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| **IATEFL Research SIG PCE**  **Researching Professional Talk**  **Steve Walsh, Newcastle University & Steve Mann, University of Warwick** |

**Session 2 Collecting and analysing data from different teaching contexts.**

In this session, we’ll consider a range of approaches to data collection using tools such as:

* stimulated recall
* self-evaluation checklists
* peer review
* lesson transcripts
* ‘snapshot’ recordings
* video interaction and guidance

**TASK 1**

What are the main problems and issues that you might have to face when collecting and analysing spoken data? Make a list and suggest ways of dealing with each one.

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| **Problem or issue** | **Possible solution** |
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Lesson observation is sometimes associated with assessment and evaluation of teaching; this is obviously NOT our concern here. We are interested in things like:

* understanding ‘what is really happening’ in classroom talk
* how the interaction is managed
* what is the relationship between the discourse and the learning which occurs (or doesn’t!)

**TASK 2**

Watch the lesson extract; what do you consider to be the main problems of lesson observation both for the observer and for the person being observed? Make a list. *(Looking at Language Classrooms*, 1A, 6 minutes).

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| **Observer** | **Observee** |
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Your first decision when using observation as a means of collecting data is **what and why**. It is obvious that some aspects of the teaching and learning process lend themselves more to observation than others. We’ll come back to this in the final session today.

The basic decision you will have to make once you have decided what and why is **how**. The main decision to be taken is whether you are going to follow some kind of coding system, under which data are collected using a predetermined instrument and allocated to various categories, or use a more ethnographic approach (see Van Lier, 1988) where the data are subjected to a close textual analysis and commentary.

Clearly, the way in which we collect data will influence what we see so it is important to think carefully about the use of observation tools.

**TASK 3**

Consider each of the following three techniques, each of which has been used to report the events of a single lesson extract. Comment on the appropriacy of each technique and evaluate their usefulness.

1. Tally sheet
2. Lesson narrative
3. Lesson transcript

**Using observation schedules**

* may use a predetermined system or be *ad hoc*
* often consist of a finite number of categories for observation
* usually global in nature
* take place in real time

Example: The FIAC System (Flanders, 1970). Analyses the lesson using just 10 categories.

*Teacher talk*

1. accepting feelings or attitudes of pupils
2. praising or encouraging
3. accepting or using students’ ides
4. asking questions
5. lecturing
6. giving directions or commands
7. criticising students, justifying authority

*Student talk*

1. pupil-talk response
2. pupil-talk initiation
3. silence/confusion

**TASK 4**

Watch the lesson extract using the FIAC, compare your findings with a colleague and then evaluate its usefulness. How might it be improved or adapted? (*Looking at Language Classrooms,* 4A).

***Observation schedules: advantages and disadvantages***

* provide an accurate picture of what ‘really happened’ with in the predetermined categories
* provide a reliable record
* promote self-awareness on the part of the teacher
* provide a metalanguage for discussion
* may lead to increased quality
* boundaries between the categories may be ill-defined
* categories may be multi-functional
* tend to over-emphasise quantification at the expense of qualitative data
* product rather than process oriented
* rather narrow
* concerns and beliefs of the observer are normally built into the system

**Using ‘snapshot’ recordings**

**TASK 5**

The SETT framework (Walsh 2006) is made up of the 14 interactional features

(*interactures*) below. In the table, match the features with the descriptions given. Compare with the original grid over the page.

Scaffolding Direct repair Referential questions

Content feedback Seeking clarification Display questions

Extended wait-time Teacher echo Extended teacher turn

Confirmation checks Teacher interruptions Turn completion

Extended learner turn Form-focused feedback

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| **FEATURE OF**  **TEACHER TALK** | **DESCRIPTION** |
| A. | 1. Reformulation (rephrasing a learner’s contribution)  2. Extension (extending a learner’s contribution)  3. Modelling (correcting a learner’s contribution) |
| B. | Correcting an error quickly and directly. |
| C. Content feedback | Giving feedback to the message rather than the words used. |
| D. | Allowing sufficient time (several seconds) for students to respond or formulate a response. |
| E. Referential questions | Genuine questions to which the teacher does not know the answer. |
| F. | 1. Teacher asks a student to clarify something the  student has said.  2. Student asks teacher to clarify something the teacher  has said. |
| G. | Making sure that teacher has correctly understood learner’s contribution. |
| H. | Learner turn of more than one sentence. |
| I. | 1. Teacher repeats a previous utterance.  2. Teacher repeats a learner’s contribution. |
| J. | Interrupting a learner’s contribution. |
| K. | Teacher turn of more than one sentence. |
| L. | Completing a learner’s contribution for the learner. |
| M. | Asking questions to which teacher knows the answer. |
| N. | Giving feedback on the words used, not the message. |

**TASK 6**

Watch the video clip and use the SETT grid. Try to identify examples of interactures and write them down in the space provided. How might this framework be used for professional development?

**Stimulated recall**

* usually involves a recording, playback and discussion with a colleague
* understandings are jointly established, it is a collaborative process
* useful for raising awareness
* focused
* highly relevant for professional development

**TASK 7**

Look at the extract below which uses SR. what insights about this teacher’s teaching can be gained from the comments on the right? How might you use this approach in your own professional development?

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| **(The teacher is eliciting vocab items and collecting them on the board. Learner 1 is trying to explain a word)**  1. L1: discographics=  2. M: =ooh what do you mean?  3.L1: the people who not the people the (4) the business about music record series and=  4. M: =is this a word you’re thinking of in Basque or Spanish in English I don’t know this word ‘disco-graphics’ what I would say is er (**writes on board**) like you said ‘the music business’=  5. L1: =the music business? what is the name of of er industry?=  6. M: =the music industry as well it’s actually better | *I was going to say it’s a false friend but I decided not to because I thought that might confuse her...maybe I misunderstood her now when I look back at it... I understood at the time that she meant that this was a particular industry but maybe she meant a business.... but I wasn’t prepared to spend a long time on that because it didn’t seem important even though there was still a doubt in my mind....* |

**Some useful references**

Nunan, D. (1989) *Understanding language classrooms*. Oxford University Press. Chapter 5.

Seedhouse, P. (2004) *The interactional architecture of the language classroom: a conversation analysis perspective*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Wallace, M (1998) *Action research for language teachers*, CUP, Chapter 6.

Walsh, S. (2011) *Exploring classroom discourse: language in* action. London: Routledge.

Walsh, S. (in press) *Classroom discourse and teacher development.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.