



REFLECTION TOOLS FOR TEACHER QUALITY

Title

REFLECTION THROUGH OBSERVATION – Meeting diverse needs

Goal

Every teacher faces the challenge of meeting the needs of students with different abilities, whatever the age of the children. This tool raises aspects of and dilemmas arising in differentiation.

Target group

This tool can be used with teachers and student teachers, both in pre-service and in-service education.

The group involved should have a minimum of 6 participants.

Summary/description

These clips illustrate a range of data from pupils in two differing ability groups in a class of 5 and 6 year olds and their teacher.

There is a focus on two elements; a) differentiation and b) groups and group work.

The task of providing for the diverse needs of a wide range of pupils is an immense challenge, often met in primary schools through group work. This clip provides a lot of information about this teacher's approach; she is seen dealing with the two groups in detail. The focus is on teacher approaches and strategies rather than on how the children in the groups are working together.

The activities aim to:

- develop awareness of a range of issues concerning differentiation
- promote analysis of how planning for meeting a range of needs can be improved
- appreciate the importance of questions and explanation in promoting and supporting learning
- enable teachers to develop their own planning for meeting a variety of needs within the same class



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Methodology

With reference to the above provisos, the clip can be viewed in one sitting, it is advisable to allocate logging tasks around the group and where this is a new experience to do a short 'trial' before the serious logging begins.

Multi-use is made of data gathered but you, or the group may wish to watch some or all of the clips again at various points.

You may wish to combine the first two items if desirable.

A working time of at least 30 minutes is suggested for individual items but they are all fairly open-ended,

Activity 4 in particular will need more time.

If you are following most of the Activities in the tool you will need a plenary session to draw all the learning points together before moving on from the tool.

The discussions in these should focus on the major objectives of the individual exercises but also seek to promote reflection on what other aspects of good and/or improvable practice and learning opportunities are visible within the happenings in the clip.

Specific suggestions about the use of the tool and the individual activities are given in the worksheets.

It would be particularly beneficial to have groups across nationalities and if relevant age groups taught.

There are 5 exercises, to gain maximum impact all 5 should be done

1. Mapping evidence
2. Matching needs
3. Learning intentions
4. Questions and responses

The clip also lends itself to a variety of other observational learning opportunities that the facilitator or group may wish to suggest.

The outcomes should provide the participants with a range of possible strategies and actions to promote differentiation of approach, language, materials, support tactics in learning and teaching. At the same time it allows reflection on the participants' own practice, values and attitudes towards providing for the diverse needs of children. It also highlights their own professional development needs in achieving improved teaching quality.



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Variations

See above.

The basic practices, attitudes and values arising in this clip of teaching and learning could also be applied to:

- different age groups
- other curriculum subjects

An example in a secondary classroom would give scope for comparison and a further opportunity to identify generic issues in facilitating differentiation

Background/resources

The following materials would provide background information and practical examples of achieving differentiation in classrooms

Wragg E. (1999). *Classroom Observation 2nd edition*. London: Routledge. (isbn 0-415-19440-7)

Bearne, E. (2002). *Differentiation and diversity in the primary school* (reprinted 2002). London, Taylor & Francis. (Isbn 0-415-13198-7)

Gregory, G. & Kuzmich, L. (2004). *Data Driven Differentiation in the Standards-Based Classroom*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin. (isbn 9780761931584)

Pyryt, M. & Bosetti, B. Accommodating gifted learners in regular classrooms. In: Smith, E. (ed) (2005). *Including the gifted and talented: making inclusion work for more gifted and able learners*. London, Routledge. (Isbn 978-0-415-36110-1)

Conditions

Materials

DVD with classroom fragments and dvd player

- The clip used is a mathematics session. The teacher and her class of five and six year olds are involved in three tasks on shapes.
- It focuses on two contrasting groups and the teacher explains her approaches to them.



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NB. Permission has been given to use this video material for Educational purposes provided they are acknowledged (as in the worksheets) and images of children and classrooms are limited to DVD transmission not freely available on the web.

The DVD can be ordered by sending an e-mail to M.Snoek@hva.nl.

Depending on the time available and the needs of a particular study group, sections of the clip could be selected and explored in greater depth. Specific attention could be given to language used, non-verbal triggers, materials, gender, involve the participants own classroom anecdotes etc. dependent on individual requirements.

Strength and weaknesses

Strengths:

Many teachers still work in isolation. They are not familiar with even their school colleagues' classrooms.

The clip provides a window into an actual school and classroom in a different educational context for most of the participants

The observation focuses on real issues in a real classroom during an actual lesson.

The teacher verbalizes her intentions and reflects on aspects of learning and expectations.

Examples of differentiation are given.

Children are shown and verbalise during the learning process.

The importance of both verbal and non-verbal interactions is illustrated

Weaknesses:

Only one age group is shown.

The participants may find it difficult not to concentrate on aspects of failure – either on the part of the teacher or the pupil, rather than using, for example, a child's not grasping the learning objective as an opportunity to look for reasons and alternatives. It is the facilitator's role to guard against this.

A defeatist attitude of 'the conditions are not right in my classroom/school/with my pupils to do things like that' could prevail.

The amount of in-depth reflection and possibilities for professional development taking place, hinges on the quality of discussion and elaboration of reflective questions, themselves dependent upon the co-operation of the group and the skill of the facilitator.



Improving Teaching Quality (ITQ) Reflection through Observation Step-by-step guidelines



Tool 3	Meeting diverse needs
A variety of Needs	Every child is an individual: meeting diverse needs
	What you can do



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Introduction

This tool looks at a challenge that faces every teacher, whatever the age of the children: that of differentiation.

Children have different needs and learn in different ways and at different rates. Classes often span the whole ability range.

Teachers need to plan their lessons to cater for differing targets and often varied grouping strategies to meet these needs.

These clips illustrate a range of data from pupils in two differing ability groups in a class of 5 and 6 year olds and their teacher. There is a focus on two elements; a) differentiation and b) groups and group work.

The task of providing for the diverse needs of a wide range of pupils is an immense challenge, often met in primary schools through group work. This clip provides a lot of information about this teacher's approach; she is seen dealing with the two groups in detail. The focus is on teacher approaches and strategies rather than on how the children in the groups are working together.

The activities aim to:

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Guidance for Facilitators

General points

You are strongly urged to make yourself familiar with the clips and the exercises before you begin work with a group. Timings may be given but you will have your own views on likely variations that influence your planning, particularly when you grow more familiar with the members of the group. If you don't like the phrasing of some of the questions then change or add to it, but be sure to retain the learning-objectives of the activity. Thought should also be given to the use of the working space, comfort and visibility, small-group work areas etc and to the phrasing of the items, allowing natural breaks etc. Try also to ensure the hardware is working properly and is well placed! Remember there is little benefit in watching a clip without doing follow up work. You may identify items other than



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those addressed in the suggested activities. Feel free to develop further activities of your own both on the focus/learning objectives given, or any other learning issues you or your group feel the clip illustrates. Indeed that could be an extension item applicable to all the Tools.

Before starting on any of the tools in the tool-box, please stress that these activities are not inviting you to criticize these teachers, who are all volunteers, selected for their dedication and willingness to co-operate in benefiting others in the development of teaching skills. None of the material is role-play, it is all real. They are not offered as examples of 'best practice'. What they say and do is however often analysed within the activities. As a learning group try not to come to verdicts or judgments about them. They, like you, are practitioners with strengths and weaknesses, so don't rush to conclusions such as 'I don't like that', 'I couldn't work with them'. They will stop you from learning some valuable and important about your own teaching. You are advised to share your own version of this warning before starting each Activity. There is also the aspect of the group members' own vulnerability to possible approbation or isolation within the working group. These exercises involve rigorous analysis of individual teaching styles and strategies, referring directly to members' own strengths and weaknesses. Facilitators should be very sensitive to the feelings of others in this respect while creating opportunities for co-operative growth which need not threaten individuals.

Most activities will require the group members to copy or construct data gathering formats for their observations. The activities will require work in individual, small group and larger group formats. Make sure ample opportunity is given to use and develop data/perceptions gathered during each session.

In some cases follow-up/extension activities may be suggested. However please use this opportunity to create reflection in the most profitable manner for the needs, experience and contexts of the particular group you are facilitating.

European perspective points

If activities or sections of an activity are done in small multi-country groups then a shared or plenary session is necessary to take advantage of the wide range of experience and cultural and contextual difference within the group. In some instances this will be included in one of more items in the activity. In any case please create opportunities where and when appropriate.



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Points for this activity

The clip can be viewed in one sitting. However, it is advisable to allocate logging tasks around the group and, in cases where this is a new experience, to do a short 'trial' before the serious logging begins. Multi-use is made of data gathered but you, or the group may wish to watch some or all of the clip at various points. You may wish to combine the first two items if desirable. A working time of 30 minutes is suggested for individual items but they are all fairly open-ended (Activity 4 in particular will need more time). If you are following most of the Activities in the tool you will need a plenary session to draw all the learning points together before moving on from the tool.

Clips

This is a mathematics session. The teacher and her class of five and six year olds are involved in three tasks on shapes. It focuses on two contrasting groups and the teacher explaining her approaches to them.

Activity One

What to do before you start

There are two maps to complete, one about children's needs, the other about what the teacher does i.e. the provision to meet those needs. Before you begin, look to see what information you are asked to look for. In each map there are three categories, two categories referring to the two separate groups and one common strategy. To get a wide range of examples, divide the categories to be looked for, amongst the group who are watching. Don't be concerned about the 'common strategies, you can best fill those in after discussion following the viewing. You will need separate information about the two groups. It will tell you on the screen which group you are watching. Now watch the clip.

Mapping evidence

In this activity you will be considering the two important dimensions of pupils' need and the teacher's planning and provision towards meeting those needs. You will start this whilst watching the clip and in discussion you should be able to make some points in the common area on both maps.



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PUPILS' NEEDS

GROUP 1	COMMON	GROUP 2

Write the needs you have collected whilst watching the clip in the appropriate boxes e.g. these might include relationship with the teacher, reference to the individual's capacity, the culture within the group, ...

PROVISION

GROUP 1	COMMON	GROUP 2

In here note down evidence of provision for the needs of the two groups: these may include reference to prompting, reinforcing by repetition, direct assistance, non-verbal clues. You may make reference back to the needs map.



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Activity Two

In this exercise you will use the data you collected on the needs and provision for the two groups to try to evaluate the match between the provision and the need. Here are some questions to work with. Your group may add more.

- What do the common areas of need tell you generally about the needs of the class?
- What are the principal differences in needs between the two groups?
- How does the teacher meet the individual needs of the children in the less able group?
- How does the teacher meet the individual needs of the children in the more able group?
- To what extent is the teacher meeting the separate needs of two groups?
- Putting together the two common areas from the two maps, what do you now infer about the standard of planning provision and monitoring, which is distinctive to this class?

Activity Three

This teacher sets out clearly what her intentions are for the learning in these groups and gives reasons for her planning and actions.

Here are areas for you to note and analyse. Your group or you personally may wish to design a form or table to collect this data.

What are the teacher's learning intentions for the:

- i) more able group
- ii) less able group



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Identify in her planning how she made provision for these intentions to happen

To what extent were her intentions successful?

i)

ii)

Give the evidence for these examples

iii) If you had been this teacher what else would you have done differently to take learning even further?

Do the individual answers to question iii, from within a mixed country group of teachers, show obvious context-specific items?

Extension

Examine and give reasons why these differences may occur.



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Activity Four

In this activity you will be looking at the way teacher questioning can develop and support pupil learning. The foci will be: questions; sequencing of questions; explanations

A Collecting the data: The Question Log

Teacher Questions

Write down four questions the teacher asks and what or how the pupil responds. Write down the actual words used and the sort of response received.

Question 1

Response

Question 2

Response

Question 3

Response

Question 4

Response

Sequences



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Write down a sequence of between 2 and 4/5 questions that followed each other and belong together. As you do this write the actual words of the questions and a brief note about why this sequence of questions was asked and what the outcome was. Follow this with your thoughts on the sequence.

Question 1

Outcome

Question 2

Outcome

Question 3

Question 4

Question 5

Your thoughts

Explanations

(1)

Write down two explanations given to the whole group, a pair of children or an individual pupil. Add your description of the context, what strategy was used and what the outcome was.

Explanation 1



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Explanation 2

Background

(2) customizing explanations

Write down an explanation given to a) a less able pupil b) a more able pupil.
Add notes on the background to each (context, strategy, outcomes).

Explanation to less able pupil

Background

Explanation to more able pupil

Background

B. Using the data: Our reflections



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Activity Five

One of the aspects of effective teaching and learning is monitoring learning. Any evidence we collect about teaching and learning is inevitably selective. What are the indicators which count in terms of monitoring learning?

List the indicators which emerge from the clip and consider any additions that you would look for in assessing the effectiveness of group learning. For example, how far would you value evidence that appears to be about children's personality or nature, as opposed to their involvement in learning?

You may share and reflect upon examples from your own and/or the group's teaching experience.

You may wish to consider:

- Where would you expect there to be similarities?
- Are there country-specific differences?

Activity Six

Extension items (2)

Own context:

needs and provision

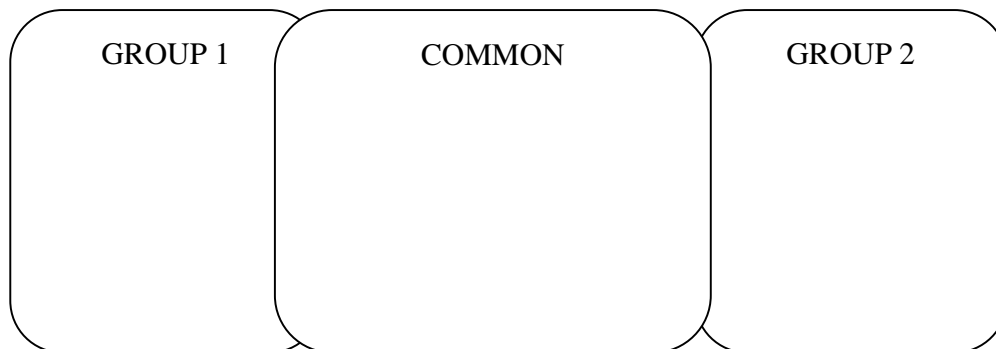
match and mismatch

i) From your own class/classes select two contrasting groups of pupils and carry out a similar mapping task on needs and provision.

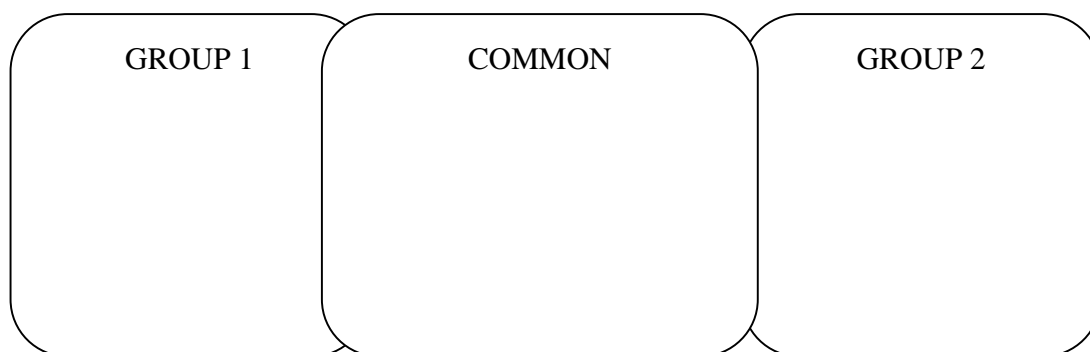


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PUPILS' NEEDS



PROVISION



Having mapped your own groups, can you complete a similar exercise to the one you did in Activity two. The key question is: how are you meeting needs with provision?

ii) You can do this exercise using either the mapped data from your own class or that taken from the clip and relating it to your own experience.

Can you now devise any strategies that deal with the observed mismatches, e.g. a need identified from one group which is not being met?

This exercise would be equally valid looking at the needs of an individual child.



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Other reading

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List of other materials

TEACHERNET www.teachernet.gov.uk

TEACHING ENGLISH: ACTION RESEARCH (BRITISH COUNCIL SUPPORT MATERIAL) SEE ALSO 'START, STOP, CONTINUE'.

www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/methodology/reflection.shtml

DIFFERENTIATION – AN APPROACH TO TEACHING AND LEARNING :
SECTION 2 www.pearsonpublishing.co.uk/education/samples/s_494342.pdf