

PROSPECTIVE ARTICLE

PEDAGOGY

UDK 37.02

DOI 10.56378/NHSU20240223

Nadiia GRYTSYK

PhD (Pedagogy), Associate Professor, T. H. Shevchenko National University “Chernihiv Colehium”, 53 H. Polubotka Street, Chernihiv, Chernihiv region, postal code 14000, Ukraine(Nadiela7027@gmail.com)

ORCID: 0000-0001-7198-5327

Svitlana SMOLINA

PhD (Pedagogy), Associate Professor, T. H. Shevchenko National University “Chernihiv Colehium”, 53 H. Polubotka Street, Chernihiv, Chernihiv region, postal code 14000, Ukraine (svitlanapost@ukr.net)

ORCID: 0000-0003-0907-2054

Bibliographic Description of the Article: Grytsyk, N., Smolina, S. (2024). Piloting the impact of classroom observations for pre-service teaching practice evaluation. *Innovations in the scientific, technical and social ecosystems*, 9, pp. 5–19. doi: 10.56378/NHSU20240223

PILOTING THE IMPACT OF CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS FOR PRE-SERVICE TEACHING PRACTICE EVALUATION

Abstract. The Purpose of the Study. *The focus of the current research was to investigate classroom observation as an effective tool for TP of pre-service teachers of English. The Research Methodology.* *The survey was conducted to analyze checklists designed by the authors of the article and completed (45 items) by pre-service teachers of English while developing their observation skills during teaching practice throughout the*

year 2023–2024. In the context of our piloting project pre-service teachers of English represent bachelor's and master's degree students majoring in 014 Secondary Education (Language and Literature (English)), T. H. Shevchenko National University "Chernihiv Colehium", Chernihiv, Ukraine. Two kinds of classroom observation checklists for bachelor students and three kinds of classroom observation checklists for master students were used to gather data. The checklists for bachelor students are focused to evaluate teacher's behavior and learner's behavior in the classroom environment according to certain criteria: rapport, dynamics, teacher talk, social-emotional support. The focus of the classroom observation checklist for master students was on their analytical and creative thinking development while they observed the growth of professional competence in the context of teacher planning and preparation, instruction, classroom environment. **The Scientific Novelty.** 45 checklists for classroom observation app were cross checked by pre-service teachers of masters degree level and their observers (university mentors) to analyze the checklists and define the evidence of data for classroom observation app. **The Conclusion.** The analysis of data suggested that classroom observation played a significant role in the year 2023–2024 in enhancing pre-service teachers' English professional growth. They got real experience in TP while planning, conducting and evaluating their own English lessons of their peers and themselves. The analyzed data will be implemented while designing our classroom observation app. The further steps in the context of our investigation are to use the piloted checklists in classroom observation app design and issue the app.

Keywords: teaching practice (TP), professional competence, classroom observation, classroom observation checklist, teacher education.

ПЛОТУВАННЯ ВПЛИВУ СПОСТЕРЕЖЕНЬ У КЛАСІ ДЛЯ ОЦІНЮВАННЯ ПЕДАГОГІЧНОЇ ПРАКТИКИ

Анотація. Мета дослідження. Метою даного дослідження є вивчення спостереження в класі як ефективного інструменту професійної підготовки майбутніх учителів англійської мови. **Методологія дослідження.** Дослідження проводилося шляхом аналізу контрольних списків, розроблених авторами статті та заповнених (45 пунктів) майбутніми викладачами англійської мови під час розвитку їхніх навичок спостереження під час педагогічної практики впродовж 2023–2024 років. У контексті нашого пілотного проекту майбутні вчителі англійської мови є студентами бакалаврату та магістратури спеціальності 014 Середня освіта (Мова і література (англійська)) Національного університету "Чернігівський колегіум" імені Т.Г. Шевченка, м. Чернігів, Україна. Для збору даних було використано два види контрольних списків спостережень за заняттями для студентів-бакалаврів та три види контрольних списків спостережень за заняттями для студентів-магістрів. Контрольні списки для студентів-бакалаврів зосереджені на оцінці поведінки вчителя та учнів у класному середовищі за певними критеріями: взаєморозуміння, динаміка, розмова вчителя, соціально-емоційна підтримка. Контрольний список спостережень у класі для магістрантів був спрямований на розвиток їхнього аналітичного та творчого мислення під час

спостереження за зростанням професійної компетентності в контексті планування та підготовки вчителя, викладання, атмосфери в класі. **Наукова новизна.** 45 контрольних списків для додатку для спостереження в класі були перехресно перевірені викладачами магістерського рівня та їхніми спостерігачами (університетськими наставниками) з метою аналізу контрольних списків та визначення достовірності даних для додатку для спостереження в класі. **Висновок.** Аналіз даних показав, що спостереження у класі відіграло значну роль 2023–2024 навчального року у підвищенні професійного рівня викладачів англійської мови професійної підготовки. Вони отримали реальний досвід під час планування, проведення та оцінювання власних уроків англійської мови та уроків своїх колег у часі педагогічної практики. Проаналізовані дані будуть використані при розробці нашого додатку для спостереження за уроками. Подальші кроки в контексті нашого дослідження полягають у використанні апробованих контрольних списків у розробці додатку для спостереження за уроками та випуску додатку.

Ключові слова: педагогічна практика (ПП), професійна компетентність, спостереження в класі, контрольний список спостережень в класі, педагогічна освіта.

The Problem Statement. It is a widely known fact that “English has become the genuine lingua franca of a majority of the world population” (D. Crystal, 2003). We are entering a very fascinating decade in which the number of people who speak English as a second language will exceed the number of native speakers. It also means that other countries will completely take over the teaching and learning of English. It is clear that the responsibility of English teachers of Ukraine for development of methodology is growing and that we are about to enter a new era of ELT. The most important issue for changing ELT is that modern teachers can critically analyze their actions, focus on personal growth and professional development, and continuously strive for self-improvement as a lifelong process of learning and renewal (Asligokturk, 2012 & Floate, 2013). Such educators can discover unconventional solutions to professional challenges, demonstrate adaptability in decision-making, and actively contribute to their own self-identification and professional growth that ultimately lead them to successful realization in professional activities (Grytsyk, Skoryk, 2020). Due to this, Teaching Practice (TP) has always been an integral part of enhancing pre-service teachers’

professional competence while training pre-service teachers to the real teaching environments after graduating the university.

The Analysis of Sources and Recent Researches. There is a large list of literature outlining the issue of pre-service teachers of English professional competence development focusing on teacher's self identification and professional growth in the 21st century. Research on professional education was conducted by both foreign and Ukrainian scientists. In particular, approaches to evaluating teacher effectiveness in the context of professional growth and development are discovered by L.Goe, C.Bell, & O. Little (2008). The work "Classroom observation tasks: A resource book for language teachers and trainers" written by R. Wajnryb (1992) focused on the practical usage of classroom observation in particular S. Asligokturk, (2012) & Floate (2013), S. Smolina (2019) & N. Grytsyk, T. Skoryk (2020) highlight an important place in their works of a teacher's self-identification and professional growth.

However, the analysis of literature based on issues of classroom observation does not meet the pre-service teachers' needs in TP. And on the other hand, the results of our own observation of pre-service teachers' TP at schools and higher educational establishments clearly shows the lack of their knowledge on how to use classroom observation tools.

The Purpose of Publication is to establish the role of classroom observation in pre-service TP while analyzing piloted checklists designed by the authors of the article with the purpose to create an observation app.

Among the main learning outcomes of TP are: organization and evaluation of own academic and scientific-professional activity; ability to critically analyze its results, build and implement an effective strategy of self-development and professional self-improvement, and comply with the requirements of academic

integrity (Boby, 2018). Therefore, classroom observation is an essential part of TP.

According to M. Willams, classroom observations should be “developmental rather than judgemental” (1989, p.85) in the sense that they offer opportunities for teachers to improve their awareness, abilities to interact and evaluate their own teaching behaviors'. Classroom observation checklists can provide meaningful tasks and offer an opportunity to collect focused data for reflection on the area of concern (Wajnryb, 1992; Wallace, 1991). The process of classroom observation and evaluation requires a high level of professional ethics, empathy, resilience, critical thinking skills and objectivity (Smolina, 2019).

We define “classroom observation” as a purposeful reflective process of gathering information about TP within an educational setting usually led by an observer (university mentor, in-service teacher or peers). It involves the observation and assessment of various elements of professional behavior of pre-service teachers in TP. The primary aim of classroom observation is to assist and support pre-service teachers to identify their strengths and weaknesses and awareness of their understanding and performance by providing valuable insights into instructional strategies, classroom management, and the effectiveness of teaching methods.

Classroom Observation Process. Figure 1 presents our own version of the classroom observation process.

Figure 1. Classroom Observation Process

Stage	Procedure
1 stage	Plan Classroom Observation
2 stage	Classroom Observation & Collect Evidence
3 stage	Reflection & Analysis

Plan Classroom Observation. We start with a conversation with the person to be observed in order to get a good idea not only of what it is that we are going to observe, but also to gain enough background about the lesson so that we do not make the mistake of working from our own assumptions (e.g. the apprenticeship of observation) but from the actual needs of pre-service teachers and their observers.

Classroom Observation & Collect Evidence . The next step in the classroom observation process involves the actual observation of the lesson and the gathering of data. Due to this and in order to support our students we suggested using the following observation checklists (see *Table 1, Table 2, Table 3, Table 4, Table 5*) as a tool to reflect and determine pre-service teachers' own views about their professional growth during the classroom observation of their peers in TP.

The observation checklists for bachelor's degree students (*Table 1, Table 2*) were designed by the authors of the article in the form of questionnaires to reflect their thoughts, concerns and questions next to certain criteria regarding rapport, dynamics, teacher talk, social-emotional support and adapted from CELTA Course Materials.

The focus of the classroom checklist “Classroom Environment 1. TEACHER” (*see Table 1*) revolves around evaluating and ensuring an effective and conducive learning environment created by the teacher. This checklist aims to assess various aspects related to the teacher's role in fostering a positive and productive classroom setting. The key elements of the checklist may include 12 questions that serve as a valuable tool to reflect on and enhance the teacher's impact on the classroom environment. By focusing on these essential questions, it helps promote effective TP and contributes to the overall success and well-being of students.

**Table 1. Classroom Environment 1
Teacher**

Teacher's behavior	Comments
Did the teacher smile during the lesson? When? At what stage/s of the lesson?	
Did the teacher show interest in the content of what learners were saying? Specify.	
Did the teacher allow learners sufficient time to speak? If not, what would you recommend to improve?	
Did the teacher use a combination of a) sitting; b) standing; c) monitoring, circulating classroom management techniques? How did it help in making the lesson more learner centered?	
Was there enough variety of interaction patterns: individual, pair, group, whole class? If not, what stages of the lesson would you recommend that variety?	
How many times did the teacher praise individual learners? What about the whole class? Specify.	
Was the teacher relaxed and confident? What could he/she do to feel more relaxed and confident?	
Did you notice any fidgeting, speaking too fast/ too much/ too loud/ too softly, repeating sometimes like "Okay", "Well", a lot, etc.? Give examples or specify.	
Was the teacher able to vary his/her volume of the voice during the lesson? When? At what stage/s of the lesson?	
Was the teacher's use of language appropriately graded, i.e, for this level of learners? Specify.	
Was the teacher's own use of language accurate? In case you spot any type of errors regarding meaning, form or pronunciation, please note them down in order to help the teacher correct them.	
12. How was the quantity of Teacher Talking Time (TTT) at the observed lesson? What would you recommend to reduce the amount of TTT?	

The focus of the classroom checklist “Classroom Environment 2. STUDENT” (see Table 2) is centered around evaluating and ensuring that the learning environment is conducive to the needs and well-being of the students. This checklist is designed to assess various aspects related to the students' experiences within the classroom, with the goal of creating an atmosphere that supports their academic, social, and emotional development. The checklist includes 7 questions that serve as a valuable tool to navigate the effectiveness of the learning environment from the students' perspective. By focusing on these questions, it helps create a classroom atmosphere that not only supports academic achievement but also promotes the holistic development and well-being of each student.

Table 2. Classroom Environment 2 Student

Learners' behavior	Comments
Did learners share anything personal/ about themselves of interest? Specify.	
Did the teacher show interest in the content of what learners were saying? Specify.	
Did the teacher allow learners sufficient time to speak? If not, what would you recommend to improve?	
Was there enough variety of interaction patterns: individual, pair, group, whole class? If not, what stages of the lesson would you recommend that variety?	
Were the students aware of educational cultural rules of classroom management during the lesson?	
Were the students engaged in exploring the topic? Were questions asked by the students? Were eliciting techniques used by the teacher?	
Were the students engaged in the learner autonomy process? How? Give examples?	

The observation checklists for master students were designed by the authors of the article in the form of tables for students to reflect their thoughts, concerns and questions next to certain aspects. The aspects were adapted from Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching 2017 [<https://www.jefferson.kyschools.us/sites/default/files/Teacher%20Framework.pdf>].

To implement the checklists into the education process we organized several stages. The first was a prepared and conducted scientific seminar for teacher educators who would host the master students at their classes during TP. The aim of the seminar was to get educators acquainted with the aspects pre-service teachers will focus on while their observation. The second stage was a lecture for master students devoted to the explanation of the aspects they would focus on during observation at TP. The third stage was devoted to pre-practicum orientation to help pre-service teachers understand how to use checklists for class observation during their TP.

The focus of the first classroom observation checklist (Table 3 "Teacher Planning and Preparation") was to determine pre-service teachers' own views about their professional growth during the classroom observation of their peers at the teaching practice. The first observation checklist emphasizes the importance of educators showcasing proficiency in various aspects, including content and pedagogy knowledge, understanding of students, setting instructional outcomes, familiarity with resources, creating coherent instruction, and designing effective student assessments. That was a kind of a scaffolding technique which helped pre-service teachers to express their own vision of the aspects of teacher planning and preparation, enhancing their analytical and creative thinking while using the checklist in classroom observation.

Table 3. Teacher Planning & Preparation

I see	I think	I wonder
Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy		
Demonstrating Knowledge of Students		
Setting Instructional Outcomes		
Demonstrating Knowledge of Resources		
Designing Coherent Instruction		
Designing Student Assessment		

The focus of the second observation record checklist (Table 4 “Instruction”) was on communicating with students, using questioning and discussion techniques, engaging students in learning, using assessment in instruction, demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness, engaging students in activities that develop their professional competence. With the help of the checklist master students were able to fix their thoughts next to the parameter of the observation and put down their questions to the teacher educator or to themselves.

Table 4.

Instruction		
I see	I think	I wonder
Communicating with Students		
Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques		
Engaging Students in Learning		
Using Assessment in Instruction		
Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness		
Engaging Students in Activities that Develop their Professional Competence		

The focus of the third observation checklist (Table 5 “Classroom Environment”) was on the emphasis of the importance of fostering a respectful and rapport-filled environment, cultivating a learning-focused culture, effectively managing classroom procedures, and thoughtfully organizing the physical space.

Table 5.

Classroom Environment		
I see	I think	I wonder
Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport		
Establishing a Culture for Learning		
Managing Classroom Procedures		
Organizing Physical Space		

Some of the thoughts of master students were as follows: *“The clarity and organization suggest thorough teacher preparation. The incorporation of various instructional strategies reflects a dynamic and adaptable teaching approach. Supplementary resources indicate a proactive approach to enriching the curriculum. The inclusion of formative assessments suggests a focus on continuous improvement. Multimedia approach suggests a dynamic and interactive teaching method. The focus on communicative methods indicates a practical approach to language instruction. The use of authentic materials provides real-world context for language learning. The presence of assessment strategies indicates a focus on gauging language proficiency. Collaborative projects promote teamwork and communication skills in language acquisition.”*. Such feedback demonstrates the pre-service teachers' awareness of the impact of thorough teacher preparation, of various instructional strategies and supplementary resources usage, of teamwork in language acquisition; pre-service teachers highlight communicative approach. It means the master

students gained a high level of professional competence, they are able to analyze the process of education, build and implement an effective strategy of self-development and professional self-improvement.

Analyzing the questions the pre-service teachers put down in the column “I wonder” we would like to point out the following: *“How does the teacher structure lesson plans to address different language proficiency levels and learning styles effectively? How do these diverse teaching methods cater to different learning styles and contribute to students' comprehensive language development? Do students have enough motivation to study additional educational resources on their own? How do not overload students? I wonder if formative assessments provide valuable feedback for both the teacher and students. How does the integration of multimedia enhance the learning experience and support language acquisition for diverse learners? What else can be emphasized for the development of practical language skills? What else improves language skills and cultural understanding beyond the use of authentic materials? How effective are assessment strategies in improving students' progress and developing their language skills? How much do group discussions contribute to language and cultural understanding?”*. The questions show the pre-service teachers' readiness to investigate different aspects of teacher planning and preparation, instruction, classroom environment. They realize the necessity of thorough composing and arrangement of each class. They demonstrate their understanding of challenges educators face (different language proficiency levels and learning styles; students motivation; assessment). Therefore the checklists we created motivate pre-service teachers for scientific studies. They fix the state of the education process (I see), they try to formulate their thoughts (I think) and they try to verbalize the issue and point out the way it could be investigated (I wonder).

Before the piloting of the checklists there were three columns in the tables we created: “I see”, “I think”, “I wonder”. After the approbation of our checklists it became clear that the first column should be named “criteria” because it contains the points pre-service teachers should focus on while observation. The second column then became “I see” focused on collecting evidence, the third - “I think” for analytical skills development, the fourth - “I wonder” for educating scientific minded master degree students. So, the piloting of the designed checklists helped us to improve them for their needs and, therefore, gave us the materials for classroom observation app design.

Reflection and analysis After the lesson is over it is useful to reflect about the lesson. The stage of "Reflection and Analysis" in classroom observation is a crucial phase where educators and observers carefully review and analyze the data, insights, and observations gathered during the observation process. This stage is fundamental for improving TP, enhancing the learning environment, and fostering continuous professional development of pre-service teachers. The university mentor navigates the discussion in order to reflect on the following key points:

- *review of classroom checklist observation data*: as a rule observers review the detailed notes, recordings, or any other documentation collected during the observation. This may include observations related to teacher-student interactions, classroom management, instructional strategies, and overall classroom atmosphere;

- *identification of strengths and weaknesses*: it involves recognizing effective teaching practices, positive student engagement, and areas where adjustments or enhancements could be beneficial;

- *teacher's reflection*: pre-service teachers reflecting on their own teaching practices. They consider how their instructional

choices, communication strategies, and classroom management techniques contribute to or hinder the learning environment;

- *feedback and action plan*: observers provide constructive feedback to teachers based on their observations. This feedback is aimed at fostering professional growth. Additionally, an action plan may be developed collaboratively to address identified areas for improvement and build on existing strengths.

The ultimate goal of the **reflection and analysis** stage is to contribute to continuous improvement in TP. Pre-service teachers and observers collaboratively work towards refining instructional strategies and creating a more effective and engaging learning environment. By engaging in thorough reflection and analysis, pre-service teachers can refine their teaching methods, create a positive impact on student learning, and contribute to the overall improvement of the educational experience in the classroom.

Conclusions. The examination of data indicated that classroom observation was notably impactful during the 2023–2024 academic year in fostering the professional development of pre-service teachers of English. It provided them with authentic experiences in TP as they planned, executed, and assessed their own English lessons and those of their peers. We intend to integrate these insights into the design of our classroom observation app. The next stages of our research involve incorporating the tested checklists into the app development process and subsequently launching the application.

References

- Asligokturk, S.** (2012). Learning Together; INSET. <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/blogs/asligokturk/learning-together-inset> [in English]
- Crystal, D.** (2003). The future of Englishes. In Burns, A. and Coffin, C. (Eds.). *Analysing English in a Global Context*. pp 53—64. Oxon: Routledge. [in English]
- Boby, S.** (2018). Pedahohichna praktyka mahistrantiv zaochnoho viddilennia: spetsialnist 014.02 “Serednia osvita (Mova i literatura (anhliiska)”: metodychnyi posibnyk [The pedagogical practice of master’s degree students for part-time department:

014 Secondary Education (Language and Literature (English))), T.H. Shevchenko National University "Chernihiv Colehium", 60 p. [in Ukrainian]

Cambridge Assessment. (2020, May). Cambridge CELTA Syllabus and Assessment Guidelines. https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/Images/CER_2872_V2_MAY20_CELTA_syllabus_WEB.PDF [in English]

Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching 2017 <https://www.jefferson.kyschools.us/sites/default/files/Teacher%20Framework.pdf> [in English]

Floate, J. (2013) Collaboration: The Best Professional Development for Teachers. <http://ezinearticles.com/?Collaboration:-The-Best-Professional-Development-for-Teachers&id.=7497892> [in English]

Goe, L., Bell, C., & Little, O. (2008). Approaches to Evaluating Teacher Effectiveness: A Research Synthesis. National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality. <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED521228.pdf> [in English]

Grytsyk, N., Skoryk, T. (2020). Theoretical analysis of the factors influencing modern teacher's professional success. Scientific Journal of Polonia University, 38(1-2), 212-216. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.23856/3868> [in English]

Smolina, S. (2019). Stan pidhotovky maibutnikh uchyteliv anhliiskoi movy (vykhovnyi aspekt). [The state of training of future teachers of the English language (educational aspect)], Bulletin of the T.H. Shevchenko National University "Chernihiv Colehium". Issue. 5 (161) pp. 193-197. [in Ukrainian]

Williams, M. (1989). A developmental view of classroom observations. ELTJ. Vol.43/2. [in English]

Wajnryb, R. (1992). Classroom observation tasks: A resource book for language teachers and trainers. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [in English]

Wallace, M. (1991). Training foreign language teachers. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [in English]

*The article was received 13/11/2023.
Article recommended for publishing 23/02/2024.*