

# Enhancing Classroom Observations with Knowledge about Effective Teaching Practices for ELLs

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Using Observational and Student Achievement Data to Improve Teaching

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January 10, 2014

# Overview

1. A bit of background on classroom observation instruments
2. Essential knowledge
3. Four key practices

# Classroom Observations

- Classroom observations have been used in research to examine the ways in which interactions among teachers and students promote achievement

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(e.g., Good & Brophy, 1969; Good & Grouws, 1975; Simon & Boyer, 1968)
- “The study of teacher effectiveness must assume different kinds of effectiveness for different kinds of teachers, pupils, programs or situations”  
(see Mitzel & Gross, 1958, p. 206)

# Classroom Observations

Once tools limited to informing educational research, classroom observation instruments are now used to enhance accountability measures

# Classroom Observations

- According to Pianta and Hamre (2009):

*Systematic classroom observation systems provide a standard way of measuring and noting teachers' strengths and weaknesses (p. 110)*

# Norms

- When **standardizing** any instrument, considering the **norming sample** is imperative
  - Was the norming sample nationally representative?
  - Was it representative of the students or teachers in question?
- Necessary to **draw conclusions** about the status of students relative to a particular group of students

# Norms

- Widely used classroom observation measures
  - the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) *Pianta, LaParo, & Hamre, 2008*
  - the Framework for Teaching (FFT) *Danielson, 2011*

# MET Project

- Evidence that some of the most commonly used evaluation instruments, which attempt to capture “quality teaching” generally **overlap substantially with each other**

<b>CLASS</b>  <i>Cross subject</i>	<i>Emotional Support</i>				<i>Classroom Organization</i>		
	Positive climate	Negative climate	Teacher sensitivity	Regard for student perspectives	Behavior management	Productivity	Instructional learning formats
	<i>Instructional Support</i>				<i>Student Engagement</i>		
	Quality of feedback	Content understanding	Analysis and problem solving	Instructional dialogue	Student Engagement		
<b>Framework for Teaching</b>  <i>Cross subject</i>	<i>Classroom Environment</i>						
	Creating an environment of respect and rapport		Establishing a culture of learning		Managing classroom procedures		Managing student behavior
	<i>Instruction</i>						
	Communicating with students		Using questioning and discussion techniques		Engaging students in learning		Using assessments in instruction

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# MET Project

- Evidence that some of the most commonly used evaluation instruments, which attempt to capture “quality teaching” generally overlap substantially with each other **and with language arts-based instruments**

# Norms

- Central challenge in evaluating teachers' contributions to ELLs' learning is that achievement reflects two, confounded, factors:
  - Content knowledge *and*
  - English proficiency

# MET Project

- Evidence that some of the most commonly used evaluation instruments, which attempt to capture “quality teaching” generally overlap substantially with each other and with language arts-based instruments
- but not very well with mathematics-specific observation instruments

# Norms

- **... and lack sufficient evidence supporting their use with ELLs**

# Norms

- An exhaustive review of other classroom observation instruments used in funded studies has found that *none* provide information on norms for ELLs

*Boller, Atkins-Burnett, Malone, Baxter & West, 2010*

Instrument Name	CQ	Grade/Age Range	Assessment Type	Initial Material Cost <sup>a</sup>	Reliability <sup>b</sup>	Validity <sup>c</sup>	Norming Sample <sup>a</sup>
Authentic Instructional Practices Classroom Observation Form	X	K–Grade 12	O	1	3	A	1
CIERA classroom observation scheme for classroom literacy instruction	X	K–Grade 6	O	TBD	3	A	1
Classroom Characteristics (CC) form (Math Curricula) <sup>d</sup>	X	Grades 1–3	O	n.a.	1	NA	n.a.
Diagnostic Classroom Observation Tool (DCO, formerly VCOT)	X	K–Grade 12	O	1	3	A	1
Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised Edition(ECERS-R)	X	2.5–5 years	O, R	1	3	A	1
Early Reading Professional Development (PD) Classroom Observation		Grade 2	O	TBD	3	A	1
Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised Edition (ITERS-R)	X	0–30 months	O, R	1	3	A	1
Reformed Teaching Observation Protocol (RTOP)		K–Graduate programs	O	1	3	A	1
School Observation Measure (SOM)	X	K–Grade 12	O	1	3	A	1
Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP)	X	K–Grade 12	O	1	3	A	1
Teacher questionnaire of attitudes and behaviors (Formative Assessment REL-Midwest) <sup>d</sup>		Grades 4–5	R	n.a.	1	NA	n.a.
Teacher questionnaire of classroom quality and instructional practices (Different Routes to Certification) <sup>d</sup>	X	K–Grade 5	R	n.a.	1	NA	n.a.

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  - FFT “has not been modified to ensure that teachers are using best practices with ELLs, which in some cases **differ from or are additional to practices** used with English proficient students” (*August, Garcia-Arena, Myrtle, 2013*)

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“Students whose first language is not English, as well as students with other special needs, must be considered when a teacher is planning lessons and identifying resources to ensure that all students will be able to learn”
- CLASS (*Vitiello, 2013*):  
“...the CLASS measure does not specifically assess...teaching strategies specific to dual language learners”

- Observation tools generally exclude ELLs in validation
- “Good teaching” in general is insufficient for ELLs who must acquire English proficiency and content simultaneously

# Evaluating Teachers of ELLs

- Evaluation systems should:
  - Reflect high-quality instructional standards (CCSS) that apply to **all teachers**
  - Reflect the special knowledge and skills teachers require to **effectively teach ELLs**

# Caveat

## Legal requirements for all SEI programs:

- -ELL students shall be educated through Structured English Immersion (SEI). (15-752)
- -The period of SEI instruction is temporary - not normally intended to exceed one year. (15-752)
- **-Students with a similar degree of fluency shall be grouped together. (15-752)**
- -Students in their first year classified as an ELL shall receive four hours of ELD daily. (15-756.01)
- -Entry and exit from the program is based on AZELLA score. (15-756)
- --Children shall be placed in English language classrooms. (15-752)
- **-All children taught in English using English materials. (15-751, 15-752)**
- Once ELL students have achieved English language fluency they shall be transferred to an English language mainstream classroom. (15-752)

What special knowledge and skills do  
teachers require to effectively teach  
ELLs?

# Specialized Knowledge

1. How L2 language and literacy develops
2. How to use formative information to drive instruction

# Enhancing Observations

1. ELLs engage in discipline-specific practices designed to build **conceptual understanding** and **language competence**

# Content-Based English Development

Teachers engage “students in purposeful activities, ensure that students experience multiple examples of language in use, and call students’ attention to the ways in which language is used to communicate meaning”

*Quinn, Lee, Valdés, 2012, p. 7*

# Content-Based English Development

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# Content-Based English Development

## Content *and* Language objectives

<b>Verbs for Content Objectives</b>	<b>Verbs for Language Objectives</b>
Identify	Listen for
Solve	Retell
Investigate	Define
Distinguish	Find the main idea
Hypothesize	Compare
Create	Summarize
Select	Rehearse
Draw conclusions about	Persuade
	Write

*Echevarria & Short, 2004; National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, 2012*

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Teachers provide multiple, meaningful (i.e., content-based), and extended opportunities for all students to:

- **produce complex texts** to develop and use academic language

# Content-Based English Development

Teachers provide multiple, meaningful (i.e., content-based), and extended opportunities for all students to:

- analyze how a text's organizational features, syntax, and word choice combine to create meaning and build disciplinary language, thinking, and comprehension

2. Instruction for ELLs is rigorous, grade-level appropriate, and **provides deliberate and appropriate scaffolds**

# Scaffold for ELLs

Scaffolding as moving from macro to micro:

1. Planned curriculum progression over time
2. The procedures used in a particular activity
3. The collaborative process of interaction

# Scaffolds for ELLs

## Teachers

- **amplify** rather than simplify
- consider and **expand** what students bring to classroom

# Scaffolds for ELLs

- **Message abundancy**
  - Synonyms
  - Paraphrasing

*“You can use your native language to write your letters, but there is a caveat... a stipulation...there is something you have to do. You need to summarize your ideas in a paragraph in English.” (DeFazio, 2001)*

# Scaffolds for ELLs

- **Modeling:** clear examples of what is requested of students for imitation

*“In my chemistry class I can always do well because the teacher first demonstrates an experiment, and then we try a similar one. Then he asks us to write down the procedure and the conclusions in groups of two or four. I can do it. I can even use the new words because I know what they mean.” (Walqui, 2000, p. 94)*

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- Templates
- Sample work

# Scaffolds for ELLs

- **Contextualizing:** embedding academic terms in a sensory context

*“I couldn’t make any sense of what happened in the Middle Ages and the lives people led. I could understand ‘castle’ and imagined a beautiful castle in my dreams. When the teacher showed us a four-minute clip of an old film, it all clicked, and I could make sense of all those other words- knights and vassals and all that.” (Walqui, 2000, p. 94)*

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- **Schema building:** building onto pre-existing knowledge
  - vocabulary previews
  - adapted texts
  - visual aids
  - glossaries

3. Teachers foster academic interactions by equipping ELLs with the **strategies necessary to comprehend and use language** in a variety of academic settings

# Explicit Strategies for Language Use

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  - Strategies for using their still-developing English language proficiency to engage in different communicative modes (e.g., prompts)
  - Explicit teaching of metacognition (e.g., questions to monitor understanding)

## **4. Instruction leverages ELLs' cultural assets and prior knowledge**

# Home Culture Connections

Teachers

*Quinn, Lee, Valdés, 2012*

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- use cultural artifacts and community resources in ways that are academically and culturally meaningful
- design instruction in a way that allows *them* to learn about students and their families
- connect students lives to the instruction in school

# Four Principles

1. Language and content building
2. Planned scaffolding to access rigorous content
3. Explicit teaching of strategies to comprehend and use language in a variety of academic settings
4. Students' culture integrated into instruction

Questions?

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