

BACKGROUND

It is commonly recognised that active learning allows learning to be both more personal and more memorable and for these reasons, is more effective. Learners who are 'engaged' by the lesson – by the teacher, the materials, the tasks, the activities – are more likely to have that learning make an impact on them. Teachers, therefore, often incorporate tasks in their teaching that require learners to *do* something in the lesson, for example, with the language or with each other.

TASK OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this observation is to allow you to become sensitive to the fact that 'learning by doing' embraces a large range of activities, and to analyse these activities as being *cognitive* (thinking), *affective* (feeling) and *physical*.

PROCEDURE

BEFORE THE LESSON

1. Arrange to observe a lesson. Prepare yourself for the 'nature of doing' by considering the sorts of things that teachers typically ask students to do. For example, tasks may involve:
 - thinking;
 - feeling;
 - acting;
 - moving about;
 - prioritising, ranking, making judgements;
 - negotiating, interacting with others;
 - consulting other sources of information.
2. Make yourself familiar with the chart opposite.

DURING THE LESSON

1. Observe the lesson from the point of view of what the learners actually do.
2. Use the chart to help you collect data from the lesson. Note down:
 - what the learners do;
 - what this involves;
 - what you think the teacher's purpose is.

Add any comments in the far right column, for example, whether you would label the activity cognitive, affective, physical.

What learners do	What this involves	Teacher's purpose	Comment
<i>Grouping words according to meaning</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Referring to dictionary - Consulting other students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teach reference skills - Teach two layers of meaning: denotation and connotation 	<i>Cognitive</i>

earner as doer

AFTER THE LESSON

1. Together with the classroom teacher, consider the balance of cognitive, affective and physical activities involved in the lesson. Discuss your views on this.
2. Considering the data you have collected, which activities in the lesson do you consider were the most valuable for the learners? Why were they valuable?
3. While we might, as teachers, encourage active involvement in the lesson, what happens when this planned learning style is incongruent or incompatible with a learner's own learning style? To what degree should a teacher compromise their preferred teaching methodology so as to cater for a learner's own preferred learning methodology?

REFLECTION

Use this lesson as a mirror of your own teaching. What balance of activities does your teaching typically involve? Has your awareness of these factors altered in any way that may influence your approach?