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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### CLASSROOM OBSERVATION AS AN IMPORTANT TOOL FOR INITIAL TRAINEE TEACHERS

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#### ABSTRACT

“It’s the teacher that makes the difference, not the classroom”

-Michael Morpurgo

The main purpose of this paper is to bring out an overview or feedback of initial trainee teachers on regular classroom teaching observation. The researcher acted as a mentor, observed the trainees, their behaviour and found their difficulties to face real classroom teaching through observation. Classroom observation is a formal and informal observation of teaching. A classroom observation is the purposeful examination of teaching and/or learning events through the systematic processes of data collection and analysis (Bailey, 2001). The present study has done in three phases- pre observation phase, observation phase and post observation phase. It is aimed to develop the confidence of trainees during classroom observation; to identify the difficulties during classroom observation. These objectives were followed by research questions. The researcher has followed observation method and collected data. The data were analysed through pie chart and graphs. The result of the study shows that initial trainee teachers gained experience through observation, since it is a critical process for teachers. Thus, this is an attempt for improving credibility of the classroom observation.

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## INTRODUCTION

According to Allwright, any system of classroom observation must recognize the possibility of multiple perspectives on a classroom event. There can be at least three different perspectives: the teacher perspective, the learner perspective and the observer perspective. The main purpose behind the classroom observation is to allow a teacher to get feedback from an objective, experienced observer and to involve in context-specific discussions about teaching with an adviser. Moreover, data will be collected on what the teacher is doing what they should probably be doing; classroom learning environment will be assessed and reported to the stakeholders. Additionally, the teacher’s capability to demonstrate various teaching methods is also observed (Wragg, 1999). Over the past several years, diverse research indicated that the way teachers behave in the classroom and the instructional approaches they use influence the degree students learn. Using classroom observations, educators and researchers are able to provide feedback that may lead to changes in teaching practices.

### Need and Significance of the Study

Initial trainee teachers need proper training to gain confidence to face students in the real classroom. Classroom observation is seen as a vital element of each educational system.

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Researchers have found that teachers were not satisfied with the observation process. The main reasons researchers found were judgmental, evaluative nature of observation, authoritative role of observers and prescriptive nature of feedback (Akbari and Tajik 2007). In order to focus on the useful aspects and the benefits of classroom observation, it is important to understand which factors make the instruments of classroom observation credible and reliable for the teachers who are being observed. In this way, the researcher decided to undertake a study for the improvement.

### Review of Related Literature

1. **Joana Salazar** (2018) examined the role of classroom observation in pre-service English teachers’ understanding of the teaching profession. Both systematic and unstructured classroom observations were used to evaluate teacher knowledge and the process that prospective English teachers undergo during a two-month classroom observation period. Based on a questionnaire and journals, our findings show that the participants (N=171) reportedly developed their critical thinking and their basic knowledge of teaching procedures such as generating motivation, using adequate EFL methodologies and classroom management. An extended classroom observation encounter allowed the student teachers’ beliefs to evolve and their identities as English teachers to develop.
2. **Mihaela Badea** (2017) found that there should have demonstrated that a combination of teacher, learner and

observer perspectives helped the teacher and the observer understand the significant role of classroom observation in the development of future teachers. They were able to sensitize themselves to various perspectives on classroom aims and events, thus opening up new vistas for their approach to classroom learning and teaching. The present study focuses on the relationship between the student-teacher and the ELT Methodology teacher, whose main aim is to teach future students how to teach.

3. **Anna Haep et al.** (2016) investigated the study on entitled, Classroom observation as an instrument for school development: School principals' perspectives on its relevance and problems, The results clearly indicate that classroom observation is a critical process for teachers. Not being able to observe the classroom credibly can have several negative effects. Therefore, this research concentrates on ways that can improve the credibility of classroom observation.

### Operational Terms Defined

1. **Classroom observation:** A classroom observation is the purposeful examination of teaching and/or learning events through the systematic processes of data collection and analysis. A **classroom observation** is a formal or informal observation of teaching while it is taking place in a classroom or other learning environment. Typically conducted by fellow teachers, administrators, or instructional specialists, classroom observations are often used to provide teachers with constructive critical feedback aimed at improving their classroom management and instructional techniques. School administrators also regularly observe teachers as an extension of formal job-performance evaluations.
2. **Trainee teachers:** a person who is learning the skills and knowledge needed for a particular job. After completion of graduation, students can admit in bachelors of educational courses. They are trainees, also called as student teachers.
3. **Feedback:** the modification or control of a process or system by its results or effects, for example in a behavioural response of a student.
4. **Teaching practices:** is a period that a student teacher spends teaching at a school as part of his or her training. Good teaching practice is a key influence on student learning - a desired outcome and primary goal of higher educational institutions. Teachers strive to meet the principles of good practice in an effort to provide the best learning experience for their students.

### Objectives

- To develop the confidence of trainees during classroom observation.
- To identify the difficulties during classroom observation.
- To find out the perception and feedback of initial trainees.
- To provide feedback for the betterment of trainees during observation period.

### Research Questions

1. Is there any difference between perception and feedback during observation period?

2. Whether initial trainees follow constructive critical feedback?

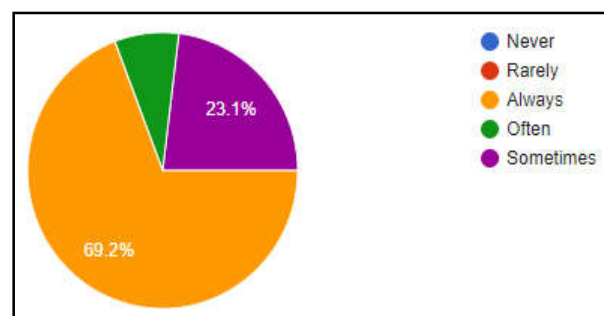
### Procedure of the Study

The researcher as a mentor has allotted trainee teachers to observe real classroom teaching. The present study has undertaken in three phases i.e. pre-observation, observation and post-observation phase. Trainees were also given observation schedule to fill in while observing class. Under pre-observation phase, the mentor instructed about the observation (how to observe regular classroom teaching, interact teachers in schools etc). Under observation phase, trainees observed real classroom teaching of experienced teachers in different subjects. Under post-observation phase the mentor collected feedback and suggestion from them. In this way the researcher completed the study of classroom observation and result showed that most of the students were satisfied with the first step of teaching i.e. observing.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

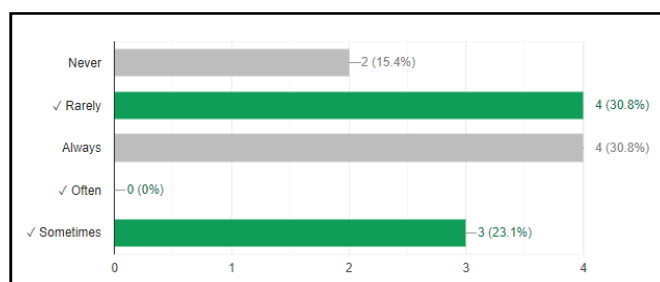
1. **Samples and sampling technique:** For the present study, the investigator selected all the trainee teachers through adopting purposive sampling technique. The total samples were taken for the study is 45 trainees.
2. **Method and tool:** Survey method has followed by the researcher and self prepared questionnaire was used to obtain data through Google form.
3. **Statistical technique:** percentage analysis was used.
4. **Data analysis and interpretation:** The researcher has analyzed data in the form of pie chart and graph as represented below:

#### Did you find useful observing teaching of experienced teachers?



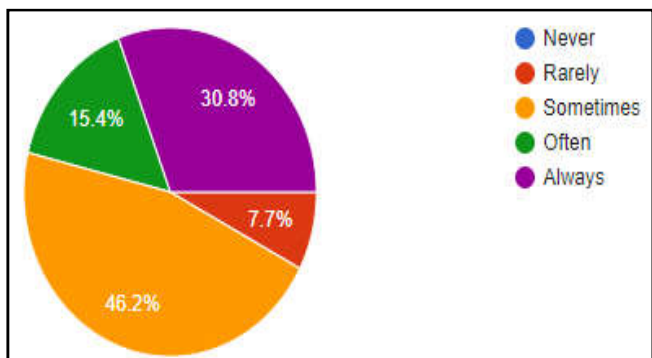
The above pie diagram reflects that trainees opined always with 69.2%, sometimes with 23.1%, for the given statement. So based on their opinion we can conclude that trainees found useful in observing teaching of experienced teachers.

#### Did you discuss the lesson with the teacher beforehand?



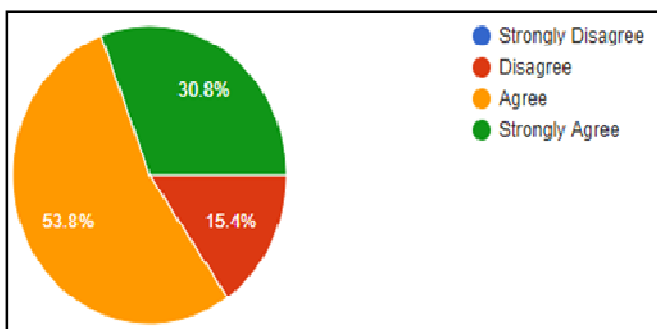
The above graph shows that trainee teachers opined for the given statement as rarely 30.8%, sometimes 23.1%. Thus it is clear from the above graph that trainees discussed the lesson with the teacher beforehand.

**Did you write notes during the lesson?**



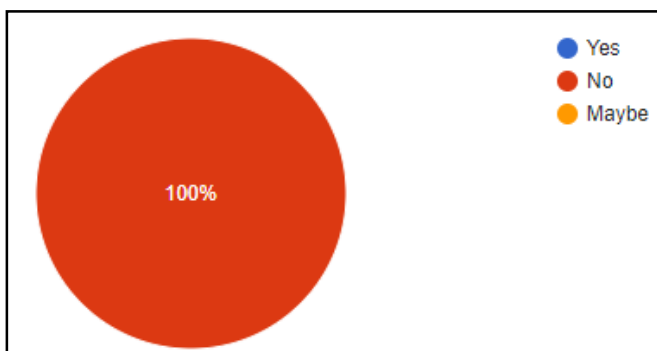
The above pie diagram reveals that 46.2% of trainees wrote notes during the lesson, 30.8% of them written always, 15.4% often and 7.7% rarely. Thus we can conclude that trainees were eager to take down notes important concepts during the lesson.

**I don't mind if there is more than one observer?**



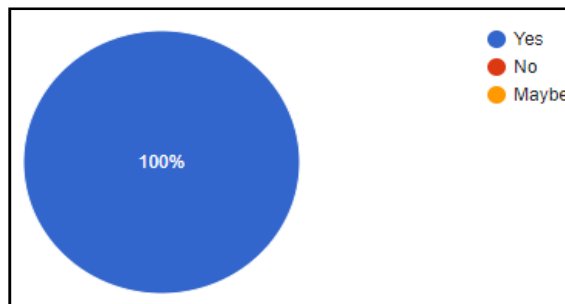
The above pie diagram reveals that 46.2% of trainees wrote notes during the lesson, 30.8% of them written always, 15.4% often and 7.7% rarely. Thus we can conclude that trainees were eager to take down notes important concepts during the lesson.

**Did you face any difficulty during allotment for classroom observation?**



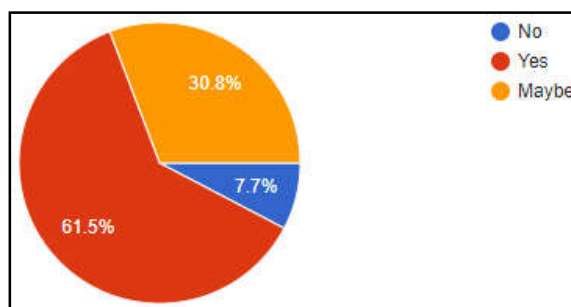
The above pie diagram reveals that 100% of trainees did not face any difficulty during allotment for classroom observation. Thus we can conclude that trainees were satisfied with the respective mentors' allotment for classroom observation.

**Do you feel encouraged after the classroom observation?**



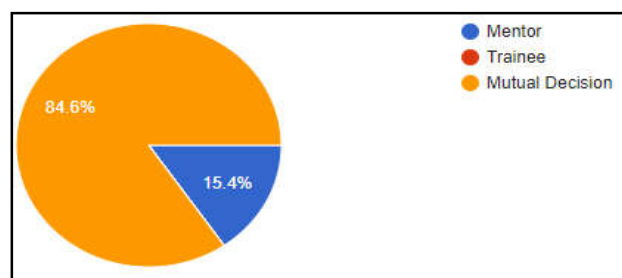
The above pie diagram reveals that 100% of trainees feel encouraged. Therefore we can say that trainees felt self motivated after observing the real classroom teaching.

**Have you been formally trained as an observer?**



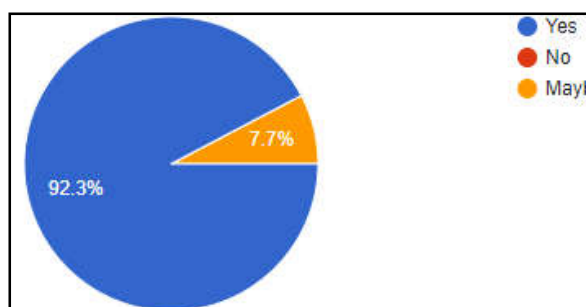
The above pie diagram reflects that 61.5% of trainees say yes, 30.8% says maybe and 7.7% says no for the above given statement. In this way we can say that they are formally trained as an observer.

**Who decides which lesson to be observed?**



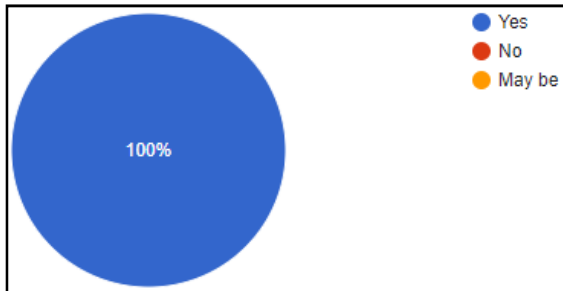
The above pie diagram shows that 84.6% of trainees opined that they decided through mutual decision to observe the lesson while 15.4% says it is decided by respective mentors. Therefore, it is clear that this is mutual decision between trainees and mentors to observe the lesson.

**During classroom observation, do you fill in observation schedule?**



The above pie diagram reflects that 92.3% of trainees opined yes, they filled observation schedule during classroom observation, 7.7% as may be for the above given statement. Thus, we can say that most of the trainees opined that they filled in observation schedule which comprises of topic, teaching techniques, method followed, examples quoted etc. This certainly helps initial trainees to equip these skills.

#### Are you satisfied with the teaching and classroom exposure?



The above pie diagram reveals that 46.2% of trainees wrote notes during the lesson, 30.8% of them written always, 15.4% often and 7.7% rarely. Thus we can conclude that trainees were eager to take down notes important concepts during the lesson.

#### Conclusion

Teachers are responsible and accountable for designing and delivering a high quality of learning and teaching practice. So, such good teaching practice can be provided through observation of real classroom teaching.

This will certainly help these initial trainee teachers to develop teaching skills by themselves.

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