



Aston University

BIRMINGHAM UK

A summary and analysis of learning outcomes



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Outline of session

1. Responses to input sessions on ICC, GCC, PTCI & Constructive Observations
2. Individual reflections on classroom observations in 2 schools

Patterns found in_response to ICC sessions

- Learning : Knowledge and awareness of cultural differences in broadest sense: values, behaviours, social habits, and the need for tolerance and respect.
- Useful : as teachers: know how to explore and discuss cultural differences with students, and, on a personal level, be aware of differences when interacting in a different culture, and adapting accordingly.

Patterns found in_response to ICC sessions

Surprisingly few comments related to communicative aspects !

- **Importance of non-verbal communication**
- **“ Every word we use is important”**
- **“ how to be more understandable”**
- **different ways of greetings and politeness**
- **“ Tell students to not always expect others to interpret their intentions correctly “**

Responses to GCC

- **Implement and implementation** were frequently mentioned
- Importance of implementing democratic values in classrooms and discussing them with students
- The need to understand and respect different perspectives and values
- “ Now I know how I should implement GCC into education”
- “ Now I know what skills will help me to facilitate a safe and open environment for my future students. “

Surprising responses to GCC

- 3 students from the same university commented on their own country:
- “our country has a long way to go to get better at GCC “ , and
- “ the education system is not in its best shape “
- And could clearly see a role for teachers to play:
- “ I can change the perspectives of my students by incorporating GCC “
- “ It will help me find a way to make an impact on our education “
- “ We (young teachers) have to make actions “

Responses to PTCI

- All responses focused on the same key points :
- The importance of gaining knowledge about the educational systems in the EU in order to be adequately prepared for teaching internationally.
- “ Don’t make assumptions about how things may work”

Responses to PTCI

- “prepare to deal with difficult situations”
- “punishing students too harshly, teaching too freely”
- Only comments relating to teaching approach/methodology and possible need for adaptation and flexibility

Constructive Observations

- 2 quotes that grabbed my attention
- “ Many factors influence classroom behaviours “
- “Teaching is not just about passing on knowledge, but also many other aspects.. “
- e.g. Wait-time, proxemics, IRF pattern, high/low context culture
- Learning how and what to observe and how to benefit from experience.
- Observation sheet practical : provides focus for observation and helps organise
- information

Constructive Observations

- “ I know what things to focus observation on “
- “ I know how to behave in low/high culture class “
- “ I’ll be able to observe classes as well as my own teaching style and improve it”
- “ I can regulate communication in light of national culture “
- “ I will question any behaviour that seems weird to me before judging it.”
- “ I will try to put more emphasis on skills like emotional resilience, flexibility and openness. “

Individual reflections on observations

- Classroom atmosphere was major focus + what contributed to this:
- Teacher/student relationships –friendly, mutual respect, kindness
- Teacher talk – supportive, encouraging, positive feedback, open body language , patience (wait-time)
- Motivating activities – games, technology, relevant materials and topics
- Use of L2

Individual reflections on observations

Queries raised by individual students/ one-off observations :

- Classroom photo of president (vs cross in Bavarian schools) ?
- Competitive nature of games detrimental ?
- Use of L1 for small talk ?
- Students wearing crosses ?
- Language lab for conversation practice ?
- T. nomination → unequal participation ?
- Authentic way of teaching ?

Some *Takeaways* from Observations

- Give positive feedback → motivating
- Ask follow-up questions
- Give students time to reflect on answers
- Use pair and group work
- Use L2 for teaching
- Use gestures to help understanding
- Use scaffolding to motivate students to participate
- Motivating use of technology

Conclusions

- Clear evidence from thoughtful comments and reflections that worthwhile learning has taken place at many and varied levels.
- Looks promising for a future as competent and caring teachers and as ambassadors for human rights, democratic values and intercultural understanding.