

Learning teaching is a long-life process. Observing a class of an experienced teacher may help you identify your skills and needs for the future. What can one observe?

OBSERVATION FOCI

Visible things:

- **Timing.** How much time the teacher spends on different activities
- **Activities.** The types of activities the teacher employs during the lesson
- **Elicitation techniques.** Long/short answers elicitations.
- **Participation.** Which learners actively participate in the lesson
- **Classroom language.** The kind of language learners produce

Other important aspects of the lesson, however, are **not visible**. They either have to be inferred or can only be identified as a result of talking to the teacher. These include the following:

- **Decision making.** The kinds of decisions the teachers consider during the lesson
- **Engagement.** The extent to which learners find aspects of the lesson interesting and engaging
- **Problems.** Difficulties the teacher experiences during the lesson that might not have been visible to an observer
- **Teaching principles.** The principles that inform the teacher's approach to the lesson

Adapted from Richards, J.& Farrel, T. (2005). *Professional development for language teachers: Strategies for teacher learning*. Cambridge University Press. (pp.87-91)

Though many aspects of a lesson can be the focus of an observation, in short, we can zoom in either on the teacher's actions or the learners'. The main foci of your observation during **this continuous practicum** can be the following aspects of

- Lesson content (pp.35-36 in the EPOSTL)
- Using lesson plans (p.39)
- Interaction with learners (41)
- Classroom management (p.42)
- Teaching grammar/vocabulary (pp.27-28)
- Teaching Listening/Reading (pp. 25-26)

Below are some questions that may help you while observing **the teacher**:

How does the teacher start a lesson?

What patterns of interaction does the teacher use?

What is the balance between TTT and STT?

How does the teacher supervise students while they are fulfilling a task?

How frequently does the teacher interact with some students if compared with others?

To what extent does the teacher use the textbook?

What types of materials (authentic/semi/non-authentic) does the teacher use?

Is the choice of materials appropriate to the task? Why?

Does the teacher modulate the voice during the lesson? When?

Does the teacher give his instructions in English or Czech? Are teachers' instructions clear?

Does the teacher ensure a smooth transition between activities? Please specify.

Does the teacher vary activities to enhance learners' motivation and interest? Please give concrete examples.

For pair or small group work, does the teacher provide learners with verbal or non-verbal prompts? Please specify.

While working on lexis/grammar, what types of activities does the teacher use? (Please recall the classification we learned and specify.)

How often and in which way does the teacher praise the learners? Give examples.

How does the teacher create a supportive atmosphere that helps learners to participate?

Does the teacher use meaningful and engaging activities to encourage learners to participate? Please specify.

While working with a text for listening/reading, does the teacher provide pre-listening activities that facilitate listening comprehension? Please specify.

How does the teacher encourage learners' participation?

How does the teacher end the lesson?

Does the teacher manage to create a supportive atmosphere for the lesson? How has he achieved it?

Below are some questions that may help you while observing **the learners**:

How do the learners greet the teacher at the beginning of the class?

Are all learners ready for a class?

How do students react to the teacher's questions/instructions? Do they understand the instructions in English? What makes you think so?

Are the activities used by the teacher meaningful and engaging for the learners? Please specify.

While working in pairs, do learners use English or Czech?

Are all students actively engaged in a task? What makes you think so?

Do the students find the lesson interesting and engaging? What makes you think so?

Read the suggested sections in the EPOSTL and based on the descriptors in the categories mentioned above **add some more questions for your observation.**