

**Ms Dina:** “Best Practices in Teaching English” is a series of teacher training segments dealing with eight topics: **Classroom Management, Writing, Reading, Listening, Presentation Skills, Practice, Error Correction, and Supervision.**

“Best Practices in Teaching English” can be used for teacher and supervisor in-service training or by faculty in pre-service teacher education. Also, tapes can be used separately by student teachers, teachers, and supervisors for individual study and self-development. Accompanying the video series is a set of printed supplementary materials that describes the content and includes information on how to use the videotapes

### Techniques of objective supervision

**Dr. Mohamed :** In the field of supervision, there was a shift from the inspector who judges or evaluates, to the supervisor who guides teachers and helps them to develop professionally.

Ah, nowadays, supervisors visit teachers at their schools several times a year. They observe their classes. In order to have effective supervision, the process of observation should be divided into 3 stages. The first stage is called "Pre-observation Meeting."

The second stage is called "Actual Observation." And the third stage is called "Pre..Sorry..Post-observation Meeting."

Now let us see how far these 3 stages are applied by a supervisor and a teacher in one of Ismailia classes.

**Ms. Fatma:** I'm pleased that you'll be with us today, Mr. Mahmoud.

**Mr. Mahmoud:** Thank you, Ms Fatma. It's a pleasure to me, too.

**Ms Fatma:** Thank you.

**Mr. Mahmoud:** Well, what classes are you going to teach today?

**Ms Fatma:** Today I'm going to teach third preparatory.

**Mr. Mahmoud:** Well, which lesson?

**Ms Fatma:** It's unit 8. Uhhh..It's a reading lesson: The Necklace.

**Mr. Mahmoud:** Yes. Well, what are the objectives of the lesson?

### Pre Observation Meeting

**Ms Fatma:** As you know, reading is at the heart of everything we are doing today. So I'm very much interested in conveying this message to the students. I want them to learn not only reading for scanning and skimming. No, just to ..to start learning reading for pleasure as well.

**Mr. Mahmoud:** Yes. What other sub-skills are you going to teach them?

**Ms Fatma:** Uhhh...Well, they are going to practice pre-reading, silent reading, and post- reading at the same time.

**Mr. Mahmoud:** Fine. Ah, what kind of interaction are you going to use?

Are you going to use pair work and group work?

**Ms Fatma:** Yes, sure. Sure. We are going to use group work and I've already prepared uhhh..ah,some cards like these for role-play. I divide the

class into groups of 5. Each one will have a uhhh..role within the group to be responsible for. And by the way, this also teach them how to be responsible in the future.

**Mr. Mahmoud:** So they are trained on..

**Ms Fatma:** Yes.

**Mr. Mahmoud:** pair work and group work.

**Ms Fatma:** Sure.Sure.

**Mr. Mahmoud:** Yes. Well, what are the stages of the lesson?

**Ms Fatma:** First of all, I'm going to introduce these students to the new material, and this will be done through the illustration. I have already prepared some of them here.

**Mr. Mahmoud:** Yes. Fine. How did you prepare this?

**Ms Fatma:** Uhhh...by using the uhhh..photocopying machine. I put the transparency, and then I use the photocopying machine. I use...

**Mr. Mahmoud:** Is this available?

**Ms Fatma:** Yes, sure. In most of the schools. And I know nowadays in most of the schools they have overhead projector, and the transparency is found everywhere.

**Mr. Mahmoud:** Yes. Well, ah, is there anything specific you would like me to know about the students in your class?

**Ms Fatma:** Well, really I'm proud to have such a class, but the same time I feel dissatisfied because I have some of the students who suffer from stammering. Uhhh .. They are shy, they didn't or they couldn't involve with the others in the group to get involved in the groups. So I'm trying with them...

**Dr. Mohamed:** The teacher may express her concerns about her teaching, or lesson, or any problem in the classroom.

**Ms.Fatma:** So, I am trying with them.

**Mr. Mahmoud:** So how can you solve the problem of shy students.

**Ms Fatma:** Yes. I'm trying with them from time to time, I'm giving them a task to be done within the group.

**Mr. Mahmoud:** Yes.

**Ms Fatma:** To..to make them feel that they are one of the whole, a part of the whole.

**Mr. Mahmoud:** And you shouldn't insist that the spokesperson is the same person all the time.

**Ms Fatma:** Yes. Really..

**Mr. Mahmoud:** You should give them the chance to participate.

**Ms Fatma:** Yes.

**Mr. Mahmoud:** Can I have a look at your lesson plan, please?

### Lesson Plan

**Ms Fatma:** Sure. You know, Mr. Mahmoud, I've been always criticized for writing a lot when preparing a lesson.

**Mr. Mahmoud:** Yes. You..

**Dr. Mohamed:** During the pre-observation meeting, the supervisor looks at the lesson plan. He discusses the objectives of the lesson, the teaching techniques, tasks, procedures, plan to achieve them.

**Ms Fatma:** ...flash cards. Okay?

**Mr. Mahmoud:** Yes.

**Ms Fatma:** And while dealing with the illustration. Do you have any other suggestions on how to...?

**Mr. Mahmoud:** You know the..the..the book is a raw material. Please, as much as you can, try to make an extension of the material.

**Ms Fatma:** All right.

**Mr. Mahmoud:** I see that your lesson plan is well done. Thank you very much.

**Ms Fatma:** I'm having a class now. Would you like to come with me to attend with me the period?

**Mr. Mahmoud:** Yes, with pleasure, if you please.

**Ms Fatma:** So let's go.

**Students:** Good morning, Mr. Mahmoud. Good morning, Ms Fatma.

**Ms Fatma:** I'm sure that you know Mr. Mahmoud Othman. He's our supervisor of English.

**Students:** Yes.

**Mr. Mahmoud:** Sit down.

**Students:** Thank you..

### Observation

**Ms Fatma:** Yesterday we had a problem and we discussed it. We discussed this..

**Dr. Mohamed:** During (Through) this stage the supervisor sits at the back of the class in order not to distract the teacher. He observes and writes comments on the points discussed earlier. The supervisor mustn't interfere with the teaching even if the teacher makes a pronunciation or grammar mistake. Correcting the teacher in front of students will de-motivate her and will not help at all.

### Post Observation Meeting

**Mr. Mahmoud:** Well done, Ms Fatma. In fact, I'm very pleased with your performance in this class. You did a very good job.

**Ms Fatma:** Thank you very much.

**Dr. Mohamed:** This stage should take place right after the class, and shouldn't be postponed at all.

### Positive

**Mr. Mahmoud:** ...the materials and to revise the pre-taught materials. Ah, you gave the pupils the chance to put the new words into sentences to dramatize, even, some words and put them in situations.

**Ms Fatma:** Yes.

**Dr. Mohamed:** The supervisor begins with positive feedback on the teacher's performance. He also discusses the implementation of the lesson plan, using encouraging and supportive language.

**Mr. Mahmoud:** ...to start and close an activity properly and in the right time. You also use eye contact very well. You are able to establish rapport with the students and in fact, this is very important because this is the friendly relationship and the friendly

atmosphere inside the class. And I hope that I'm able to answer one of the questions you asked me concerning how to give a push to slow learners. When you are able to establish rapport, they are no longer shy, and they are encouraged to participate.

**Dr. Mohamed:** The supervisor points out the teaching steps he found creative and interesting and why he liked them. Also, he may ask about the reasons for unsuccessful teaching points and he should suggest alternative techniques or solutions.

**Mr. Mahmoud:** ...and participate. In teaching the second conditional, you gave them as many examples as possible, and then you asked them to..to practice under your guidance. I also like this about you.

**Ms Fatma:** Thank you.

**Mr. Mahmoud:** Ah, you didn't teach grammar traditionally.

**Ms Fatma:** Yes, because I know that grammar.

**Mr. Mahmoud:** but you taught grammar communicatively, and you gave them as many examples as you could, and you'd not give them the rule directly.

**Ms Fatma:** I know. As you always advise us to do. You always say that grammar should be swept under the carpet.

**Mr. Mahmoud:** Yes. I do like this, in fact. Also ah, the grading of questions was very good. You started and suited the level of the students. You started with "yes or no" questions and you moved on to open ended questions.

**Ms Fatma:** Thank you. This is too much for me, in fact, uhmm and I promise to do... my best next time and the times to come. This is really motivating and if anybody listens to these words, he should be proud of himself.

**Mr. Mahmoud:** Thank you. You are worth that. Now, Ms Fatma, how do you feel how did you feel about your lesson?

**Ms Fatma:** Sometimes I come to the class and I have many objectives in my mind and sometimes I fail to achieve one objective-- one of my objectives.

**Mr. Mahmoud:** Yes.

**Ms Fatma:** But I'm trying to develop myself.

**Mr. Mahmoud:** Well, concerning today's lesson, what did you like about your performance?

**Ms Fatma:** Uhmm.

**Mr. Mahmoud:** What areas did you like about your performance?

**Ms Fatma:** I like dramatization, and I like using strips so as to uhmm re-tell the story. I think this is a very easy way of dealing with the lesson –or uhmm..dealing with wrapping-up of the lesson. It makes it easy. It makes it an easy task for the teacher ...

**Mr. Mahmoud:** Yes.

**Ms Fatma:** to achieve.

**Mr. Mahmoud:** Well...I'm sorry to say, what was the worst part of your lesson?

**Ms Fatma:** I think the worst part was a part concerning silent reading because I feel that some of the...some of the students were not highly involved ...or completely involved in practicing this activity.

- Mr. Mahmoud:** Yes.
- Ms Fatma:** Would you like to advise me on how to do...?
- Mr. Mahmoud:** Anyhow, it's not your mistake because some of the learners are Not uhhh motivated to work individually. But in fact, what I want to say, you did this part in particular in a good way because I see in some other classes that some teachers spoil the role of the student and they do not give them the chance to read silently. And if one of the students ah, does not know the meaning of a word or any other kind of thing, he volunteers to give him the meaning, so he renders him a disservice instead of serving him. Anyhow, you did this part in a good way.
- Ms Fatma:** Yea, thank you.
- Mr. Mahmoud:** What I want to say is that what would you do differently if you were going to teach that lesson again?
- Ms Fatma:** Really, what I'm thinking of is that I want to depend completely on some of the advanced... of the advance students in dealing with the different stages of the lesson.
- Mr. Mahmoud:** I noticed that the two boys in the back called Ayman and Ahmed, they were not following you. Why do you think that was?
- Ms Fatma:** You are right. From time to time I draw their attention, but not all the time. I don't want them to be frustrated.
- Mr. Mahmoud:** Yes.
- Ms Fatma:** You see? I know that I have different levels in my class, so I don't want to press them all the time so as not to be frustrated and not to hate the language. But sometimes I call them outside the class and I give them more activity.
- Mr. Mahmoud:** You dismiss them outside the class?
- Ms Fatma:** No, I call them. I bring them to my room, and I give them some more activity to practice.
- Mr. Mahmoud:** Well, Ms Fatma, I also noticed that the distribution of **the** questions was not fair. You focused only on excellent students, and slow achievers were not given the chance to talk or even express themselves. Is it because I'm here?
- Ms Fatma:** Really, I didn't notice that, and thank you for drawing my attention to such a point, and I will consider this later on.
- Mr. Mahmoud:** Yes. Thank you. Also, I'm sorry to say that you didn't give students enough wait time to ah..to answer questions, and you know this is against critical thinking. And...
- Ms Fatma:** Yes.
- Mr. Mahmoud:** As a teacher you know that we should encourage critical thinking. Yes. Why so?
- Ms Fatma:** You are right. I've been criticized many times..
- Mr. Mahmoud:** Yes.
- Ms Fatma:** For doing this, but really you know we have a lot of activities and We should finish quickly. Maybe because there are many activities, and I want to finish quickly.
- Mr. Mahmoud:** Yes. Also I noticed that before you finished giving instructions concerning the group work, your students started working before you finish. Why do you think this happened?
- Ms Fatma:** I think...I think because they got accustomed to the .. to the..to such

- an activity.
- Mr. Mahmoud:** Is it a class habit? Yes.
- Ms Fatma:** I think ..No..Maybe because they are aware of what they are going to do.
- Mr. Mahmoud:** Yes, They are aware of what they are going to do. They are well trained, you mean? Yes. What would you like to concentrate on for next time?
- Dr. Mohamed:** The supervisor and the teacher agree on the focus for the next visit.
- Ms Fatma:** As I've just told you that I'm trying to develop myself and to develop my techniques and ..so as to achieve all the goals.
- Mr. Mahmoud:** Fine. Well, Miss Fatma, can I have a look at your students' written work.
- Ms Fatma:** Yes, sure. Here you are.

### Check Written Work

- Mr. Mahmoud:** I do like the way of error correction, and the last thing I would like to remind you of is that you should take into consideration the points or the comments we agreed on,
- Ms Fatma:** Sure!
- Mr. Mahmoud:** And next time I see you, I hope that everything will be better. Thank you very much Ms Fatma. Thank you.
- Dr. Mohamed:** As we have seen, the supervisor, Mr. Mahmoud Othman, applied the three stage approach we presented earlier. The first stage is called "pre-observation meeting," the second stage is called "actual observation," and third stage is called "post-observation meeting." During the pre-observation stage, the supervisor looked at the lesson plan, discussed the teaching objectives and the techniques—activities for achieving them. He also asked her about the level of the students in the classroom. During the observation stage, the supervisor sat at the back of the classroom to observe and write his comments. He never interrupted Mrs. Fatma Elzahra. During the post-observation meeting, the supervisor began his comments with positive feedback. For example: "good," "well done," "you did a very good job, Mrs. Fatma Elzahra." He also asked her about her evaluation of the lesson, and that was a very important point, indeed-- to ask the teacher to evaluate his or her performance: the best part, the worst part, achieving the objectives of the lesson, etc. The teacher, after answering these questions, didn't hesitate again to ask the supervisor about his suggestions to control class during silent reading,...during one of the activities, which was silent reading. The supervisor also inquired about Ayman and Ahmed, who were not following Mrs. Fatma Elzahara. The teacher said that she didn't want to pressurize them in order to avoid..ah..negative reaction on their part.
- Mr. Mahmoud:** In fact, uhm, in the video clip I seem supportive with the teacher, but in fact, sometimes I'm not that supportive because ah, as you know, I'm overloaded with the supervising about 45 teachers in 15 schools. But in fact, I like this kind of clinical supervision for many reasons. First of all, it appeals to most of the teachers because the process of

supervision is a challenging one, and the challenge stems from the fact that all teachers are intimidated to the process of supervision in general because of the..the..the model of supervision they inherited, which is authoritarian, judgmental and, yes, and directive. So also the traditional way of supervision is unannounced. A supervisee might visit the class without telling the teacher, so that is why teachers don't like supervision in general. We try as much as we can to make them have a good approach and a good trend towards supervision. If any of my colleagues, the supervisors, see the clip I was doing with my colleague, Fatma, it's...it's preferable if he is able to achieve that kind of thing. But as I said before, I think that all my colleagues are overloaded with the supervision of so many teachers, and they might not be able to achieve that. But anyhow, there must be a balance between the judgmental and the developmental models of supervision.

Last, but not least, I would like to add something to my colleagues, the supervisors. I would like them to play the role of the mentor. The mentor. They shouldn't be running after mistakes because one of their responsibilities is to raise the level of the teacher professionally through a model lesson, a presentation, or practicing in a workshop, or in a training. And unless the teachers are on good terms with the supervisors, they will not accept anything from them. So as much as they can, I hope that supervisors will not be fault-hunters and they will be able to establish good and fair relationship with the teachers.