

A Workshop on the 'What' and 'How' to observe an English lesson to bring student learning

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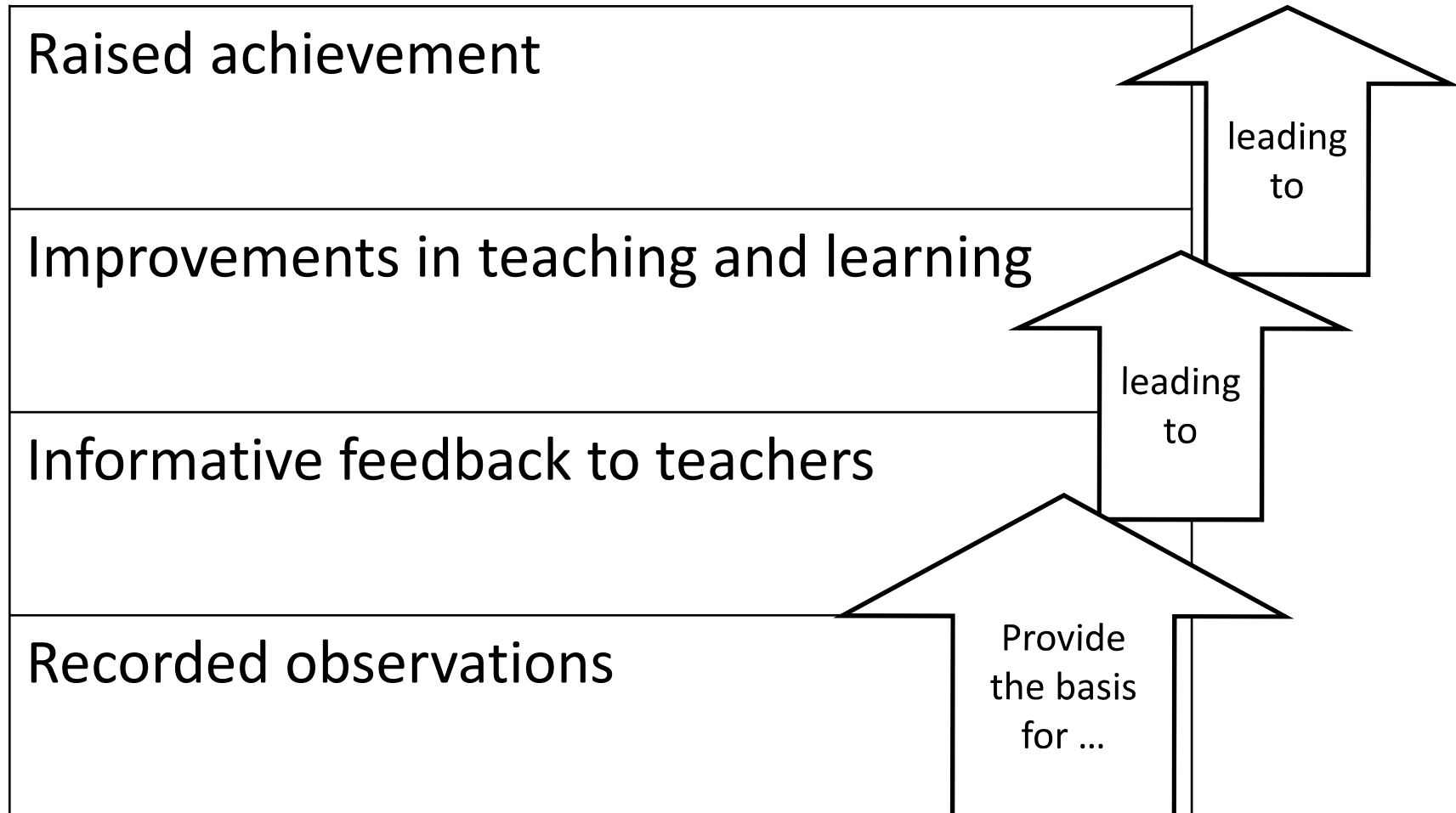
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Assumptions of the observer ...



What matters in student learning?

- **supervisor – peer**
- **accountability & quality – development & improvement**
- **remediation work (repair) - reflection**

Functions of a lesson observation

- ✓ For appraisal (by Principals or Function Heads)
- ✓ For mentoring (for new teachers or support)
- ✓ **For diagnosis (teacher initiated for self-evaluation or peer)**
- ✓ For quality assurance / review (by inspectors / reviewers)
- ✓ For research (try out projects of innovative strategies)

Taking a developmental approach in classroom observations

- **teacher-initiated** with a focus on development
- descriptive and **non-judgemental**
- gather **information about teaching** (may challenge our common beliefs)
- learn **what happens in the classroom**

Lesson segments enacted on the spot

What will I do to engage students in the learning process?

Lesson segments addressing content

help students learn new knowledge

help students practise and deepen their understanding

help students generate and transfer new knowledge

What will I do to recognize and acknowledge adherence to pedagogical content?

What will I do to communicate high expectations for students?

What will I do to establish and maintain effective communication with students?

Some beliefs of a lesson being observed?

- learning is an input-output system?
- learning has uniform procedures?
- mistakes must not be seen in a lesson?
- there are absolute indicators for good lessons?

Possible problems of a polished lesson

- avoid experimentation
- adopt perceived ‘tried-and-tested’, correct and authority-approved teaching approach
- give observers what they want or what the teacher thinks they want
- go back to a default teaching style when unobserved

Aspect / Area	Performance Indicator
Organisation of learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ pre-requisites for learning are taken care of ✚ preparation with inspiring elements ✚ substantial learning content is meticulously prepared
Teaching strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ balance between teacher-led and student-centred activities ✚ logical linkage between different learning activities ✚ effective communication skills e.g. paralinguistic features, gestures, judicious use of mother-tongue, if necessary
Learning environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ positive and purposeful atmosphere ✚ students on task ✚ language-rich resources available and well-used
Learning process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ equal opportunities for student participation ✚ an awareness of using English for communication ✚ confidence in learning e.g. participate in learning activities, enjoy reading, respond to questioning ✚ demonstrate sensitivity towards language use
Classroom interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ flexible use of pair work and group work ✚ use appropriate expression to converse about feelings and ideas ✚ express opinions and present information ✚ clarify information and seek correction ✚ work cooperatively with peers
Questioning techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ ask a range of questions to check understanding, e.g. from close-ended to open-ended, from easy to difficult ✚ give prompts and rephrase questions to help students think ✚ give appropriate wait time, if possible
Feedback and follow up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ assess students' understanding to find out how to move them on through student feedback ✚ recap learning content and revisit difficult area

A teacher's classroom practices are the composite of a multitude of elements relating to the teacher's knowledge, skills and personality.

(Gabrielators, 2002)

Key principles for post-observation discussion

- be frank, sincere and **empathetic**
- be positive and **respectful**
- communicate effectively
- be critical to **identify problems** observed
- inspire **reflective thinking**
- conclude with **complimentary remarks**

S M A R T



Reference materials

- ELT resources (EDB publications)
 - English KLA Curriculum Guide (2004)
 - Vocabulary Handbook (2009)
 - Reference papers on lesson observation
- Guidelines for lesson observations
- Sample lesson observation forms captured from Internet - generic / specific / checklist / peer mentoring / inspection