

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION GUIDELINES

OBJECTIVES: To observe teachers' ability to integrate the "Ja-ling" approach to their every-day classes. **This also implies** a description of the communicative processes and of the (explicit metalinguistic) reflections made about language.

WHAT OBSERVERS SHOULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT:

It is important to have visited the schools to inform the teachers who will be interviewed about the general goal of the observation: to see how she/he has interpreted the approach in her/his own manner (which is for us an enrichment !). This first contact is also important to negotiate how the observation will be carried out, when and by whom and also to discuss the kind of feedback the school will receive. In order to ensure that teachers would not try to deduce any "expected behaviour" from the items of the observation grid, the observers should in no case show them the grid before the observation session (we are interested in observing how they interpret Jaling-tasks, not in giving them hints about what we expect them to do). This aspect should also be explained to the teacher, who will for sure be ready to accept this kind of argumentation: "we are interested in knowing different ways in which people have succeeded in implementing the approach, because that is an enrichment for us. If we show you the grid beforehand, there is a danger that we influence you – and that would be a shame!"

The document elaborated to collect the data should clearly specify whether the observer is a teacher of that school or an external researcher.

In some cases, observations will be video-recorded, but this situation will not be common, only applied to certain cases in which recording classes is relatively easy. The recordings, if any, should be complemented with observation notes, which would facilitate the reconstruction and interpretation of important data. In those cases, the recording and the field notes will be considered a single observation instrument.

To conclude, we would like to ask observers to be as descriptive as possible and to write down only the details that are necessary to keep a record of what is going on in the classroom. The following guidelines will help you undertake this observation task:

Before the observation starts the interviewer should ask the teacher the information about some of the items detailed in the "General information" and "Specific information" sheets (items in *italics*) to be able to establish the context of the lesson, which is necessary to interpret data.

During this first conversation, teachers should give an account of what they plan to do, which their objectives are, whether they would adapt the materials, and so on. By doing so, the observer will be able to predict which aspects are more relevant for the attainment of the goals of the observation (especially, those related to reflections upon language and the interactions on cultural and linguistic diversity).

It is extremely important for the observer to be familiar –even to have learnt by heart- with the items that should be observed –the questions and the indicators specified in the observation sheet.

Although he/she will be able to re-read such items while the observation is being carried out, the lack of familiarity with the observation instrument inhibits the perception of what goes on in the classroom.

During the class, the observer should not interrupt the normal flow of the lesson, therefore he/she should know the students in advance and should have been present in the classroom in previous sessions.

It is obvious that during the classroom the observer should take notes about the items specified in the forthcoming pages, therefore he/she should sit in a place where he/she could easily observe all the members of the group, without interrupting the activities being carried out.

The observer should try to be as objective as possible when he/she takes notes and, consequently, he/she should describe the actions he/she observes without trying to evaluate or interpret them, since this will be done later, in the analysis of the data.

It might be interesting to keep a record of time references. For example, whether students are off task for some time or how long students exchange opinions without the intervention of the teacher, etc. To write down the length of the activities and situations is extremely important. Parallel to this, if the teacher concentrates on a specific group of students, the amount of time spent with them is also an important item.

At the end of the session, the teacher should be able to read the notes and see the items of the grid if he/she expresses such a wish. If this situation takes place, the teacher's remarks should also be taken

into account, since they are a different viewpoint which will help researchers be more objective in their analysis.

Moreover, a short interview in which teachers can express what they feel was different from what normally takes place in the classroom could be very interesting. If the classroom is only observed once, it is very difficult to determine whether things went better because a naughty student was not present (a very important detail –specially if such student comes from a different ethnic or cultural background) or whether they went worse because the weather was bad and the students could not have their regular break between classes.

The observer should re-read his/her notes soon after the observation in order to be able to complete them with any important fact he/she can still recall but did not have time to write down earlier.

GENERAL INFORMATION SHEET

<i>Name of the teacher</i>	
<i>Name and address of the school</i>	
<i>Class</i> <i>Age of the pupils</i> <i>Number of pupils present</i>	
<i>Classroom arrangement & decoration</i> <i>Can the children move around?</i>	Is the class room decoration related to language awareness?
<i>Status at school of the languages taught</i>	it is extremely important to take into account all issues related to linguistic and cultural diversity and how this diversity is present in the classroom or at the school. It is also necessary to describe the social and linguistic background of the school and the aspects related to the state languages.
<i>Number of pupils who speak/understand other languages than the official language(s) of the country</i> <i>What are those languages?</i>	
<i>What is the status given by the school to these languages and those children?</i>	Specify the kind of programmes developed at the school to cater for these children's needs, as well as how these children get along with their classmates and the attitudes the latter have towards them
<i>Other remarks made by the teacher</i>	This space should be used to account for the general aspects that cannot be included in the previous sections but that are also related to linguistic and cultural diversity (e.g. the activities carried out with the parents of immigrant children at non-school hours).

Information concerning this sheet should be asked before the observation starts.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE OBSERVED LESSON

<i>Date :</i> <i>Time (from...to...)</i> <i>School subject:</i>	Which subject or curricular area does the activity concern? Is the activity related to several different subjects?
Material	Name of the activity or of the material Indicate the precise part (lesson, page...) Also note the type of material: paper, video, audio...
Preparation by the teacher	Was this lesson prepared in a previous lesson? What type of material and pedagogical preparation did the teacher do?
Type of observation	Was the observation done by another teacher from the same school, by an external researcher, by another person? Is the observation recorded in video?
Factors that may influence this lesson	This space should be used to report incidents, activities or events that had taken place before the commencement of the session to be observed but that may influence its development (games, atmosphere, tiredness, projects, etc.)
M A R K M A R K R E	This space should be used to document the general aspects that cannot be included in the previous sections but that are also important for the development of the session. It is an open category that should not be filled in if nothing relevant takes place. It is important to notice that, if it is used, it should include aspects related to the context, not to
Made by the teacher: - before the observation session: Made by the teacher: - after the observation session : Made by the observers (eventually, before the observation):	
Any elements or events which have influenced the development of the session	This space should be used as a record of the incidents that took place during the development of the lesson and that influenced the implementation of the activities (there was noise at the playground, an instrument broke, etc.)
Activities which will follow this lesson in order to complete it	Here it is important to state whether the tasks will be complemented with other activities and, if so, how they will be carried out.

Information concerning the items in italics should be asked before the observation starts..

OBSERVATION GRID			Date :
TIME	TEACHER	STUDENTS	(OTHER) REMARKS
	INITIAL AND ANCHORAGE SITUATION		
	RESEARCH SITUATION AND PARCIAL SYNTHESES		
	FINAL SYNTHESES		

TIME:

The section entitled “**time**” should be used to note the time spent on each phase or sub phase of the lesson. (you may indicate the time spent).

STAGES

You should not respect the dotted horizontal lines. They are only guides for you to draw an horizontal line on the dotted line to show the specific moments observed during the lesson. These moments don’t necessarily correspond to the total amount of time of the three phases of a lesson: for example the initial phase may have different moments

The section entitled “**initial situation**” should be used to detail the tasks carried out as an introduction to the lesson. A horizontal line drawn from one side to the observation grid to the other would indicate the end of this stage in the development of the lesson.

The section entitled “**research situation**” should be used to specify what has been done during the central stage of the lesson, when pupils try to solve the issues Ja-Ling materials put forward. In this section, most observations will report the initiatives taken by the teacher to monitor the activities carried out by the students.

The section entitled “**final synthesis**” should be used to describe how the activity ended up and how the work done is put together.

THE “TEACHER” AND “STUDENTS” SECTIONS

The section entitled “**teacher**” should be used to list the activities suggested by the teacher and to describe how he/she manages them (explains, asks questions, organises, etc.). It is also to specify here the role he/she assigns to students who speak other languages or have other cultural backgrounds. The line drawn with dots could serve as a border, but it can be moved, if necessary.

The section entitled “**students**” should be used to indicate how students respond to the proposals of the teacher and how they take initiatives to solve the task. It should also represent the interaction among students. As in the previous section, the line drawn with dashes can be moved, if necessary.

The sections “**teacher**” and “**students**” are also separated by a series of dashes. This is so because the observer should ignore it when interaction takes places, because at that point both the teacher and the student(s) intervene.

THE “**FURTHER REMARKS**” SECTION

The section entitled “**further remarks**” should be used to detail those contextual aspects that may influence the activity: the students are noisy, the students are attentive, etc.

Guidelines for the OBSERVATION¹ (Relevant items)

The teacher

- Has the teacher adapted the materials to the students' social context?
- Has the teacher adapted the activities to the (methodological and learning) characteristics of his/her students?
- How has the teacher guided the students to enable them to construct knowledge (management of the research, synthesis phases, evaluation of the contributions, reactions to student's difficulties or misunderstandings, etc.)
- How does the teacher promote the participation of the multilingual students?
- Which changes were produced with regard to the suggestions of implementation provided in the design of the materials?
- Which were the most critical, unexpected or successful moments in the session?

The students

- Which is the role of the students?
- To what extent do students actively engage in the activities? (if relevant, relate this item with the traits of individual student; strong/ weak, monolingual / multilingual...)
- To what extent have students internalised the project goals and the methodology used (in this session and in general)?
- What's the role or which are the contributions of the multilingual students?

Interaction modes

- What's the frequency of occurrence of these two types of exchanges: teacher-students and student-student?
- What's the frequency of occurrence of students' initiatives in these exchanges?
- What kind of interaction (exchanges, initiatives) does the teacher enhance?
- How often does the teacher provide feedback? What's the nature of such feedback?
- What's the nature of the collaboration of students in group tasks?

Plurilingualism (teacher. students)

- The teacher or the students make reference to other languages apart from the ones suggested in the materials (justify with examples, reflections, etc.)?
- Do students make such reference in reply to a request of the teacher?
- How are the references to other language welcome (negatively or positively) by the teacher and by other² students?
- How does the teacher exploit them?

¹ Observers should read these questions before carrying out the observation task. It would also be advisable to have them visible during the observation process since they will help the observer to take accurate notes on what goes on in the classroom.

² If the teacher is the person who makes reference to diversity, the observer should try to perceive students' reactions to it. However, if a student makes the reference, the observer should try to capture the reaction of the other students and of the teacher.

OBSERVATION INDICATORS

(The following elements are aimed at complementing the guidelines to ask yourself questions during the observation³)

The teacher

- How does the teacher introduce the task and how does he/she engage the students (how does he/she promote students' participation, how does he/she arrange them, does he describe clearly (or not) the steps they should follow, how and when will they participate, etc.) Does he/she remember his/her decisions during the session?
- Management of the student participation (does he/she promotes participation, has he/she taken it into account when planning, how does he/she responds to weird interventions, etc.)? When does he /she gives more importance to student intervention? When does he/she give less importance to it?
- Response to the difficulties students have encountered (presents them again to ask students to think about them, only the teacher responds to difficulties, the teacher suggests new research tasks, the teacher asks more questions, etc.)
- If conflict arise, how does the teacher solve it?
- Are the comments about language diversity promoted? Rejected? Paraphrased? How? (Please provide careful details).
- What does the teacher change in his/her original planning (specify in detail each of these changes, specially if they have been caused by a student intervention, also provide the context which has originated the change)
- How does the teacher end the sessions, elaborate the synthesis of the contents of the sessions, suggests activities to be done out of the classroom, engage families in the activities, etc.

Students

- Students' reactions when the teacher arranges the mode of participation: do they complain? Propose alternatives? Are quiet? Show interest and make comments –if so, what kind of comments- etc.
- Which roles do students take when faced to proposals related to language diversity (specify the roles which the teacher does not distribute and pay attention to the reactions of different types of students)?
- Do students take initiatives, know what they should do or show they have understood what they are asked to do?
- Do students feel lost or uninterested? How many of them? How often?
- Do they make any comment on the activity –for example, do they comment on what's missing or on what it was said they would do but they haven't done?
- Do students make any comments on language diversity apart from those derived from the activities? How many students? When?

³ The following information is aimed at clarifying the aspects that should have more prominence when one is observing the activities carried out in the classroom. It is important to read it beforehand to be aware of the kind of details that should be included in each section of the grid.

Interaction modes

- Which guidelines does the teacher provide throughout the course of the lesson? When? Which is the interaction mode he/she promotes (does he/she explicitly demand that mode or is it articulated thanks to prior experiences)?
- What does the teacher do when a student's intervention was not planned but is related to the topic? Does he/she take it into account? Does he/she ignore it? Does he/she provide positive feedback?
- Do certain interaction modes promote interventions based on language diversity?
- When the students are asked to work in groups, do they immediately get organised? Know what they have to do, concentrate on marginal problems, work quickly, etc. How many groups have organisational problems? How does the teacher respond to those problems?
- What kind of comments about the cultural and linguistic situation of classmates occur in group tasks? What kind of attitude do they show?

Plurilingualism (teacher and students)

- Do the teacher or the students provide information about the languages in the classroom or about languages that are close or very far from the students' background even when they are not present in the materials? If so, when do they do it? Are they answers to teacher's demands, are they closely related to the topics discussed in class? How often are they present? What's the quality of the information provided?
- Does the teacher take profit from the contributions on multilingualism by expanding the topic, by suggesting new activities, ask for more ideas or, on the contrary, ignore them as if he/she had not heard them?
- How do students and their teacher value the occurrence of such aspects? Do they look tired? Do they look interested? Do they look fascinated?

(English version of all documents: D. Masats —UAB team—, revised by A. Noguerol, with the invaluable help of M. Candelier. May 2002)

<i>Name of the teacher</i>	
<i>Name and address of the school</i>	
<i>Class</i> <i>Age of the pupils</i> <i>Number of pupils present</i>	
<i>Classroom arrangement & decoration</i> <i>Can the children move around?</i>	
<i>Status at school of the languages taught</i>	
<i>Number of pupils who speak/understand other languages than the official language(s) of the country</i> <i>What are those languages?</i>	
<i>What is the status given by the school to these languages and those children?</i>	
<i>Other remarks made by the teacher</i>	

Information concerning this sheet should be asked before the observation starts.

The School : The class :

Date : Time (from...to...) School subject:	
Material	
Preparation by the teacher	
Type of observation	
Factors that may influence this lesson	
Made by the teacher: <i>- before the observation session :</i>	
REMARKS Made by the teacher: <i>- after the observation session :</i>	
Made by the observers <i>(eventually, before the observation):</i>	
Any elements or events which have influenced the development of the session	
Activities which will follow this lesson in order to complete it	

Information concerning the items in italics should be asked before the observation starts.

The School : The class :

Date :.....

PAGE N°_____

[illegible]

The School : The class : :

RESEARCH
SITUATION
AND
PARCIAL
SYNTHESES

Date :.....

[illegible]

The School : The class :

OBSERVATION GRID	Date :.....
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OBSERVATION GRID

Date :.....

[illegible]

The School : The class : :

(Relevant items)

The teacher

- Has the teacher adapted the materials to the students' social context?
- Has the teacher adapted the activities to the (methodological and learning) characteristics of his/her students?
- How has the teacher guided the students to enable them to construct knowledge (management of the research, synthesis phases, evaluation of the contributions, reactions to student's difficulties or misunderstandings, etc.)
- How does the teacher promote the participation of the multilingual students?
- Which changes were produced with regard to the suggestions of implementation provided in the design of the materials?
- Which were the most critical, unexpected or successful moments in the session?

The students

- Which is the role of the students?
- To what extent do students actively engage in the activities? (if relevant, relate this item with the traits of individual student; strong/ weak, monolingual / multilingual...)
- To what extent have students internalised the project goals and the methodology used (in this session and in general)?
- What's the role or which are the contributions of the multilingual students?

Interaction modes

- What's the frequency of occurrence of these two types of exchanges: teacher-students and student-student?
- What's the frequency of occurrence of students' initiatives in these exchanges?
- What kind of interaction (exchanges, initiatives) does the teacher enhance?
- How often does the teacher provide feedback?
- What's the nature of the collaboration of students in group tasks?

Plurilingualism (teacher. students)

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- How does the teacher exploit them?

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Type of observation	
Factors that may influence this lesson	
Made by the teacher: <i>- before the observation session :</i>	
M A R K S Made by the teacher: <i>- after the observation session :</i>	
M A R K S Made by the observers (eventually, before the observation):	
Any elements or events which have influenced the development of the session	
Activities which will follow this lesson in order to complete it	

Information concerning the items in italics should be asked before the observation starts.

The School : The class : :

OBSERVATION GRID

Date :

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RESEARCH SITUATION AND PARCIAL SYNTHESES

The School:
The class:

OBSERVATION GRID

Date :.....

(This page may be reproduced several times in order to be able to be used during the different phases)

PAGE N°

The School : The class :

Date :

FINAL SYNTHESIS

The class ::
.....

Guidelines for the OBSERVATION

ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS

The teacher

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Guidelines for the OBSERVATION

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Plurilingualism (teacher. students)

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- How does the teacher exploit them?