

Play-Based Learning Classroom Observation Tool

Instructions for the observer

Before you join the classroom, explain to the teacher that you would like to sit quietly in the back of the class and observe her/his teaching and learning practices during their lesson. Mention that you will not interrupt any of her/his activities but just silently observe. Assure the teacher that you are not in the classroom to evaluate her/his teaching performance. Emphasize that you are there to support her/him to develop the skills to deliver play-based learning lessons. Invite her/him to carry out her/his class as if you were not there.

Full name of observer	:	
Full name of teacher	:	
Sex of teacher (F or M)	:	
District / sector	:	
Name of school	:	
Subject	:	
Grade level	:	
Unit and lesson	:	
Total # of pupils (F and M)	: F	M
Ask teacher the # of pupils with disability	:	
Date of observation	:	
Time (XX:YY AM / PM)	: Start time:	End time:

Observations during teaching		Circle yes/no
1	Does the teacher make use of a written lesson plan for the class being observed?	Yes No
2	Has the teacher identified and communicated to the class the learning outcome for the lesson?	Yes No
3a	Does the class play a game, sing a song, recite a rhyme, or engage in any other playful activity during the lesson? * Please adjust examples of playful activity according to what is appropriate and relevant to the context.	Yes No
3b	Does the lesson make use of a local game?	Yes No
4	Is the game or play appropriate for the lesson by supporting the delivery of the learning outcome?	Yes No
5	Are there materials available for pupils to use in the classroom?	Yes No
6	Do the pupils have a chance to work in groups (of any size) or partners?	Yes No
7	Is there any part of the lesson where pupils move their bodies or use/work with materials without being directed by the teacher? (i.e. not following specific directions from the teacher but instead with some freedom to direct how they use the materials themselves)	Yes No

Observations during teaching		Circle yes/no
8	<p>Do the pupils look like they are enjoying themselves?</p> <p>(e.g. smiling, laughing, talking to each other and the teacher, etc.)</p> <p>* Please adjust examples of enjoyment according to what is appropriate and relevant to the context.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>No</p>
9	<p>Is the teacher moving around the room to observe, ask questions, provide materials, provide support to pupils, etc., during the lesson?</p> <p>(i.e. not standing at the front of the class for the whole lesson period)</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>No</p>
10	<p>Do the pupils have any opportunities to make decisions about their learning?</p> <p>(e.g. selecting group members, selecting partners, how they record their learning in their books, choice to respond to questions from the teacher, etc.)</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>No</p>
11	<p>Do the pupils play inside or outside the classroom?</p>	<p>Inside</p> <p>Outside</p> <p>Both</p>

Please note any additional information on play that you view as useful or necessary to understand this observation:

Thank you so much for the opportunity to observe your class.

BID¹ feedback examples

Right after the observation, provide feedback to the teacher in a place conducive for a good coaching conversation.

Below are some examples of BID statements that you can refer to as part of your coaching conversation with the teacher. The statements are merely examples and are all hypothetical to help you build your skills in providing reinforcement and/or development feedback; they are not meant as scripts. It is important that you make your own statement depending on what truly has transpired in the classroom during your observation to make the coaching conversation more natural, free-flowing, and genuine.

Observation #1: Does the teacher make use of a written lesson plan for the class being observed?



Reinforcement: (B) I saw that you wrote down your lesson plan and used it to help you remember questions that you could ask pupils about their prior learning. **(I)** As a result, the pupils were able to relate the new learning with what they already know. **(D)** Did you feel that planning how to introduce the lesson helped achieve the learning outcomes? Explain.



Development: (B) I noticed that you had notes on your lesson plan, but you did not refer to it during the class. **(I)** The impact of this was that you facilitated the local game in a way that did not bring out the intended connections to the learning outcomes. **(D)** Next time, how could you use your lesson plan to help you better prepare for the class?

Observation #2: Has the teacher identified and communicated to the class the learning outcome for the lesson?



Reinforcement: (B) I saw that you developed a Civics learning outcome that required pupils to use higher order thinking and you shared it with the pupils in age-appropriate language. **(I)** The impact of this was that your pupils went beyond stating the school rules to assessing why the rules are helpful. **(D)** In the next Civics lesson, how can you create a learning outcome that will continue to deepen their level of thinking?



Development: (B) I noticed that you did not mention the vocabulary learning outcome in today's lesson. **(I)** The pupils did not know that they should try to learn the words and ended up playing the game without using the vocabulary on the board. **(D)** At which moments in your lesson could you have shared the learning outcome or reiterated it to help the pupils know the aim of the activities?

¹ Behaviour – Impact – Do

Observation #3a: Does the class play a game, sing a song, recite a rhyme, or engage in any other playful activity during the lesson?



Reinforcement: (B) There were different kinds of activities that I saw you use during your Civic Education class. You started with a rhyme, then asked the pupils to make their own rhymes which they then must use for the game you prepared for them. **(I)** The result was that the pupils learned the difference between rights and responsibilities very quickly. **(D)** Which other subject do you think this approach will be good for besides Civic Education?



Development: (B) During your Civics class, I saw that you used the same song from your English and Mathematics lessons with them. **(I)** The pupils were so familiar with the song that most of them were not paying attention to the activity. **(D)** What other activities besides singing a song do you think you could use next time so pupils can pay more attention and show interest?

Observation #3b: Does the lesson make use of a local game?



Reinforcement: (B) I saw that you changed the local game so that pupils would match cards instead of slippers. **(I)** The pupils were excited to play the game and practiced the learning outcome. **(D)** What is another local game that you can modify to teach an upcoming lesson?



Development: (B) I noticed that in your lessons, you often invite pupils to take flashcards and complete a task with the words. **(I)** The pupils do not seem very interested in the activity. **(D)** How could you incorporate the flashcards into a local game so that pupils can work with the concepts while enjoying their learning?

Observation #4: Is the game or play appropriate for the lesson by supporting the delivery of the learning outcome?



Reinforcement: (B) I saw that you modified the local game so that pupils would need to do multiplication as they complete their turn. **(I)** As a result, the pupils were focused on solving the equations and practiced the skills in the learning outcome as they played. **(D)** In your planning, what did you think about to align the game with the learning outcome? How can the strategies you used help you modify games for other lessons?



Development: (B) I saw that you created a game where the pupils read the vocabulary words aloud. **(I)** As a result, the pupils could recall the vocabulary words at the end of the lesson. They could not explain the meaning of the words. **(D)** Next time, how could you modify the game so that pupils are engaging with the meaning of the words?

Observation #5: Are there materials available for pupils to use in the classroom?



Reinforcement: (B) I saw all the pupils had their own sticks, stones, and paper to use during the play-based learning (PBL) lesson. **(I)** This made everyone participate actively and enjoy the activity since they did not have to take turns using the materials. **(D)** How can you ensure that in all your PBL activities, the materials will always be enough for all the pupils?



Development: (B) I saw that there were only 3 sticks, 3 stones, and 1 paper to use during the PBL lesson. **(I)** This made pupils restless and uninterested with the game because they had to wait a long time for their turn. **(D)** What could you have done differently with the materials so that all the pupils could actively participate and enjoy the activity?

Observation #6: Do the pupils have a chance to work in groups (of any size) or partners?



Reinforcement: (B) I observed you used different ways to group the pupils. First you asked them to work in pairs, then in groups of four, and then groups of eight. **(I)** Because of this, the pupils were all excited and eager to participate in the game and answer the questions that you asked during the lesson. **(D)** How did you manage to have the pupils behave well despite this movement and changing of groups?



Development: (B) I saw that the pupils worked only in two groups and did not have a chance to work with others. **(I)** This made the more assertive pupils play and learn the whole time while most of the pupils just stood there and watched. **(D)** The next time you do this game, what would you change so that all the pupils will have a chance to play the game and share their answers?

Observation #7: Is there any part of the lesson where the pupils move their bodies or use/work with materials without being directed by the teacher?



Reinforcement: (B) During the PBL activity, I heard twice you were encouraging the pupils to think for themselves and discuss with their seatmates how the different materials could best be used. **(I)** This made the pupils come up with different ideas on their own and then happily try other ideas when it did not work. **(D)** Did you find it easy or difficult to let the pupils decide for themselves instead of you giving them specific directions? Why or how so?



Development: (B) During the PBL activity, I observed that some of the pupils were trying to do the activity differently, but you insisted that they strictly follow your directions. **(I)** This made some of those pupils with good ideas lose interest in the activity and they

just ended up fidgeting. **(D)** What do you think could have happened if you allowed the pupils to try out other ideas? What life skills could have been developed if they did so?

Observation #8: Do the pupils look like they are enjoying themselves?



Reinforcement: (B) I could not help but notice all the smiles and laughter of the pupils during the activity. And you were smiling and laughing with them! **(I)** The learning atmosphere was so joyful that all the pupils were finding the multiplication lesson not hard at all and enjoyable too. **(D)** How can you make this joyful learning environment move beyond PBL activities?



Development: (B) I noticed that even though the PBL activity was very active, the pupils were not smiling, laughing, nor talking to each other. **(I)** This made the pupils lose interest in the activity and the lesson. **(D)** What do you think happened? What will you do differently so that the activity becomes enjoyable next time?

Observation #9: Is the teacher moving around the room to observe, ask questions, provide materials, provide support to pupils, etc. during the lesson?



Reinforcement: (B) I observed that all throughout the lesson, you were moving around the room asking questions, observing, giving feedback, and checking the materials for the pupils. **(I)** The result of this was that almost everyone understood the lesson and that even those who don't easily follow the lesson were finding it easy. **(D)** How else can you show your support to the pupils?



Development: (B) I observed that during the whole 35-minute lesson, you stayed at the centre of the room. **(I)** This prevented you from seeing the pupils at the back who were not paying attention and those who were not following the lesson. **(D)** What do you think you need to do so that you can observe everyone in the room and check if all the pupils are following the activity?

Observation #10: Do the pupils have any opportunities to make decisions about their learning?



Reinforcement: (B) During the literacy lesson, I heard you invite the pupils to choose their partner, and then later to choose their group members for the activity. **(I)** This made the pupils very excited and busy making decisions on who can go in which group. **(D)** What do you think is one benefit for pupils when they make decisions in the classroom?



Development: (B) I observed that during the literacy lesson, the pupils were not given opportunity to make decisions on which group they could join and who they could work with. **(I)** Because they did not like their groupings, many of the pupils were not doing

the activity. **(D)** What do you think is one benefit for pupils when they make decisions in the classroom?

Observation #11: Do the pupils play inside or outside the classroom?



Reinforcement: (B) I observed that even though the local game you used required a bigger space, it worked very well because of the modifications you made to the game. **(I)** The result was that the pupils came out with creative ways to play the game to make up for the lack of space. **(D)** Which other subject do you think this modified game will also be good for?



Development: (B) I observed that the local game you used required double the size of the classroom so that pupils can move freely. **(I)** The playing space was so small that only half of the pupils were able to do the activity. **(D)** What modifications do you think you could have made for that same game to work indoors?



The **LEGO** Foundation 

This resource was developed as part of a technical assistance partnership between the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE) and Right To Play (RTP),² focusing on primary education. The partnership seeks to support the national education priority of improving learning outcomes by strengthening play-based learning in schools in Sierra Leone. The partnership also includes BRAC,³ who are focusing on early childhood development/education. Together, MBSSE, Right To Play, and BRAC aim to ensure a smooth transition from early childhood development to primary school.

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² More information about Right To Play can be found at <http://www.righttoplay.com>.

³ More information about BRAC can be found at <https://bracinternational.org>.