

Assignment 3 – Interview of the Teacher in Pre-Prac Classroom Observed

Due date: October 18 (please that this is one week later than the syllabus indicates!)

Can be handed in on paper at the beginning of class, or emailed as a Word document attachment prior to class. Please see late policy in syllabus.

Assignment

Find a teacher in an urban classroom at the teaching level (i.e., middle or high school) and subject in which you are seeking initial licensure (if not in your area, seek permission from me first). Observe at least one hour of that teacher teaching in his/her classroom.

What to look for during the observation(s)

Look for evidence of the teacher using formative feedback while teaching. Following the reading assignment from Black et al,¹ look for actions by the teacher in the following four areas explicated in the reading assignment (examples of each are provided below, but these should not be taken to be all inclusive). When you see these things happening during your observation(s), write down some notes about it to help you when you interview the teacher about it.

Areas of formative practice	Some examples from the reading assignment of what teacher might do
• Questioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Wait time- Reflecting questions back to students- Using “big questions”
• Feedback through marking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Referring during the lesson to areas where students did well on an assignment, or difficulties that the teacher learned about through marking papers- Having students use graded homework or tests during class as part of the lesson- Creating opportunities for students to talk about what they didn’t understand in some assigned work that the teacher returned
• Peer- and self-assessment by students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Structured peer- or self-assessment activities designed by the teacher as part of the lesson- Teacher explicitly sharing learning goals with students and/or inviting students to contribute learning goals- Guiding student behavior, and particularly interactions, to be productive during group work
• Formative use of summative tests	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Having students revise work during class, based on feedback the teacher provided on tests or papers students wrote- Having students invent their own exam questions and then answer them- Sharing results of an item analysis done by the teacher on exams students took recently

¹ Chapter 4, “Putting the ideas into practice” in Black, P., Harrison, C., Lee, C., Marshall, B. & Wiliam, D. (2003), Assessment for Learning. Maidenhead, England: Open University Press.

What to interview the teacher about

Explain to the teacher that you would like to interview her/him about some formative feedback strategies you saw her/him using during the lesson. The interview will probably take 30 minutes. Schedule a time to interview the teacher that is not too long after the lesson is over (the same day or the next day would be ideal). Select two or three instances of evidence of the teacher using formative feedback during the observation(s). For each instance, follow the following protocol during the interview. You do not need to tape the interview, but you may if you wish (just be sure to ask the teacher for permission first). You definitely do need to take notes during the interview.

1. Describe for the teacher from your notes and memory what you saw the teacher doing. Focus on what the teacher was doing, not what the students were doing.
2. Ask the teacher, "Why did you choose to do this during your lesson?"
3. Listen and practice wait time. Try to steer the teacher toward explaining to you what factors went into choosing to do a certain activity, or doing it a certain way.
4. Then, if the teacher has not already answered this question, ask, "What did you want the students to get out of this activity?"

Interview tips: It is often helpful to repeat back to an interview subject what you think you have just understood. This gives the interview subject the opportunity to clarify, modify or add to his/her answer. In interviewing it is very important to be listening only, and not offering what comes to your mind as you are listening. In this way, an interview is not a conversation engaged in equally by both people.

What to turn in as your assignment in EDC-G460/660

For each of the instances of formative feedback that you interviewed the teacher about, provide the following information in the paper you turn in to me:

1. Briefly describe the instance of formative feedback, in a similar way to how you recounted it to the teacher, but you will probably need to provide me with more context since I wasn't there.
2. Briefly summarize the teacher's response to your interview questions about this instance of formative feedback.
3. Write a brief reflection of something you learned from this instance of formative feedback. For example, it can be that you learned an instructional technique you hadn't thought of before, that you realized some clever ways to think about this kind of formative feedback, or that you learned you do not want to do something that you saw the teacher doing (be careful to be respectful).

I am expecting this assignment will probably be 3-5 pages of writing, but this is just an estimate. Write respectfully, in such a way that you would feel comfortable sharing your paper with the teacher you observed.

A note on formatting (my idiosyncrasies)

Do not use a cover page. Your paper can be single- or double-spaced, however you prefer. Please do not use a font size smaller than 10 point size, and please do not use Comic Sans font. If you refer to anything you learned from the reading assignment, or other written source, you should cite it in some reasonable manner.

Criteria for evaluation

These will be discussed when we meet in class and we will determine a breakdown/rubric by consensus. Possible criteria to consider include:

- Paper has all components required
- Demonstrates an understanding of the reading assignment
- Evidence of critical thinking in the reflections
- Clarity

Please contribute your own criteria to the class discussion.