

POST ANALYSIS OF OBSERVATION AND PREVIOUS PEER TEACHING

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Introduction

Observation and peer teaching are vital to professional development of teachers. The two exercises are embarked upon to provide students with firsthand information on how teaching is being done and to provide them with the needed skills on knowledge impartation. Having a good understanding and mastering of the processes involved in these exercise is likely to make one an experienced, good professionally qualify teacher.

There are various reasons for embarking on observation, depending on the purpose; observation could be conducted by peers, principals or external evaluators. It is used primarily while the teacher is still under the professional development. Observation is a formative form of assessment that deals with critical watching of detailed behaviour and explanation of what teachers do in a classroom. Observation could be participant, non-participant or observing, depending on how the observation is conducted.

A participant observer is linked to a detective. It is a situation in which observer or student is part of the group being examined, he constitutes the member without the awareness of the group to be able to observe the desired traits of interest. In non-participant observer, the groups are aware that there is an observer among them watching and recording firsthand information, their behaviour, practices and how the teacher generally manages the affairs of the students. The third type is observing participant. These types of observers are known to the group. They let their mission known, and may even join the activities of the group.

Observation, participant, non-participant or observing, is usually embarked upon either for evaluation, appraisal, or for the purpose of having firsthand information on skill development. It is an important aspect of teacher education because it prepares the teacher ahead for the needed skill on how to effectively communicate with the teacher.

Observation exercise at University of Ilorin usually comes up at the end of the second semester of 200 Level. Students are posted to schools to go and observe how teaching exercise is being conducted. They are expected to be within the school premises from eight a.m. to closing hour to observe the realities of the activities involved in the teaching. They are also expected to have a critical look at what the teacher does to ensure the smooth running of the class as well as those of the school. The program lasts for one week, after which the peer teaching exercise commences.

Possible Lessons from Observation Exercise

Student teachers are expected to gain one or two things on how to manage the students, the classroom, as well as the instructions going on in the class. Students on observation are likely to have some hints on the following factors:

- (a). Planning and Preparation: It is required of students on observation to gain some insight on how to plan and prepare for the content to be taught. Student

teachers are expected to have a critical look on how the experienced teacher plans for what to teach, i.e., the content and the skills required to impart the needed skills (pedagogy) into the students.

Knowing what to teach and the appropriate methods to use in the successful lesson presentation are parts of what a would-be teacher is expected to learn from the observation exercise.

- (b). Students on observation are also expected to have some skills on classroom environment and management. It is expected of a student to be able to deduce from experience what he observed, how to ensure an enabling classroom environment for effective lesson delivery. The observer should ensure that students learn in a friendly and conducive classroom. This is possible from the interaction or rapport created by the teacher to the students.

Another important factor of the classroom is the management of the disciplinary problems among students. Observers are expected to have a critical look of what problems emanated in the course of giving instructions to students and to checkmate the skills used in tackling such problems. It is expected that the observing students scrutinize these behaviours and select the one that is considered to be most appropriate. These and other forms of classroom management are part of the lessons expected of an observer that had really gone through observation.

- (c). Gaining some insight into instructional management. A student undergoing professional development is expected to acquire the skills of communication strategy so as to be able to involve the students actively. How does your mentor communicate to the students? which of the communication patterns is most appropriate? what strategy does the teacher use to communicate to the students? how effective is the strategy? to what degree are the students involved? which of these management pattern is the most effective?

The teacher should note that he/ she is not expected to dogmatically accept these means of managing instruction. The trainee after instruction can see the expert one-on-one for further clarifications of some issues.

- (d). Trainee on observation through interaction with the experienced teacher should have an idea of what is meant to be a professionally responsible teacher. It is part of the responsibility of the teacher to communicate with the family of the students on the progress of their wards. A responsible teacher often keeps an up-to-date record of the students to be able to know the status of such students. All these are part of what students on observation should learn from the exercise.

Peer Teaching

This is an aspect of initial teachers' training that prepares the teacher for the teaching practice exercise. It is a situation in which teachers use the experience of observation to teach their peers. It is an aspect of initial teacher exercise that ensures that teachers have adequate teaching experience rather than using a trial and error method of imparting knowledge unto the students. Unlike microteaching, which is usually conducted on five to ten students, peer teaching may be conducted on fairly

large number of students. It is the first teaching practice in the training of the trainee students.

Peer teaching is like the conventional teaching practice exercise. It is a two credit compulsory course i.e., SED 301 that all education students must pass before they could graduate. It is a practical oriented course where trainees teach their peer, hence the name peer teaching. In peer teaching exercise, students are divided into smaller groups of member ranging from ten to twenty and are assigned to two lecturers for assessment.

The lecturers reach a consensus with the students on when to fix for the assessment. Students having been notified on what is required of them will be asked to prepare lesson note on the topic of their interest for presentation. Each student will be given a time frame for the presentation and will be graded on a number of factors listed in the Teaching Practice booklet. The teaching is scored over one hundred.

At the end of the assessment, each lecturer submits his/her assessment sheet to the coordinator for computation.

Observation and peer teaching are devices that enable student-teacher to be an efficient teacher and which equip him/her with the necessary tools for effective lesson delivery. This is to say that the exercises are not for fun, but are expected to provide students with a worthwhile lesson as illustrated below.

Possible Lessons from Peer Teaching

- (a). Teachers in training, having gone through peer teaching should be versed on how to write good lesson note. They are expected to be able to plan lessons in a logical manner using correct language. They should have an insight into how to write a clear and specific objective.
- (b). Possession of skill of lesson presentation: Just as we have in observation, a student on peer teaching exercise should demonstrate knowledge of subject matter; able to communicate with students using verbal and non-verbal communications. He/ she is also expected to cater for learning needs of students and present assignment clearly and concisely.
- (c). Lesson Organization Acquisition: Students who have gone having gone through peer teaching should be able to organize effective lessons, relate the previous lesson with the present lesson, use appropriate instructional aids, create the zeal to learn in students, be able to summarize the lesson before rounding off.
- (d). Mastering of Classroom Management Skills: Through peer teaching, students should learn how to ensure an orderly classroom environment. They should dress modestly and appropriately for classroom teaching. Adequate and appropriate behaviour among students should be properly reinforced. All these and any other forms of classroom management skills are part of what students are expected to learn from peer teaching exercise before the actual teaching practice.
- (e). A student on peer teaching exercise is expected to critically examine and scrutinize the appropriate means of measuring students' learning, using varied types of questions. He/she is also expected to have ideas of how

questioning could be used to determine the extent of the learning by the students from the lesson.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the concepts of observation and peer teaching have been briefly discussed. Possible lessons from observation and peer teaching exercise has also been discussed.

Revision Questions

1. Explain what you understand by the concepts of observation and peer teaching.
2. Explain the possible lessons from observation exercise.
3. Discuss possible lessons from peer teaching exercise.

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