Virtual Classroom Observation

Background: It is important for teacher education programs to produce reflective practitioners who are able to critically evaluate their own teaching practice. One method of accomplishing this is through video self-observation. However, overcoming self-consciousness in order to observe oneself critically can be a challenge, especially when self-observation involves viewing classroom video recordings. Nonetheless, video-based self-observation is an important form of assessment of both preservice and in-service teachers. Teachers can continually improve their classroom instruction through sharing videos of their lessons with supervisors, mentors, and peers. Alliant teacher credential candidates will perform such self-video analysis in their single subject and multiple subject programs.

While it is important for teachers to have experience observing videos of their own teaching, both preservice and in-service teachers can benefit when analyzing videos of others teaching. In this Bilingual Authorization program, this form of video observation of other practitioners will be conducted.

It must be noted that there are limitations to what can be seen in classroom video recordings. Classroom video suffers from what is known as the “keyhole effect” in which the observer is limited in his/her ability to judge the full range of elements in the dynamic classroom environment. Nevertheless, such video observations are helpful, especially when they are focused on specific elements of the classroom environment and provide opportunities for the viewer to react to what is visible on the video.

Teacher education researchers have conceptualized teachers’ classroom awareness as “noticing.” Noticing has been defined as going beyond simply recognizing the presence of particular events or behaviors and involves attaching meaning to what is observed. An effective step in developing classroom noticing is through selective attention; that is, candidates can be guided in what is worth attending to and what is not worth attending to in the classroom environment. Teachers’ reflections are improved when they are provided specific lenses to guide their analyses. For example, a focusing lens for the observation might be classroom management or student questioning.

Directions: In this assignment, your task is to view several video lesson excerpts and reflect on what you observe in the lesson. You will be looking for elements that are relevant to the domain of English Language Learner instruction. These videos represent a range of contexts, student types, teacher characteristics, and content areas. It may be helpful for you to recall, per the CTC (Bilingual Authorization, CL-628B), the types of instruction authorized by the Bilingual Authorization:

* Instruction for English Language Development (ELD)
* Instruction for Primary Language Development
* Specially Designed Academic Instruction Delivered in English (SDAIE)
* Content Instruction Delivered in the Primary Language

In this activity you will follow these steps:

1. Preview the six video excerpts below. Select any four that you would like to view thoroughly and analyze; the remaining two can be omitted.
2. View each video straight through, without stopping, just looking (no notes) in order to “get the big picture.”
3. Watch each video again, taking notes according to the criteria provided. You may note not only what you see happening in the lesson, but you may also find value in the teachers’ “commentary” regarding their instructional decisions.
4. (Recommended) Watch each video a third time, further reflecting on and analyzing what you see.

Remember, as noted above, the video format is simply the medium by which we are allowed to have a *partial* view of the lesson. Please DO NOT focus on or comment on the quality of the video, background noise, the camera angle, limited view of the classroom, and so on. Those are simply “keyhole” aspects of the virtual format and are not to be analyzed.

Video Lesson Excerpts

The following videos can be found on The Teaching Channel. Log in the The Teaching Channel and copy/paste the following video titles into the search box to locate them.

1. “Deeper Learning for English Language Learners” [13:36]
2. “Supporting Language and Content Learning in Math” [9:26]
3. “Connecting Globally Through Language and Travel” [4:08]
4. “Spanish Immersion” [14:25]
5. “Bridging Content in a Bilingual Classroom” [11:13]
6. “Literacy Centers for Multilingual Students” [13:36]

Complete the worksheet on the next page. For each of the instructional criteria provided, your task is to identify, describe, and analyze one example from any one of the video excerpts. That is, you are not required to find the criteria in all of the videos; one example is sufficient.

Type your responses in the matrix below. While there is no specific word count for each item, your response must be sufficient to enable your instructor to assess both your knowledge of these areas and your ability to express your reflections on the content in a thoughtful and professional manner. As you type, the table cells will expand to accommodate your responses.

Video Observation Analysis and Reflection

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Criteria: “The teacher…” | Video # | Description | Analysis/Reflection |
| Understands the central concepts of bilingualism/language acquisition. |  |  |  |
| Understands how students differ in their approaches to learning; adjusts instruction to meet individual student needs. |  |  |  |
| Understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies geared for language development; creates active learning experiences which promote language development. |  |  |  |
| Uses knowledge of effective verbal, non-verbal, and media communication skills to maximize acquisition of content by language learners. |  |  |  |
| Understands the role of students’ first language and cultural background in the learning process. |  |  |  |
| Acknowledges and demonstrates respect for students’ cultural and language backgrounds; incorporates students’ prior learning in another language into current instruction.  |  |  |  |
| (Other elements related to bilingualism, bilingual methodology, or culture which you observed and found meaningful.) |  |  |  |