observation is a means of acquiring knowledge about the life of a group inside the school, a classroom and the members that constitute the educational act. During the Observation phase, the trainees are supposed to refer to a pedagogical background they have been exposed to during their academic training. In fact we assume that observation is affected by former theoretical knowledge acquired from pedagogical modules. Trainees refer much to what they have learnt in theory while observing teaching practice. Observation that is built on a background theoretical knowledge is focus-oriented and the interpretations are significant and valuable. The present study aims at investigating the impact of pedagogical content on the observation phase of training at the teacher training school of Constantine. Our investigation tool is the analysis of fifty (50) training reports of student teachers from the department of English. The aim is to check to what extent trainees make use of theoretical knowledge acquired from pedagogical content while writing the first part of their training report (observation).

## ملخص

يمكن أن تستعمل الملاحظة لمساعدة الأساتذة لتطوير مصطلحات تصف وتناقش العملية التعليمية وتقديم معلومات لمعالجة مفاهيم جوهرية فيما يخص طريقة تدريسهم. من الضروري استغلال ملاحظة أقسام اللغات لتبنيه الطلبة إلى طبيعة أقسام اللغات الأجنبية (نظامها وممارساتها ومعاييرها)، وذلك خلال تريضهم. تولي المدرسة العليا للأساتذة بقسنطينة أهمية كبيرة للملاحظة كخطوة أساسية خلال التريض التطبيقي، ففي دليل التريض يشار إلى الملاحظة كوسيلة لاكتساب المعرفة حول حياة فوج داخل المدرسة أو القسم والأفراد التي تشكل الفعل التربوي. خلال مرحلة الملاحظة، يفترض من المتريصين الإشارة إلى خلفية بيداغوجية اكتسبوها خلال التريض الأكاديمي. ففي الواقع، يمكننا القول إن الملاحظة تتأثر بالمخزون النظري المكتسب من المقاييس البيداغوجية، إذ يعتمد المتريصون بدرجة كبيرة على ما تعلموه في الجانب النظري خلال ملاحظة العملية التعليمية. فالملاحظة المبنية على المخزون النظري موجهة حسب الاهتمام وتفسيراتها مهمة وذو قيمة. نحاول من خلال هذه الدراسة البحث في تأثير المضمون البيداغوجي على مرحلة الملاحظة خلال التريض لطلبة قسم الانجليزية. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى فحص مدى استعمال المتريصين المخزون النظري المكتسب من المحتوى البيداغوجي عند تحرير الجزء الأول من تقرير التريض (مرحلة الملاحظة).



### **Observation: A Technique in Teacher Training**

Observation has always played an important role in teacher education. Traditional views of observation argue that through observing how teachers conduct their lessons, solve problems of classroom management, and interact with students, novice teachers can develop a repertoire of strategies and techniques which they can apply in their own teaching. However, the significance of what is observed depends on the theory of teaching the teacher holds.

In using classroom observation in language teacher education it is therefore necessary to go beyond a focus on techniques and strategies experienced teachers employ and to use observation as a way of collecting information that can be used to develop a deeper understanding of how and why teachers teach the way they do.

#### **Observation of other teachers:**

Richards (1990:43) suggests that the most frequent use of observation involves teachers in training sitting in on the classes of experienced teachers. Their observation should have a focus and the observers should use specific procedures keeping in mind that they should remain observers and not to intervene in the course of action of the class.

According to the same author, an additional way to improve classroom observation is to establish a non- evaluative role for observers through giving them tasks to complete which involve collecting information rather than evaluating performance, and having the co-operating teacher determine what these tasks are.

### **Goals of observation:**

Day (1990: 141) describes a list of goals for classroom observation as follows:

- Developing a terminology for understanding and discussing the teaching process,
- developing an awareness of the principles and decision making that underlie effective teaching,
- distinguishing between effective and ineffective classroom practices,
- identifying techniques and practices that student-teachers can apply to their own teaching.

### **Observation procedures:**

Observation is often based on the assumption that acquiring skill in teaching involves how to do things- that is, the mastery of specific types of behaviors (Richards 1998). A student teacher can observe such behaviors in the lessons of good teachers. Acheson and Gall (1987), cited in Richards (1998) assert that "The first perspective for identifying characteristics of effective teaching is to examine what teachers do in the classroom". According to Richards (1998 :143), the focus of observation will include "how to" dimensions like:

- how the teacher starts and ends a lesson
- how the teacher allots times within a lesson
- how the teacher assigns tasks to students
- how the teacher organizes learning groups
- how the teacher supervises students while they are learning
- how the teacher asks questions
- how the teacher reinforces student answers

### **Type of tasks:**

Day (1990: 141) identifies the tasks that trainees are to complete as follows:

- Collecting data on such things as organization of the lesson,
- Teacher's time management,
- How students complete tasks,
- Time on task,
- Teacher's use of questions,
- Teacher's explanations,
- Teacher-student interaction,
- The dynamic of group activities.

Once the observations have been made, using checklists, focused description, or other procedure, the observer provides a copy of any information obtained to the teacher.

## **Classroom Observation: A Step in the Practical Training at the Teacher Training Tchool**

### **The Observation Phase:**

**Definition:** The training guide defines observation as “a means of acquiring knowledge about the life of a group inside the school, inside the classroom, and the members that constitute the educational act”.

### **Stages of Observation:**

The same guide refers to the observation phase as a process made out of two stages:

**Stage one:** This stage aims at introducing the students to training and its objectives, the techniques of scientific observation (why, what, how to observe), the use of observation grids, preparing them for relating theoretical knowledge with the realities of their future profession , and preparing them for the coming phases of training.

During this stage, the trainees are expected to watch film projections of lessons presented by former trainees. In addition, the members of the training unit are supposed to organize explanatory sessions. Note that all this takes place during the pre-graduate year.

### **Stage Two: Practical Observation:**

During this stage the trainees go to the training school along with the supervisor who gives them instructions and advice. The trainees get acquainted with the characteristics and principal constituents of the immediate professional environment, the responsibilities of the staff of the school, the relationship between learners and the educational environment, the available educational environment, the available educational means, and the development of teaching cards.

### **Progression of the Observation:**

#### **Sessions 01- 02: Observation of the School Structure:**

The trainees are supposed to observe the learners’ behavior before they get into the school, when they enter the school, in the courtyard, before they enter the classrooms. They have also to consider the school structures and equipments and make an interview with the headmaster in order to collect data about the school, the pupils, teachers; school staff....It should be noted that trainees are not allowed to enter the classroom during these sessions.

#### **Session 03: Observation in the Classroom**

The trainees should observe the classroom in terms of its characteristics, equipments, pupils’ groupings. They should also have a look at the learners’ books and copybooks as well as the teacher’s teaching means.

**Sessions 04- 05-06: Use of the Observation Grid**

An observation grid entitled “classroom activities” is used at this level. Each session is devoted to one part of the grid which is made out of three parts entitled as follows:

- Part one: Warm up and classroom interaction (session 04)
- Part two: Lesson presentation (session 05)
- Part three: Evaluation of the teaching/learning process (session 06)

It is to be considered that the trainees are expected not only to answer the questions of the grid but to develop an analysis of those questions with reference to former theoretical knowledge.

**Analysis of the Impact of the Pedagogical Modules on the Observation Phase**

Before analyzing the impact of the pedagogical modules on the observation phase of training, it is essential to refer to the program in use at the teacher training school in order to sort out those modules. The aim is to sort out with a correlation between what students are taught in theory and the observation they are supposed to carry out during their professional training.

The program suggests a list of seven pedagogical modules distributed over the third, fourth, and fifth year. The following table shows the distribution of these modules over the three years.

**Table 1: Pedagogical modules in the program**

Year	Modules		number	Total number of modules over the three years
3rd Year	TEFL- CAP- PTES- Introduction to psychology		04	07
4 <sup>th</sup> Year	B+4	TEFL-MDD-TESD- P.PED	04	
	B+5	TEFL-MDD-TESD-P.PED	04	
5 <sup>th</sup> year	SD- PT		02	

The modules mentioned above are supposed to be the core of the theoretical professional preparation of students. Each of these modules aims at equipping would- be teachers with essential and basic concepts about teaching and learning with reference to all the participants in that pedagogical act.

### **Description of the pedagogical modules in the program**

**TEFL:** (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) is a module that is taught over two years in the curriculum. The aim from teaching this module is to introduce basic concepts in TEFL to provide would-be teachers with tools that would help them in their future career (third year). Another aim is to explain thoroughly the basic foundations of classroom tasks and activities, the use of appropriate teaching/ learning steps (journées d'étude sur les programmes de l'ENS, May 2008).

**CAP:** (Communication and attitude preoccupations) is a module taught over a semester in the third year. The main concern of this module is to equip trainees with some social and communication attitudes that are believed to contribute in the development of their profile as teachers.

**PTES:** (Pedagogical trends and educational systems) is taught over a semester in the third year. This course provides the trainees with sample educational systems and pedagogical trends useful for teacher development.

**Introduction to Psychology:** This module is taught in the third year. It deals with the foundations of psychology with focus on learning theories

**MDD:** (Materials Design and Development) is taught in the fourth year. The aim behind this course is to clarify the nature and types of teaching materials and media, their quality and adaptation to classroom use, their authenticity, complexity, and learn ability. The trainees are expected to be able to analyze existing language teaching materials and to adapt them to learners' levels and teaching situations, and also to be able to select, design and develop language teaching materials.(journées d'étude sur les programmes de l'ENS May 2008).

**TESD:** (Textbook evaluation and syllabus design) is taught in the fourth year for would-be teachers of middle school level but extends to the fifth year with future secondary school teachers. The aim is twofold: to discover a process that takes place before class: syllabus design and approach its basic concepts (planning, design, implementation, evaluation, renewal) ; the other part tackles textbook evaluation techniques and procedures that are believed to be essential in teacher development.

**Psycho-pedagogy:** This module is taught in the fourth year. It deals with the foundations of psycho-pedagogy with a focus on developmental trends and cognitive development.

**Pedagogical Trends:** This module is taught in the fifth year. The first part of this course provides a historical overview of educational practices in different civilizations and eras. The second part however suggests a representative sample of contemporary pedagogues.

### Analysis of the Observation Grid

The observation grid of the classroom activity is a file provided by the training department to all the trainees before they start observation. The grid contains twenty two (22) open ended questions that require detailed answers which call for the trainee's capacity to analyze a given situation on the light of his/ her pedagogical knowledge acquired at the teacher training school. Note that eighteen out of the twenty two questions start with the interrogative "How does he/ she". This form suggests that trainees are asked to observe the way teachers deal with certain classroom practices. Furthermore, the "how does" form reveals that there is no value judgment to be provided. It means rather that there are many possible ways to deal with the class and the one observed is only a case in point.

The grid is made out of three parts, namely:

**Part one:** Warm up and classroom interaction (7 questions). The questions in this part of the grid seek for answers about the following areas:

- 1- Motivation
- 2- Participation
- 3- Reward and reaction to negative behavior

**Part two:** Presentation of the subject taught (7 questions). It tackles the following areas:

- 1- Lesson presentation
- 2- Progression of a lesson
- 4- Materials and media
- 5- Time management

**Part three:** Evaluation of the teaching - learning process (8 questions). It deals with the following areas/

- 1- Questions/ answers
- 2- Assimilation of knowledge
- 3- Summarizing a lesson
- 4- Evaluation

On the whole, eleven pedagogical areas are included in the grid and belong to one or some modules taught theoretically. The following table identifies the modules (as explored in the syllabus) which deal with those areas.



**Table 2: The pedagogical areas of the grid in the syllabus**

Area	module	Year(s)
Motivation	IP/ P-ED	3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup>
Participation	CAP/ IP/ P-PED	3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup>
Reward and reaction to negative behavior	IP/ P- PED/ CAP	3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup>
Lesson presentation	TEFL	3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup>
Progression of a lesson	TEFL/MDD	3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup>
Materials and media	TEFL/MDD/TESD	3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup>
Time management	TEFL	4 <sup>th</sup>
Questions/ answers	TEFL	4 <sup>th</sup>
Assimilation of knowledge	TEFL/ IP	3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup>
Summarizing a lesson	TEFL	4 <sup>th</sup>
Evaluation	TEFL/ P-PED/ MDD/TESD	3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup>

The table reveals that the areas identified in the grid are part of the pedagogical content taught in the third and fourth years. The fifth year is left for workshops, the training and the writing of an extended essay. Furthermore, the same table reads that most of the areas (eight out of eleven) are taught in TEFL. On the whole, the areas of the grid are all available within the pedagogical content. Therefore, we would assume that the trainees do exploit that knowledge in their analysis of the grid. Another note worth mentioning is that the grid has been built for a precise purpose: that of matching the theoretical knowledge with the practical aspect of their training.

### **The Grid in the Students' Training Reports**

In order to verify our assumptions, fifty training reports have been randomly selected. Those reports have been written by the students of both levels: 4B4/ 4B5 end of the academic year 2008/2009. Our investigation consisted in reading the trainees' analysis of the grid and checking their use of the knowledge acquired theoretically. The adopted procedure consisted in analyzing every question and checking to what extent the trainees have been successful in matching theory with practice. We assume that the more successful the trainees are in handling the questions of the grid, the more they reveal that their theoretical training has been successful. The fifty reports used in this investigation contain both the notes taken during observation (in the appendix) and the analysis of the grid. Note that the analysis of the different questions is written in an essay form for all the

reports. We assume that these are recommendations from the supervisors to respond to another objective behind the training report: an exercise to reinforce the writing skill of the trainees.

### **Part one: Warm up and classroom interaction**

#### **1- How does the teacher attract the learners' attention before he/she starts the lesson?**

All the trainees in our investigation mentioned different ways to attract the learners' attention before starting the lesson. The ways as mentioned by the trainees can be listed as follows:

- Knocking on the board or desk
- greeting learners
- asking the learners to write the date on their copybooks
- congratulating learners in case of a special occasion
- ordering learners to pay attention
- clapping hands

In fact, it is important to check the interpretations made from the ways teachers use to attract learners' attention but most important is the significance of attracting attention before starting a lesson. At this level, it is worth mentioning that although the trainees agreed on the ways they observed, they did not explore the question in the same way. While fourteen (14) trainees (28%) of the sample limited themselves to listing down the ways teachers use in their classrooms, the 72% others have gone further stating the importance of attracting the learners' attention before starting the lesson. To bring evidence, they mention examples of ways that any teacher can use to attract the learners' attention and then afterwards refer to the teacher under observation and the ways he makes use of. The examples they bring are in most cases taken from TEFL lectures on lesson presentation and warm up. Others however are quotations from specialized books in teaching practice.

#### **2- What are the ways used by the teacher as a warm up for the lesson?**

Warm up is taught in TEFL within the chapter lesson presentation. From their answers to this question, we could deduce that they are taught that warm up is the introductory part of the lesson that takes approximately five minutes in order to integrate the learners in the atmosphere of learning. All the trainees (100%) of the sample defined it as such. They also mentioned the different forms warm up can take and referred later to the ways the teachers they observed used as warm up for their lessons. The following is a list of ways used by teachers as warm up activities:

- Revision of previous lesson
- reinvestment of learners' background knowledge
- a joke
- an anecdote

-use of pictures.

On the whole, the trainees seem to be aware of the importance of warm up as a crucial step in any lesson. All of them, in fact, have reported the ways their training teachers use as warm up activities which indeed are relevant to the theoretical content they received in TEFL.

### **3- How does he/she motivate the class and encourage the learners to be active and participate?**

This question involves two aspects: motivation and participation. These are aspects tackled in pedagogy and psychology and are interrelated concepts. In fact motivation leads to participation. The items trainees suggested in their reports as ways used by teachers to motivate learners are listed as follows:

- Creating a lively atmosphere
- addressing direct questions to learners
- Exposing learners to authentic materials
- Using role plays, songs, jokes
- Using group work
- Reward and praise
- Encouragement.

It is worth mentioning that the trainees could not identify these items without referring to a previous theoretical knowledge on the concept of motivation. Moreover, they started their analysis of the question with a statement on the importance of motivation in the learning process. All the reports under study have been successful in tackling this question in particular. The reason may be due to the fact that there is much importance given to this issue within their theoretical training.

### **4- How does he/ she encourage learners to ask one another questions, to answer these questions and evaluate one another's answers without the help of the teachers?**

The trainees' reactions to this question were different. Thirty, which represents Sixty per cent (60%) of the training reports view that teachers use dialogues and conversations. In fact, Twenty five out of the thirty reports belong to 4B4 trainees. The observation took place in middle schools and at the level of the middle school there is an important use of dialogues. However, eight reports (16%) reveal that teachers address direct questions to learners, meaning that the learner/ learner contact is absent in the classes they observed. The twelve (24%) left reports join the eight to state clearly that nothing of what the question suggested was observed. Note that no comment has been mentioned in the reports to justify the presence of absence of encouragement to questions addresses by learners to their peers.

### **5-How does he/she deal with learners' ideas and answers during the construction of the lesson?**

The trainees have listed the following ways used by teachers to deal with learners' ideas and answers during the construction of the lesson.

- Corrects them if they are wrong
- Writes them on the board
- reformulates the question in case the answers are wrong
- respects the learners' answers even if wrong
- Completes unfinished answers.

Again, most trainees agreed on the ways teachers deal with learners' answers. That listing also emerges from a theoretical background in TEFL and psychology. However, the trainees have limited themselves to listing the ways without any comment or justification of the teachers' attitudes toward learners' ideas and answers during the lesson.

### **6-How does he/she reward learners?**

All the reports (100%) agreed on two ways teachers reward their learners: Praising them, and writing their answers on the blackboard. However, only ten reports (20%) contained some theoretical justification of the use of reward. The main reason is that it is probable the trainees have not tackled this issue in theory.

### **7-How does he/she react to negative behavior?**

While answering this question, all the trainees seem to be well versed about the issue of the teacher's attitude towards misbehavior. They refer to adolescence and its characteristics as well as how teachers should react to negative attitudes from the part of learners. They enumerated the following reactions that seem to be common to most teachers under observation:

- Sends the learner out (50 reports=100%)
- Ignores the negative behavior (50 reports =100%)
- Raises voice to bring the trouble maker back to the mood of the lesson (5 reports= 10%)

In fact, three out of the five reports where raising voice is used by the teacher have been written by students who have been observing the same teacher. Note as well that no comment has been made on any report about the reactions that have been observed despite the fact that the trainees have demonstrated an acceptable command of the issue "behavior in the classroom".

## **Part Two: Presentation of the subject taught**

### **1- What are the techniques used by the teacher to present the lesson?**

Theoretically, the trainees know that the success of a lesson depends largely on the way the teacher presents his lesson. They mentioned various techniques used by the teachers they have been observing and are listed as follows:

- use of materials, dialogues, tests, questions and answers (30 reports= 60%)
- interaction with learners (50 reports= 100%)
- use the textbook (38 reports= 76%)
- Use of the presentation, practice, production technique (22reports=44%)
- gestures and facial expressions (1 report= 2%)

The results reveal that all the trainees agree that teachers use interaction as a technique. It means that they rely much on communication in the class and there is a sort of exchange of ideas between the learners and the teacher. 76% see that the teachers use the textbook to teach and therefore follow the steps of the textbook, while 44% know the 3ps technique and have seen their applicant teachers using it. .

## **2-How does he/she move from what is simple to what is complex?**

Gradation in the presentation of a lesson is a concept that trainees seem to master. In their reports, they mention the different criteria for gradation of content and then , later refer to what they observed teachers doing with this concept. The following list is of ways teachers move from simple to complex:

- They ask about previous knowledge (47 reports= 94%)
- They introduce the easy structure then move to the complex. (36 reports= 72%)
- They revise previous knowledge (18 reports = 36%)
- They move from guided to free activities (13 reports =26%)
- They use Arabic or French (2 reports = 4%)

It is worth mentioning that most examples mentioned deal with gradation of lexis and grammar. The examples used to illustrate the trainees ideas all deal with grammar or vocabulary teaching. The trainees seem to limit gradation to these two aspects only. The trainees who answered that they use Arabic or French seem to have misunderstood the question and therefore gave irrelevant answers.

## **3-How does he /she stimulate learners to enrich the lesson with examples?**

The trainees have listed the following ways:

- Teachers ask many questions (18 reports = 36%)
- Teachers address the brilliant learners to enrich the lesson (5 reports =10%)
- Teachers simplify the activity (13 reports= 26%)
- Teachers provide their own examples first (46 reports = 92%)
- Teachers reward the learners who give examples (7 reports = 14%)
- Teachers write the example on the board (29 reports = 58%)

From their answers, the trainees seem to know about the importance of stimulating learners to provide examples. According to the reports, this does not only motivate them to participate and enrich the lesson but to check their understanding and assimilation of the lesson as well.

#### **4-How does he/ she make use of the appropriate pedagogical materials and media?**

According to the trainees' answers, there is clear evidence that they know the different types of materials and media. They also know the principles of adaptation and adoption (called heavy reliance in some reports). These are in fact taught in three different modules: TEFL/TESD /MDD. Therefore, all the trainees found it easy to answer this question and agreed on the following answers:

- The teacher uses the textbook and some pictures (50 reports =100%)
- The teacher uses the textbook adaptively and adds extra materials (37 reports = 74%)
- No media are used. (50 reports =100%)

Unfortunately, they expressed no reason for which there is much reliance (not to say complete) on the textbook.

#### **5-How are these materials and media used by learners?**

15 reports (30%) did not answer this question. The reason might be the misunderstanding of the question. However, the 35other reports (70%) limited the answer to reading and copying activities from the textbook. This joins their answer to the previous question where they stated that teachers rely much on the textbook.

#### **6-How does he/she support the lesson with different activities and exercises?**

The trainees seem to insist that the teachers "teach" the textbook and therefore, to answer this question they suggested:

- They adopt the textbook and its materials (40 reports = 80%)
- They rarely use extra activities and exercises (9 reports = 18%)
- They select among the available activities and exercises on the textbook.(1 report=2%)

#### **7-How does he/she manage time inside the classroom?**

Time management is an aspect tackled in lesson planning in TEFL. The trainees know about the different steps of the lesson and the importance of each step as well as the time to be allotted to each of these steps. They all agreed that time division depends on the nature and importance of the lesson. Furthermore, all of them gave the following time division according to what they observed during their training.

- 05 to 10 minutes for warm up
- 30minutes for presentation
- The rest of the time of the session for practice (around 15 minutes)

### **Part Three: Evaluation of the teaching – learning process**

#### **1-Mention some examples of the suggestive questions used by the teacher to help the learners**

The trainees have mentioned the following possibilities:

- The teacher provides choices of answers. (18 reports =36%)

- The teacher helps with key words (5 reports = 10%)
- The teacher uses pictures (13 reports =26%)
- The teacher rarely uses suggestive questions (32 reports =64%)

It seems clear that trainees do not possess enough information on suggestive questions. They are unable to match this item with any theoretical knowledge and therefore the majority (64%) stated that teachers rarely use suggestive questions. However, the rest of trainees mentioned examples that are relevant to the context of the question. Note that in case the trainee misunderstands the question, he may ask for help from the supervisor.

## **2-How does he/she direct the question to other learners?**

This question tackles two main concepts: classroom management and lesson presentation. The trainees have mentioned that in theory it is important not to discourage the learners in case they give wrong answers. However, in most reports what they noticed in practice is completely different. Indeed, only 9 trainees have observed teachers avoiding to discourage the learners by correcting incomplete answers or asking the class for their opinion. The majority of trainees however, (41) stated that teachers accept only correct answers and tend to work with good pupils. Some argue that teachers argue that they do not have enough time to waste with pupils who are unwilling to learn.

## **3-Does he/she ask questions that require personal answers? Explain**

All the trainees (50) answered the question positively. According to them, all the teachers under observation ask questions that require personal answers. To explain, the trainees made use of what they have learnt in theory concerning the importance of asking personal questions and therefore suggested the following possibilities:

- Learners feel part of the lesson when they talk about themselves (50reports)
- Learners are able to talk about themselves and their environment (45 reports =90%)

## **4-How does he/she deal with incomplete answers?**

The trainees stressed the point that it is important not to blame the learner who provides an incomplete answer but rather to make use of that incomplete answer to involve the rest of the class to complete it. In fact they reported that all the observed teachers direct the question to the rest of the class in order to complete the answer provided by their mate. Again the trainees have recalled the knowledge acquired in TEFL concerning lesson presentation to answer this question.

## **5-How does he/she extract as many varied answers as possible?**

The trainees reported the following ways:

- The teacher gives the opportunity to all pupils to express themselves. (8 reports = 16%)

-The teacher does not insist on varied answers as time does not allow for that (35 reports = 70%)

-The teacher encourages the pupils to express their viewpoints freely and in different ways (7 reports =14%)

The trainees' responses reveal that most teachers do not insist on varied answers for time management reasons. This confirms what has been stated in question two concerning the waste of time. The rest of trainees however, observed teachers encouraging and giving the opportunity to learners to express themselves.

#### **6-How does he/she check the learners' assimilation?**

Before reporting the ways teachers check assimilation, all the trainees referred to the importance of evaluation of their lesson. When they check assimilation, teachers automatically evaluate their lessons and therefore prepare remedial work in case of failure at given points of the lesson. The trainees referred to evaluation as part of the lesson progression and mentioned and all of them mentioned that it is done through exercises and activities during the production phase of the lesson.

#### **7-How does he/she summarize the lesson or part of it at its end?**

The trainees stated that the summary is important to facilitate memorization of the acquired information. To do so, the teachers repeat the main parts of the lesson (48 reports = 96%) and/or asks for feedback (30 reports= 60%).

#### **8-How does he/she evaluate the information acquired by learners?**

All the trainees mentioned the following ways:

- Through homework, tests
- Through repetition drills
- Through the examination of learners' productions
- Through the project work

The trainees' responses are significant in the sense that they reveal mastery of how to evaluate acquisition of knowledge. Furthermore, all of them mentioned a new practice in the Algerian teaching context: the project work. This indicates that teachers of English are using the project work for its real purpose, that of evaluating the acquired competencies after a teaching file.



## Conclusion

Observation during the practical training at the teacher training school of Constantine is a systematic process. The trainees are provided with an observation grid that gives a focus to their observation. The trainees are guided to what to observe and also to what to do with the data they obtain. The same grid has been built on the theoretical assumption that it should include the "how to" dimension mentioned earlier. Furthermore, the items of the grid correspond significantly to what Richards suggests as dimensions (pages 2-3). Besides, most items included in the grid belong to areas that have been tackled during the academic training at the teacher training school. In fact the analysis of the grid has revealed that the trainees rely largely on what they have acquired in theory to introduce or justify the observed practices of their applicant teachers.

However, it is worth noting that the grid needs revision and improvement. In fact, many areas tackled in theory do not appear in the grid. Examples of these areas are approaches to language teaching, the syllabus, learning strategies....Hence; it would be significant to revise the observation grid with reference to what trainees learn in the pedagogical modules. This, indeed, would give significance to what the trainees learn in theory as they would be able to compare it to real classroom practices.

Furthermore, we assume that the trainees' responses are highly influenced by the discussions they hold with their supervisors at the teacher training school. It would be much more significant if the supervisors do not intervene with their opinions and advice to allow for a more authentic and personal observation.

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