

**Core Curriculum
English Language Teaching Methodology
Bachelor's Level**

**School Experience
Observation tasks
Module 2**

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Students undertake school practice throughout the whole methodology course. There are three phases to students' school experience:

- Guided observation
- Teacher assistantship
- Observed teaching.

Guided observation takes place in Semesters 3 and 4. It gives students an opportunity to observe experienced teachers at work and to make connections with their learning during the first year of the methodology course. To help in this process they complete observation tasks provided in this book.

During **Teacher assistantship** in semesters 5 to 7, students act as teacher assistants, planning teaching, undertaking microteaching and generally supporting the English teachers. Modules in these semesters also include observation tasks aimed at linking methodology classes to school experience.



Module 2 Preparing to Teach 1

Unit 2.1 Principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Task Ten

Task focus: Features of communicative language teaching

Observe a class and tick (✓) features of CLT you notice. Provide evidence for at least three of them.

Feature	✓	Evidence
language as a means of communication		
teaching grammar and vocabulary in a meaningful context		
prioritising meaning over form		
focus on developing skills		
task-based learning		
focus on social and cultural issues as well as linguistic competence		
balance between accuracy and fluency		
errors treated as learning steps		
the roles of a teacher		
• monitor		
• facilitator		
• communication partner		
the roles of a learner		
• communication partner		
• active user of English		

Observation summary

What have you learnt from this observation?

Task Eleven

Task focus: Characteristics of a communicative task

Observe activities in class and tick (✓) the features of a communicative task that you notice. Provide evidence.

Characteristics of a Communicative Task	✓	Evidence
Communicative purpose made clear		
Information/opinion gap created		
Communicative situation (resembling that in real life)		
Spontaneous use of English by the learners		
Authenticity of materials and of any related task		
Clear evidence of task completion		

Observation summary

Is the activity you have observed really communicative? If so, give evidence to support your opinion. If not, suggest ways to make it more communicative.

Unit 2.2 Teaching Grammar in Context

Task Twelve

Task focus: Aspects of teaching grammar

Observe several lessons and tick (✓) the relevant cell if you can observe these teacher actions. Provide evidence.

Aspects of teaching grammar	✓	Evidence
Grammar is mostly presented in isolation		
Grammar is mostly presented in a communicative context		
The teacher uses inductive approach to teaching grammar (from examples to rules)		
The teacher uses deductive approach to teaching grammar (from rules to examples)		
The teacher encourages talk about grammar		
The teacher gives special attention to particular grammar problems of Ukrainian speakers		
The teacher ignores grammar problems of Ukrainian speakers		
The teacher drills grammar patterns intensively		

Observation summary

How does the teacher integrate grammar into communicative context? How does the teacher check whether new grammar has been learnt? What are the most important things about teaching grammar that you anticipate using in your future work?

Unit 2.3 Teaching Vocabulary in Context

Task Thirteen

Task focus: Possible difficulties with vocabulary

Observe a lesson, preferably one that incorporates a text.

Before the lesson:

- Look through the text and identify the words/phrases that you think may be difficult for the learners. Make notes in the relevant column of the table below.
- Ask the teacher to identify the words/phrases that she/he thinks may be difficult for the learners. Make notes in the relevant column of the table below.

During the lesson:

- Observe the learners working with the text. Complete the relevant column with the words that learners found difficult.

After the lesson:

- Ask the learners which words were difficult for them.

The words that may be difficult for the learners		The words that are difficult for the learners (fill in during the lesson)
your point of view (fill in before the lesson)	teacher's point of view (fill in before the lesson)	

Observation summary

Why do you think those words were difficult for the learners? What techniques did the teacher use to overcome difficulties with vocabulary?

Task Fourteen

Task focus: Techniques for presenting vocabulary

Observe several lessons and tick (✓) the techniques the teacher uses for presenting vocabulary. Make notes if appropriate.

Technique	✓	Notes
a translation		
a contextualised example		
a cline (a scale of language items that goes from one extreme to another, e.g. from positive to negative)		
realia (real things that are brought to class and used as a resource)		
a synonym/antonym		
a definition		
visuals (photos, diagrams and drawings, flashcards)		
wordbuilding		
mime		
a demonstration		
other (please specify)		

Observation summary

What have you learnt from this observation? What do you need to keep in mind when teaching vocabulary?

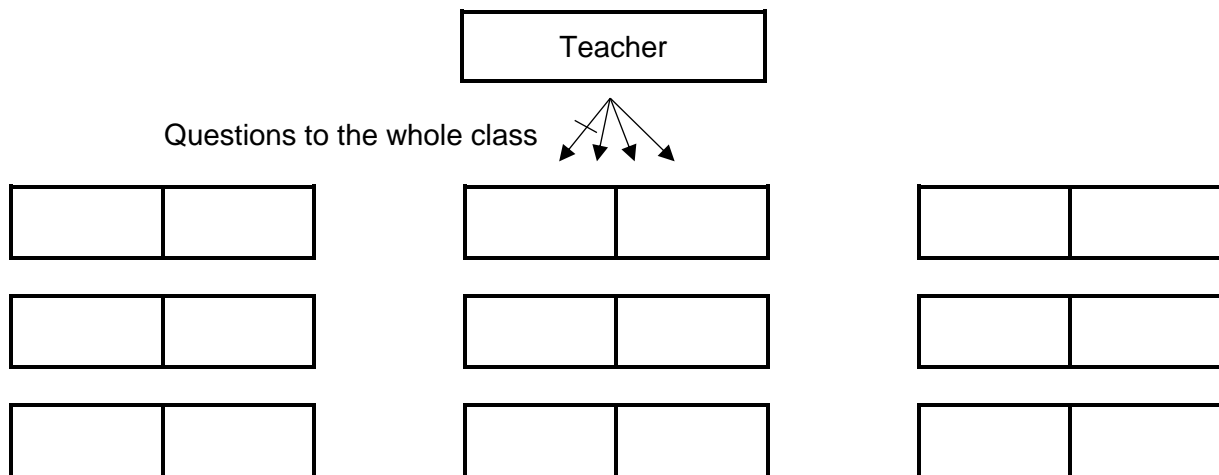
Unit 2.4 Classroom Management

Task Fifteen

Task focus: Seating arrangements for interaction

- Prepare a seating plan for a class you are observing (see the sample below). The plan will depend on the seating arrangements in the classroom.
- Observe interaction in the classroom and draw an arrow in the seating plan for every interaction.

Sample seating plan



Coding

L1-learner 1	E-empty place	
↓	↑	Teacher interacts with a learner
←	→	Interaction between learners
+ ↓	+ ↑	Number of exchanges

Observation summary

Analyse the interaction patterns and make notes on:

the level of learner involvement	
the effectiveness of the seating arrangements for developing communication skills	

Task Sixteen

Task focus: Interaction

Observe a lesson and make notes on the different kinds of interaction that take place in the classroom.

Interaction pattern	Number of times
Teacher → whole class	
Teacher ← → individual learner	
Learner ← → learner	
Learners working in groups	
Learner → whole class	

Observation summary

What have you learnt from this observation?
Was there a variety of interaction patterns in the lesson?
Was there any time when you felt that the interaction pattern was inappropriate? If so, when and why? How would you change it?

Task Seventeen

Task focus: Using the board

Observe how the teacher uses the board. Make notes.

Focus question	Notes
Was the board visible for all?	
Was the layout clear? (Did it appear overcrowded/disorganised?)	
Was the board used to highlight the new language effectively?	
For what purposes did the teacher use the board?	
What did the learners copy from the board?	
In your opinion, was the board used too much, too little or just right? Give your reasons.	

Observation summary

What have you learnt from this observation?

Task Eighteen

Task focus: Teacher talk

Observe a class focussing on teacher talk. Make notes.

Teacher talk	Notes
Amount of teacher talking time	
Speech	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• rate	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• pitch	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• volume	
The level of language	
Use of L2/L1	
Clarity of instructions	
Checking understanding	
Opportunities for learner talk	

Observation summary

What have you learnt from this observation for your own future teaching?

Task Nineteen

Task focus: Aspects of classroom management

Observe a class focussing on the following aspects of classroom management. Make notes and reply to questions.

Aspects of classroom management		Notes and responses
1.	The teacher maintained eye contact with learners. Why is this important?	
2.	The teacher changed position. For what purposes?	
3.	The teacher organised learners' cooperation. How did she/he do it?	
4.	The teacher rearranged the seating from time to time. For what purposes?	
5.	The instructions were clear. How do you know?	
6.	The teacher checked understanding of instructions using ICQs (Instruction Checking Questions). Why is this important?	
7.	Aids were clearly visible to all the learners.	
8.	8. The teacher's voice was clearly audible at all times.	
9.	The learners could hear each other well.	
10.	The teacher was aware of learners' learning difficulties. How did she/he respond to them?	
11.	What did the learners take away from the lesson? Why is this important?	
12.	What did the teacher do during pair and group work? Why do you think she/he behaved in this way?	

Observation summary

What have you learnt from this observation?

Adapted from *ObservationTasks: A workbook for learner teachers* by Kati Somogyi-Tóth. – 2012. This booklet accompanies the article in *TheTeacher Trainer Journal* on Page 7 of Volume 26, Number 3.