



UNSW
SYDNEY

Arts & Social Sciences

School of Education

EDST2002

Professional Engagement

Summer Semester, 2019

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IMPORTANT:

For student policies and procedures relating to assessment, attendance and student support, please see website, <https://education.arts.unsw.edu.au/students/courses/course-outlines/>

The School of Education acknowledges the Bedegal people as the traditional custodians of the lands upon which we learn and teach.

1. LOCATION

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
School of Education
EDST 2002 Professional Engagement (6 units of credit)
Summer Semester, 2019

2. STAFF CONTACT DETAILS

Course Coordinator: Ms Laura Bray
Email: l.bray@unsw.edu.au
Availability: Please email to arrange an appointment

3. COURSE DETAILS

Course Name	Professional Engagement
Credit Points	6 units of credit (6 uoc)
Workload	Includes 150 hours including class contact hours, readings, class preparation, assessment, follow up activities, etc.
Schedule	
Orientation	Tuesday 22 Jan 2019, 10.00am-2.00pm, Matthews room 310
Fieldwork	15 days structured field placement Dates: 29 January - 15 February 2019. Due to the Australia Day public holiday, 1 day will be negotiated during UNSW Term 1. Please liaise with placement coordinator in school to arrange.

Eligibility

For BA / BEd, BCom / BEd, BDe / BEd, BEc / BEd, BFA / BEd, BMedia Arts / BEd, BMus / BEd, BSc / BEd:

- Successful completion of 48 units of credit (1 year EFT) in approved discipline studies in the relevant discipline degree
- Successful completion of EDST 1101, 1104, 1108 and 2003,
- Successful completion of the national literacy and numeracy test, and
- A high level of oral communication skills, equivalent to an IELTS score 8.0 in Speaking and Listening. For band descriptors, see https://takeielts.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/IELTS_Speaking_band_descriptors.pdf

Summary of Course

This course gives Teacher Education Students the opportunity to develop practical knowledge and skills regarding teaching and how a diverse range of students learn through structured observations and active participation as a teaching assistant in a school.

The course consists of a university-based orientation, an online forum, and 15 days structured fieldwork in a school. Teacher Education Students will be placed in a school for 15 days of fieldwork as a teaching assistant in a secondary school (which may include learning support / a gifted program)

Student Learning Outcomes

Outcome	Assessment/s
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1	Identify and describe the learning strengths and needs of students from diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds and the implications for teaching.	1,2
2	Follow the key principles described in codes of ethics and conduct for the teaching profession, and the relevant legislative, administrative and organisational policies and processes required for teachers according to school stage.	1,2

Program Learning Outcomes (AITSL Professional Graduate Teaching Standards)

Standard		Assessment/s
1.1.1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students and how these may affect learning.	1, 2
1.2.1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of research into how students learn and the implications for teaching.	1, 2
1.3.1	Demonstrate knowledge of teaching strategies that are responsive to the learning strengths and needs of students from diverse linguistics, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds	1, 2
2.5.1	Know and understand literacy and numeracy teaching strategies and their application in teaching areas.	1, 2
3.5.1	Demonstrate a range of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to support student engagement.	1, 2
4.1.1	Identify strategies to support inclusive student participation and engagement in classroom activities	1, 2
7.1.1	Understand and apply the key principles described in codes of ethics and conduct for the teaching profession	2
7.2.1	Understand the relevant legislative, administrative and organisational policies and processes required for teachers according to school stage.	2

National Priority Area Elaborations

Priority area		Assessment/s
A. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12	1
D. Literacy and Numeracy	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19	1, 2
E. Students with Special Educational Needs	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9	1
F. Teaching Students from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11	1

4. RATIONALE FOR THE INCLUSION OF CONTENT AND TEACHING APPROACH

This course gives second year BEd students the opportunity to observe and participate in student learning in NSW schools, to experience the diverse range of students and how they learn, and to begin to develop practical knowledge and skills necessary for successful professional teaching. The course also comprises the first 15 days of the 80+ days of supervised professional experience required to gain accreditation as a teacher in Australia.

5. TEACHING STRATEGIES

Date/Week	Session	Timing (minutes)	Topic/ Activity
22 Jan	1	60	Course overview, rationale, expectations
	2	60	Learning from Observation
		15	<i>Session break</i>
	3	60	WWC, DET Code of conduct
	4	45	Anaphylaxis training, etc .
30 Jan-15 Feb + 2days			Fieldwork placement

Professional engagement consists of structured observations and activities that allow Teacher Education Students to engage with teaching and learning in an educational setting. The orientation and online forum are designed to support this engagement. These activities will occur in a climate that is supportive and inclusive of all learners.

6. COURSE CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

PLEASE NOTE:

ATTENDANCE AT THE ORIENTATION IS COMPULSORY. PLEASE BE PUNCTUAL AND SIGN THE ATTENDANCE REGISTER. FAILURE TO ATTEND MAY RESULT IN IMMEDIATE WITHDRAWAL OF SCHOOL PLACEMENT

7. RESOURCES

See Moodle for readings.

8. ASSESSMENT

Task	Component	Length	Weight	Student Learning Outcomes Assessed	Program Learning Outcomes Assessed	National Priority Area	Due Date
1.	Teaching assistance and structured observations	-	Hurdle	1, 2	1.1.1, 1.2.1, 1.3.1, 2.5.1, 3.5.1, 4.1.1	B, C, D, E	Within 5 days of placement completion
2.	Evidence of Professionalism Report	-	Hurdle	1,2	7.1.1,7.2.1	B, C, D, E	Within 5 days of placement completion

Assessment Details

Note: Students are required to keep all drafts, original data and other evidence of the authenticity of their work for at least one year after examination. If an assessment is mislaid the student is responsible for providing a further copy. Please see the Student Policies and Procedures for information regarding submission, extensions, special consideration, late penalties and hurdle requirements etc.

1. Teaching assistance and structured observations

Description:

During your fieldwork as a teaching assistant you will support a regular classroom teacher and observe how students learn, how literacy and numeracy skills develop, how effective teachers work with their students and how schools function as organisations. You will be asked to work with small groups of students or individuals within the classroom and also in a homework club. You will also have the opportunity to observe your classroom teacher/s, and will conduct a range of informal observations focused on different aspects of the teaching and learning activities undertaken in the classroom. You will need to systematically observe and/or take notes and then discuss any implications with your cooperating teacher. These observations focus primarily on helping you to 'know students and how they learn' (i.e., learners) but also to 'plan for and implement effective teaching and learning' (i.e., lesson planning and teaching strategies) and to 'create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments' (i.e., teacher-student interactions). The completion of the observation tasks is a hurdle requirement, and forms part of the final assessment. Details about the specific focus of each observation are in Appendix 1. Instructions and examples of how to conduct the observations will be given in the orientation.

2. Evidence of Professionalism Report

Description:

As a Teacher Education Student you are required to act in a professional manner at all times during the fieldwork placement. This includes maintaining satisfactory attendance, being punctual, dressing appropriately, cooperating with staff, demonstrating high-level language, literacy and numeracy skills, undertaking a range of structured observations, participating actively in class, working collaboratively in the school environment, and in general, demonstrating attitudes and actions that are appropriate and aligned with the core standards and codes of conduct in the teaching profession. Evidence of professionalism is a *hurdle requirement* and is assessed by the Cooperating Teacher.

The Evidence of Professionalism Report is the responsibility of the cooperating Teacher(s). The report is written collaboratively where there are 2 or more cooperating Teachers. This report needs to be discussed with the Teacher Education Student prior to it being signed. The report should be consistent with strengths/areas for concern discussed throughout the Professional Engagement placement. The Cooperating Teacher/s will assess each pre-service Teacher against the Graduate Teacher Standards and key attributes. For each standard and key attribute, the level of achievement is assessed as:

ND: Not Demonstrated

WT: Working Towards

D: Demonstrated

The Cooperating Teacher/s is also asked to provide a qualitative comment on the degree of professional engagement the pre-service Teacher demonstrated during the 15 days of Professional Engagement placement.

The result for EDST 2002 is graded Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory.

**Professional Engagement
Evidence of Professionalism**



Instructions to COOPERATING TEACHER

This report is to be completed after the Teacher Education Student has completed his or her 15 days of professional engagement. Teacher Education Students are to be assessed for each Standard/requirement as either:

ND - Not demonstrated; WT – Working towards; D – Demonstrated (please tick)

Upon completion, this document is to be returned to the Teacher Education Student who will upload it via our online placement system portal.

Details of Teacher Education Student

Name:			
Student ID:		School:	

Attendance Record

No	Date	Activity Summary	Teacher's Signature
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			

Demonstration of the Standards			
	<i>ND</i>	<i>WT</i>	<i>D</i>
1.1.1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students and how these may affect learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.3.1 Demonstrate knowledge of teaching strategies that are responsive to the learning strengths and needs of students from diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.5.1 Know and understand literacy and numeracy teaching strategies and their application in teaching areas.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.5.1 Demonstrate a range of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to support student engagement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.2.1 Understand the relevant legislative, administrative and organisational policies and processes required for teachers according to school stage.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Key Attributes			
	<i>ND</i>	<i>WT</i>	<i>D</i>
Demonstrate professionalism and commitment to teaching	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meet school expectations regarding punctuality, attendance & dress	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participate actively in the classroom as a teaching assistant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Complete all structured observations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrate the ability to collaborate effectively with staff and fellow Teacher Education Students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exhibit positive and flexible approach to resolving any problems and Issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

PERSONAL LANGUAGE, LITERACY AND NUMERACY COMPETENCIES
<p>The Teacher Education Student can use the English language appropriately and accurately to communicate and manage interactions with students and colleagues effectively both inside and outside the classroom</p> <p>Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The Pre-service Teacher demonstrates mastery of the full range of literacy and numeracy competencies required of a beginning teacher</p> <p>Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/></p>

Comments by Cooperating Teacher
<p>Please provide a comment on the degree of professional engagement that you observed in the Teacher Education Student:</p> <p>FINAL GRADE: Satisfactory Unsatisfactory</p>
<p>Supervising Teacher's name _____</p> <p>Signature _____ Date _____</p> <p>Teacher Education Student's signature _____ Date _____</p> <p>Principal or nominee's signature _____ Date _____</p>

PLEASE DISCUSS WITH YOUR COOPERATING TEACHER BEFORE AND AFTER THE OBSERVATIONS – NOTE THESE TASKS ARE A HURDLE REQUIREMENT ONLY.

Adapted from Wajnryb, R. (1993) *Classroom Observation Tasks: A resource book for language teachers and trainers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

TASK 1 ATTENDING TO THE LEARNER

BACKGROUND

A group of learners in a classroom with a teacher comprises a learning community. The human element – both verbal and non-verbal, visible and barely perceptible – shapes human interaction qualitatively and may perhaps furnish the key to what happens (the processes) and what eventuates (the outcomes). Approaches to teaching that draw on an understanding of humanistic psychology highlight the importance to learning of the affective learning environment, that is, making the conditions right for others to learn. Part of these ‘right conditions’ involves how the teacher relates to – or attends to – the learners.

TASK OBJECTIVE

In this task you will be paying very close attention to the teacher’s attending behaviour towards the learners – that is, the way a teacher acknowledges, through verbal or non-verbal means, the presence, contribution, and needs of individual learners. There are many facets to attending behaviour. One of the more obvious of these is using students’ names. Others are eye contact, touch, facial expression, etc.

PROCEDURE

BEFORE THE LESSON

1. Arrange to observe a lesson.
2. Make yourself familiar with the sample diagram opposite. Be aware that you will probably have to modify it or draw up a new one to reflect the seating arrangements in the classroom. Each box should represent a student. You may want to go into the room early to start doing this, you may be able to ask the teacher to prepare one for you.

DURING THE LESSON

1. Make sure you are seated in a position where you are able to observe when and how the teacher attends to individuals – by names, gesture, stance, facing them or not, eye contact, verbal prompts, etc.
2. For a portion of the lesson (decide yourself how much of the lesson you wish to devote to the collection of data), keep a record of every time the teacher attends: mark the appropriate box (perhaps with a dot) each time the teacher attends to a particular person.
3. As the teacher’s use of names allows you to identify the learners, name each box on your diagram.
4. As far as you are able, try to make a note (see list below) of the actual attending strategy used by the teacher. Some likely ones are listed. You may like to add others as you observe. It may help to use an abbreviation code. Sometimes strategies overlap or are combined: you may like to indicate this, for example, smile/eye contact (overlap); name + smile (combined).
5. Note on your diagram, too, whether the students are male or female and any other distinguishing characteristics, such as a difference in age, nationality.
6. You may wish to record some field notes on student response to the teacher’s attending strategies, for example, when the teacher looks at a student to discourage talking, or to encourage a response.

Seating arrangements

Attending strategies

Wu F •	M	F	Matilda F ••	M	M	F	Name (N)
M						F	Nod (↓)
M						Julio M ••••	Smile (☺)
F						F	Eye contact (☺)
F						F	Reprimanding look (⊗)
M						M	Touch (T)

AFTER THE LESSON

1. Share the data with the classroom teacher and together consider your impressions.
2. Do any patterns emerge? Were some students named or attended to more often than others?
3. Is there any 'pattern within the pattern'? For example:
 - Is the gender of the student relevant to the distribution of teacher attention?
 - Does the seating arrangement lend itself to a particular spread of teacher attention?
 - Is there a category of student that is attended to more or less than the others?
 - Do weaker or stronger students tend to 'disappear'?
 - What general conclusions can you draw about attending behaviour?
4. Focus on the use of names. Try to recall how these were used: for what purpose and to what effect? Speaking generally, what purposes can be served through the use of names? What means can teachers use to help them recall names?
5. Now consider the range of attending strategies used by the teacher. What others are possible? What comment would you make on a teacher's having a range of attending strategies? Are these conscious or subconscious behaviours in a teacher? Perhaps share the list of attending strategies noted with the classroom teacher and discuss whether these were consciously used.
6. Did you happen to notice anything about the students' own attending behaviours towards other students? How important is this? What is the teacher's role in this regard?

NEXT STEPS

What three things have you learned from this observation that you could apply to your own teaching?

TASK 2 LEARNER MOTIVATION

BACKGROUND

What motivates learners? Why do students sometimes put so much effort and energy into learning a subject, and other do not? Research shows motivation is complex, however, whatever the basis of the motivation of the learner, its level (high/low) has an impact on expected learner roles. Highly motivated

learners are more likely to synchronise their roles willingly with the teacher's role; and more likely to co-operate with the teacher in the various processes involved in classroom learning.

TASK OBJECTIVE

This task will encourage you to consider learners from the point of view of their individual motivation for learning.

PROCEDURE

BEFORE THE LESSON

1. Arrange to observe a class of learners whom you have met before.
2. Make yourself familiar with the chart below.
3. Choose a range of about five students whom you feel you now know well enough to comment on their motivation for learning. Consider their reasons for wanting to learn this particular subject or topic. Comment in the column marked Motivation whether you consider it to be high or low or otherwise make a relevant comment.

DURING THE LESSON

1. Consider these students' behaviour/role in class and the degree to which they synchronise and co-operate with the teacher. For example, consider a student's:
 - Response to the teacher;
 - Involvement in tasks;
 - Willingness to ask when uncertain;
 - Tolerance of other students, etc.
2. There is room in the far right column for any further comments. You may, for example, wish to describe the kind of the motivation.

Student's name	Motivation	Learning behaviour	Comment

AFTER THE LESSON

1. Consider the data you have collected. Comment on any linkage between Columns 2 and 3.
2. As it is easy to make assumptions, you may wish to confirm your understanding of the students' motivations by interviewing them.
3. How important is it that a teacher knows their students well enough to understand their various motivations for learning? What means/methods might a teacher deploy in order to obtain this information? Which of these strategies do you use in your own teaching situation?
4. Consider your own attempts to learn this subject. How would you define your motivation? How successful were you? To what extent do you link your success rate with your motivation? To what extent do you think your success or otherwise affected your motivation?

NEXT STEPS

In what ways will student motivation affect you when you take on a teaching role with this (or another similar) group of students?

TASK 3 THE LEARNER AS DOER

BACKGROUND

It is commonly recognised that active learning allows learning to be both more personal and more memorable and for these reasons, is more effective. Learners who are 'engaged' by the lesson – by the teacher, the materials, the tasks, the activities – are more likely to have that learning make an impact on them. Teachers, therefore, often incorporate tasks in their teaching that require learners to *do* something in the lesson, for example, with the language or with each other.

TASK OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this observation is to allow you to become sensitive to the fact that 'learning by doing' embraces a large range of activities, and to analyse these activities as being *cognitive* (thinking), *affective* (feeling) and *physical*.

PROCEDURE

BEFORE THE LESSON

1. Arrange to observe a lesson. Prepare yourself for the 'nature of doing' by considering the sorts of things that teachers typically ask students to do. For example, tasks may involve:
 - Thinking;
 - Feeling;
 - Acting;
 - Moving about;
 - Prioritising, ranking, making judgements;
 - Negotiating, interacting with others;
 - Consulting other sources of information.
2. Make yourself familiar with the chart below.

DURING THE LESSON

1. Observe the lesson from the point of view of what the learners actually do.
2. Use the chart to help you collect data from the lesson. Note down:
 - what the learners do;
 - what this involves;
 - what do you think the teacher's purpose is.
3. Add any comments in the far right column, for example, whether you would label the activity cognitive, affective, physical.

What learners do	What this involves	Teacher's purpose	Comment
<i>Grouping words according to meaning</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Referring to dictionary</i>• <i>Consulting other students</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Teach reference skills</i>• <i>Teach two layers of meaning: denotation and connotation</i>	<i>Cognitive</i>

AFTER THE LESSON

1. Together with the classroom teacher, consider the balance of cognitive, affective and physical activities involved in the lesson. Discuss your views on this.
2. Considering the data you have collected, which activities in the lesson do you consider were the most valuable for the learners? Why were they valuable?
3. While we might, as teachers, encourage active involvement in the lesson, what happens when this planned learning "style" is incongruent or incompatible with a learner's own learning "style"? To what degree should a teacher compromise their preferred teaching approach so as to cater for a learner's own preferred learning approach?

NEXT STEPS

What balance of activities does your teaching typically involve? Would you change this balance as a result of this activity?

TASK 4 LEARNER LEVEL

BACKGROUND

The assumption underlying this task is that no one class is ever completely homogenous in terms of level. Even if we might say that on the first day of the course, a class *appears* homogenous, by the end of the first week, patterns and gradations of levels will have begun to appear. The notion of level is itself a complex one, related to and influenced by other differences among learners. The more we discover about learning the more we are confronted by the diversity of contingent factors: people learn in different ways, at different rates, with different styles and exposing different strategies. There are other cases of 'anomaly' too, such as the quiet risk-avoiding, accuracy-orientated student who might *appear* to be a higher or lower level than the rowdy risk-taking student who is less concerned with making mistakes or appearing foolish.

TASK OBJECTIVE

The objective of this unit of observation is to recognise the overt signs of learner level as well as aspects of teaching that indicate that the teacher is accommodating learner level.

PROCEDURE

BEFORE THE LESSON

1. Arrange to observe a class of mixed-level students.
2. Meet with the teacher and find out some of the learners' names and their respective levels. Have the teachers tell you where they think the learners are tracking in terms of their learning achievement, for example, 1 to 5, where 1 is near the lowest in the class and 5 the highest.

DURING THE LESSON

1. Using the chart below to collect your data, look for overt evidence of the students' designated levels.
2. In the far right column, record the strategies used by the teacher to accommodate learner level.

Student	Level	Signs of level	Teacher's strategies
<i>Miguel</i>	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Non-comprehension</i>• <i>Uses first language (not much English)</i>• <i>Looks to neighbour for help</i>	<i>Re-formulates directly to learner</i>
<i>Ingrid</i>	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Response is quick and accurate</i>	<i>Uses student as a model for others</i>

AFTER THE LESSON

1. Share and discuss your findings with the teacher of the class. Talk about any students whose level appears to be different from that designated in your meeting before the lesson.
2. During the lesson, you noted the teacher's strategies in responding appropriately to the level of the student. Some obvious accommodation strategies are listed here:
 - Varying speed of delivery ;
 - Varying complexity of language;
 - Varying length of wait time;
 - Calling on stronger students for 'model' answers;
 - Pairing and grouping arrangements.

Can you add to this list?

3. Challenge is no doubt a good thing in the classroom. If all students can do an activity easily and accurately then it is very probably below the appropriate level of difficulty for this class. In order to assess whether the level of difficulty is indeed appropriate, a teacher needs to be alert to the *indicators of challenge*. Some of these are listed below. Can you add to this list?

Indicators of challenge

- Non-comprehension in facial expression
- Student wait time (= silence) before response
- First respondent does not offer the correct answer
- A learner looks sideways at a neighbour before starting writing

Some research suggests that if indicators of challenge are present in about a quarter or a third of the class, then the level of challenge is about right. Would you agree?

4. What are some of the corresponding indicators of under-challenge or ease of lesson? Some of these are listed below. Can you add to the list?

Indicators of ease

- Students get started quickly
- Plethora of responses to teacher's questions
- Expected time needed for tasks over-calculated

The question of how to group students in the classrooms is a vital one in teaching. There is of course no one answer that is always right. Much depends on the purpose of the group work. Consider the following ways of grouping students: what outcomes might be expected in each case? Can you think of sample activities for each case?

Ways of grouping levels	Expected outcomes	Sample activity
a) Group lower-achieving students together		
b) Group higher-achieving students together		
c) Mix the groups		

5. Level is only one criterion by which groups may be created. In the chart below consider other criteria, and alongside this, indicate what the expected outcome might be, and a sample activity that would be appropriate.

Criterion	Expected outcome	Appropriate activity
<i>Friendship group</i>	<i>'Noisy' interaction</i>	<i>Discussion task – topical/social/sensitive issue</i>

NEXT STEPS

Consider another class that you have observed. How aware are you of the levels within the class? How has this awareness of level impacted on your thinking about the implications for teaching?

TASK 5 THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

BACKGROUND

It is obvious that people learn best when they are relaxed, comfortable, unstressed, interested and involved in what is going on, and motivated to continue. Regrettably, there is no hard-and-fast, definitive list of what makes an environment conducive to learning. We cannot, for example, say that 'the more a teacher smiles, the more relaxed the students are' as this is absurdly simplistic.

Nonetheless, there may be a lot to be gained from developing an awareness of the affective factors that influence learning.

TASK OBJECTIVE

This observation is designed to refine your awareness of the learning environment. During the lesson you will be watching and listening for anything that you think contributes to making the learning environment one in which students learn better. Conversely, you will also become aware of factors that hinder or impede learning and detract from the effectiveness of the learning environment. Broadly, then, you are looking for factors that range from the size of the room, the seating arrangements, the acoustics, aspects of the teacher's behaviour or the classroom dynamics. You will also, for a short period during the lesson, focus on one student and note the external factors during that period that seem to shape their learning involvement. One difficulty in this task is that the very presence of 'an outsider' among the learning community will affect it in subtle, perhaps imperceptible ways. This is difficult to avoid but might be minimised by your awareness and your maintaining a very low profile.

PROCEDURE

BEFORE THE LESSON

1. Arrange to observe a lesson. Try to avoid lessons with a heavy emphasis on reading and writing as there may not be very much to observe in Step 4 below.
2. Make yourself familiar with the charts overleaf.

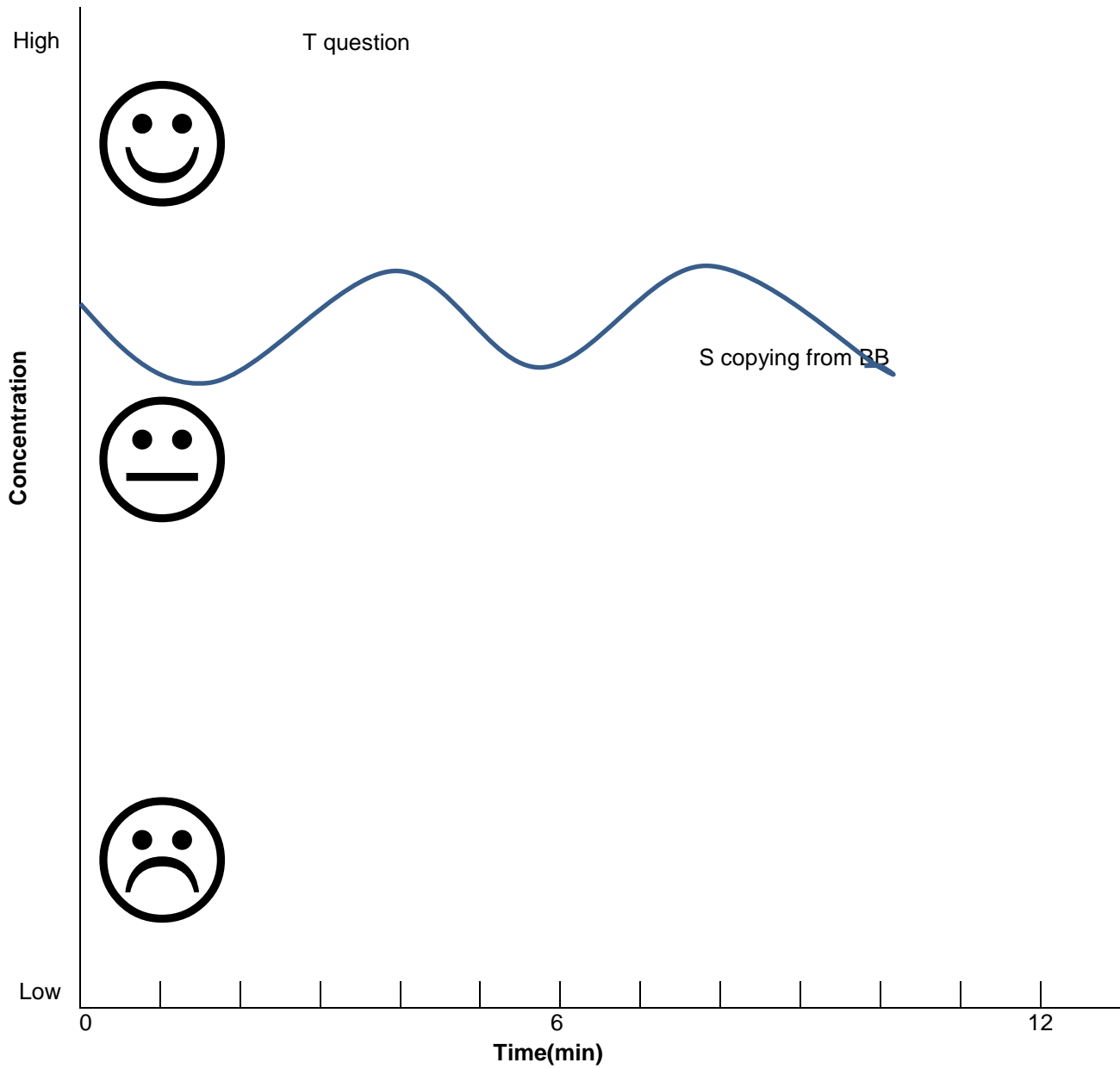
DURING THE LESSON

1. Seat yourself in a place where you have a clear view of the classroom, and yet where your presence will be as unobtrusive as possible.
2. For most of the lesson, concentrate on making yourself as aware as possible of the affective environment, the ambience in the classroom, and the various and diverse factors that are influential here. Consider factors that are external to the student, such as the acoustics or temperature of the room, the comfort or otherwise of the seating, the visual attraction of the room, the quality, tone or volume of the teacher's voice.
3. Record these below in any order, as you become aware of them. List these under *Factor/item*. The column *Memory jog* allows you space for a brief note (for example, phase of lesson, context) to record information to help you remember the detail.

Factor/item	Memory jog
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Large room, well ventilated</i> • <i>Positive T response to SS - encouraging</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Elicitation phase 7 mins into lesson</i>

4. Take about twelve minutes out of the above activity to concentrate on one student in the class. Choose someone you have a good view of but try not to make them aware of your attentions. Try to graph one student's concentration in the lesson. It is important to be aware that both internal and external factors are relevant here, but that because internal factors are unobservable, we will be gauging concentration through external evidence alone. The horizontal axis records the degree of concentration. At each point marked on the vertical axis, note what was happening to or around the student, for example: T's question, S doodling on paper, S gazing around room, S copying notes from board. In addition, you may like to use face drawings to indicate mood.

Graph of student's concentration pattern over 12 minutes



AFTER THE LESSON

1. Consider the information you have included in the column *Factor/item*. Look at the chart below and try to group factors into categories, for example: physical factors (room size, ventilation); teaching behaviour (style of positive reinforcement, eg. smile, nod).

A	B	C	D
<i>Physical factors</i>	<i>Teacher behaviour</i>		
<i>Room size</i>	<i>Smiles</i>		
<i>Ventilation</i>	<i>Nods</i>		
	<i>Calls by name</i>		

2. Comment on anything you observed that surprised or puzzled you, concerned you or inspired you. Reflecting on the overall ambience in the classroom, what general patterns or tendencies emerged? Would you venture any generalisations based on what you have uncovered here? Consider, too, the extent to which we are entitled to generalise about something internal and invisible (that is, learning) from external signs or symptoms.
3. Consider the chart where you graphed one student's concentration, and possibly mood(s), over a portion of the lesson. Comment on the external factors that seemed to affect or shape the student's concentration. What could the teacher do to enhance the learning environment?

NEXT STEPS

If you are asked to describe the sort of learning environment characteristic of the classrooms in this school, what would you say? Can you identify any conscious strategies used to generate this environment? What could be done to improve the learning environment?

TASK 6 CHECKING LEARNING

BACKGROUND

If all students learned what they were taught at the time at which it was first taught, and if all of them grasped it equally well and equally quickly, teaching would be much less complex than it is. In fact, of course, learners do not always learn what the teacher sets out to teach – sometimes they learn less and sometimes other (more valuable?) things! Nor do they all learn in the same way or at the same rate. In fact, little about the elements is predictable or generalizable across a class of learners. It is the reason that teachers develop strategies for checking that learning is taking place or has taken place.

TASK OBJECTIVE

This observation task is designed to help you monitor learning by monitoring a teacher's monitoring of learning. You will be looking at the language used in monitoring learning and analysing what each learning check achieves.

PROCEDURE

BEFORE THE LESSON

1. Arrange to observe a lesson, preferably one that will involve the presentation of a new topic or material .
2. Pay attention to the stated learning outcome of the lesson.
3. Make yourself familiar with the chart opposite and the particular items you will be attending to.

DURING THE LESSON

1. Use the chart below to help you track how the teacher monitors learners' understanding. Collect about five instances of teacher checking.
2. Script the teacher's language (including any non-verbal signals) used to check learning. In each case, what is the teacher checking?
3. Can you identify the trigger that prompted the teacher to check, for example, a student appearing confused; a necessary logical step in the lesson; repeated and similar errors by a number of students?
4. How does the student respond to the check?
5. What, if any, follow-up happens?
6. What did the learning check achieve?
7. Try also to be aware of times in the lesson when the teacher did not check for learning, but you would have; or where the teacher did, but you would not have.

1	2	3	4	5	6
How does the teacher check?	What does the teacher check?	Why does teacher check?	How does student respond?	What follow-up is there?	What did the learning check achieve?
<i>'Is a whale a fish?'</i>	<i>Do students know what class of animal a whale belongs to ?</i>	<i>To establish difference in concept between fish vs. mammal</i>	<i>'No, it isn't.'</i>	<i>T confirms ('That's right') checks another S</i>	<i>Establishes + confirms meaning, leads on to next phase of lesson; but learner could be guessing. Better if teacher asks student how they know it isn't a fish</i>

AFTER THE LESSON

1. Share the collected data with the teacher and discuss the checking process as seen from the teacher's point of view.
2. Reflect on the last column – what did the learning check achieve? Add any relevant information to your grid.
3. Looking over the five instances of checking that you collected, is it possible to do any of the following: Label them? Group them according to any similarities? Rank them, indicating your criterion? Is it possible to say that questions that check for learning tend to be of a particular type? If you agree, try to describe in greater detail the type of question.
4. Generally, was there a neat link between the purpose for the check (Column 3) and the results of the check (Column 6)? If not, what factors are relevant here?
5. Were there times in the lesson when *you* would have checked learning but where the teacher did not? (Or where you would not have, but the teacher did?) Think about *what* and *why* you would have checked and how that varied from what happened in the lesson. Perhaps discuss these points with the teacher.
6. Consider again the stated learning outcome of the lesson you observed. Was it achieved? How do you know? Did the learning checks in any way seem to propel the lesson onwards towards its objective? Did the monitoring of learning in the lesson have any connection with the reaching of or failure to reach the lesson's outcome?
7. Learning involves processing information and appraising new information in the light of previous understanding. What evidence did you notice through the lesson of the learners' processing meaning, for example, the meaning of new concepts or vocabulary? To what extent, in the lesson you observed, did the monitoring of learning allow the teacher 'to tap into the student's head' and guess at the state of the processing of meaning?
8. Have you any comment to make on how monitoring of learning might influence the sorts of decisions that a teacher makes in the classroom?

NEXT STEPS

In regard to how this observation has raised your awareness, comment on the experience by deciding which of the following applies:

- In this lesson I found what I already knew, and have now confirmed it;
- In this lesson I found what I suspected but had never thoughtfully considered;
- In this lesson I found what I had not considered before;
- In this lesson I found what I would like to pursue further.

TASK 7 PRESENTING NEW MATERIAL

BACKGROUND

In recent years a lot of attention has been given to the varying roles of a teacher. Increasing emphasis has been placed on the less obtrusive roles such as monitoring and facilitating learning. Nevertheless, even with an increased focus on student learning rather than teacher talking, the skill of presenting remains a key one in the repertoire of a teacher.

TASK OBJECTIVE

The objective of this task is to raise awareness of the key components of a successful presentation.

PROCEDURE

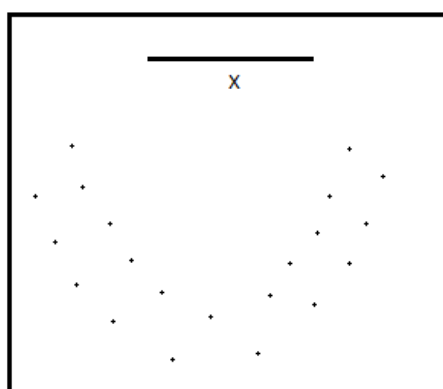
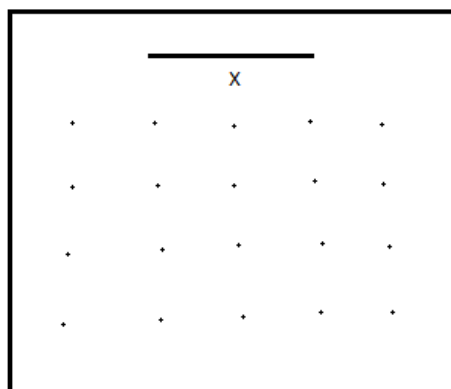
BEFORE THE LESSON

1. This task involves you watching the presentation phase of a lesson. It may be of value to watch this in a number of different lessons
2. Make yourself familiar with the chart and diagram below.

DURING THE LESSON

1. During the lesson, record what happens by completing the chart below, using a new chart for each lesson. Record the chronological events in terms of what the teacher does and what the students do.
2. You may like to keep a record of the teacher movement in or around the classroom. A convenient way of doing this is to make a diagram of the classroom, and note the teacher's position with a cross.

What teacher does	What learners do
Greet/chat with SS Warm SS up by reminding them of yesterday's lesson	Greet/respond to T Recall yesterday's lesson



AFTER THE LESSON

1. Using the data you have collected and your awareness of the effectiveness of the various parts of a presentation, prepare a list of the key components of a presentation. Discuss your list, along with your data of the lesson, with the teacher.

2. Consider your list of the various key components of a presentation, identify what you believe to be the purpose of each.
3. One key element of the presentation phase is the use of the teacher's voice, including appropriate audibility, projection, speed, and clarity. Another element of the presentation phase is the physical position of the teacher in the classroom. Consider now the notes you took regarding teacher voice and position. What comments can you make about teacher voice, position and movement?
4. Consider the presentation(s) you have observed in terms of the actual material presented. What context was used to embed the new material? How 'natural' do you consider the context to have been? Did the context 'naturally' generate the need for the new material? Did it foster a learning link between old and new schemata?
5. Now consider the presentation mode used by the teacher to present the new material. For example, was it presented just orally, or visually in written form, or a mix of modes? Consider the relationship between presentation mode and the material? To what extent was the mode appropriate to the material being presented? How could the presentation been improved?

NEXT STEPS

What comments can you make about your own presentation style and procedure? How did you acquire this style and procedure? How might you improve or refine them?

TASK 8 COMPARING LEARNING AND TEACHING

BACKGROUND

It has long been known that teaching does not equal learning – that what a teacher goes into a classroom to teach may not match what the learner perceives the lesson to be about or what learning is achieved on the part of the learner. This is because the construction of meaning is an essentially individual experience, 'each lesson is a different lesson for every learner'. We will be examining how a teaching plan appears to be realised in learning terms in the minds of learners.

The difficulty in this type of task, as in many aspects of observing learning, is that learning itself is not directly visible. Teaching aims, for example, should not be confused with learning outcomes, as these will vary according, in part, to how the learner acts on the input. We therefore must guard against making simplistic equations or drawing conclusions about learning based only on observable data. With these reservations in mind, we might proceed to consider how learning appears to be happening for some learners.

TASK OBJECTIVE

In this task you will collaborate with another observer to compare the learning contributions made by different learners in order to see how the same teaching seems to translate for different learners.

PROCEDURE

This task can be conducted in one of two ways:

- a) You may tape-record the interaction of one pair working on a task set as part of a lesson. The transcribed interaction then becomes the subject of scrutiny.
- b) You may observe a lesson, along with a colleague, and each of you will concentrate on a different learner within the same group, and later compare your notes.

If you choose to conduct a live observation, follow the instructions for *During the lesson* overleaf. If on the other hand you use a transcription, apply the same instructions to the transcription.

BEFORE THE LESSON

1. Arrange to observe or tape-record a lesson.

2. Make yourself familiar with the lesson plan, the teaching aims, and with the procedure outlined below.

DURING THE LESSON

During the paired task, each observer should focus on one of the pair (X or Y). Take notes on the interaction, follow these guidelines:

- What does X (or Y) do?
- What does X (or Y) seem to want to learn?
- What, in your opinion, might X (or Y) have learned from this lesson?

AFTER THE LESSON

1. Compare your respective analyses of X and Y. Use these questions to guide you:
 - How do you compare?
 - How different was this experience for each of them?
 - What difference does each make to the experience of the other?
 - What difference does the teacher make?
 - To what extent is your analysis comprised by the subjectivity of the observation process?
2. Learning involves a processing – via construction and reconstruction – of meaning that is personally significant and relevant to the learner. Re-appraising old information to bring it in line with new is what constitutes learning. What evidence did you find of this type of processing in your observation and analysis of the students in this lesson?
3. Many teacher-created lesson plans, whether they be rigid or flexible, tend to overlook the ‘reality’ of what students bring to the classroom. What are some of the things that students bring to the classroom that will affect the course of their learning?
4. If each lesson is a different lesson for every learner, how can a teacher plan to accommodate and cater for a class of students? What are the implications for the mismatch between teaching/ learning for: Teacher preparation of lessons? Teacher decision-making in the classroom? Curriculum planning?
5. If you were able to ask the students at the end of the lesson what they thought they had learned, what do you think some of the responses might be? To what extent does this align with the stated objectives of the lesson? In regard to this, you may like to observe another lesson and, with the teacher’s permission, follow it up with a survey of individual students to see what they think the lesson was aiming to do.