

UNIVERSIDAD DEL VALLE DE GUATEMALA
Facultad de Educación



Classroom Observation in Private Schools in Guatemala City: an
exploratory study of teachers' perceptions

Trabajo de graduación en modalidad de tesis presentado por:

Virginia Alejandra Escobar García 10327

Para optar al grado académico de Licenciada en Educación con especialidad en
“English Language Teaching”

Advisor: PhD. Jamey Burho

Guatemala, Diciembre de 2022

UNIVERSIDAD DEL VALLE DE GUATEMALA
Facultad de Educación



Classroom Observation in Private Schools in Guatemala City: an
exploratory study of teachers' perceptions

Trabajo de graduación en modalidad de tesis presentado por:

Virginia Alejandra Escobar García 10327

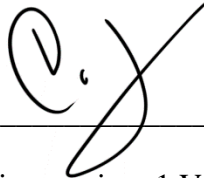
Para optar al grado académico de Licenciada en Educación con especialidad en
“English Language Teaching”

Advisor: PhD. Jamey Burho

Guatemala, Diciembre de 2022

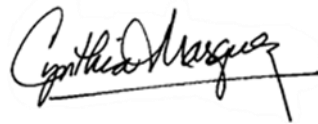
Jamey Burho

Advisor: PhD. Jamey Burho Vo.Bo.



Thesis examiner 1 Vo.Bo.

Rodrigo Cortés



Thesis examiner 2 Vo.Bo.

Cynthia Márquez

Jamey Burho

Thesis examiner 3 Vo.Bo.

PhD. Jamey Burho

Fecha de aprobación: Guatemala, 06 de diciembre de 2022

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my advisor, PhD. Jamey Burho for her continuous support, patience, motivation, and immense knowledge that she was always willing to share with me. Her guidance helped me and motivated me throughout this research and the writing of this thesis. I could not have imagined having a better advisor and mentor for this research as Jamey.

I would also like to thank the rest of my thesis committee for their comments and questions during the examination.

My sincere gratitude also goes to M. A. Karin María Rossbach Lemus for her unconditional support and words of encouragement throughout the process.

Finally, I would like to thank my family: my parents Aistulfo Escobar and Cristina García for always believing in me and their unconditional love and support in all the stages of my life. To my sister Ana Lucía for helping me when I needed it the most. And to my husband Carlos for his support and love all the way here.

INDEX

Acknowledgements.....	ii
I. Abstract.....	1
II. Introduction.....	2
III. Problem Statement.....	3
IV. Literature Review.....	5
A. Teachers' perceptions of classroom observation	5
B. Reliability of the observation process	6
C. Comparison of various countries' teacher observation systems	8
D. Non-evaluative peer observation in post-secondary institutions.....	11
V. Conclusions.....	14
VI. Objectives	16
VII. Justification	17
VIII. Research Methods	19
A. Purpose Statement.....	19
B. Research Design.....	19
C. Participants.....	20
D. Data Collection.....	20
E. Data Analysis.....	21
F. Ethical Considerations	22
IX. Work plan.....	23
X. Findings.....	25
A. Announced vs Unannounced Observations	25
B. Content of Observation	26
C. Purpose of Observation	27
D. Feedback.....	28
E. Observer's behavior	29
F. Timing	30
G. Teachers' feelings.....	31
XI. Discussion/Analysis.....	32
Limitations	34
XII. Conclusions.....	35

XIII.	Recommendations	37
XIV.	References	40
	Other references	41
XV.	Appendix / Annexes.....	42
	a. Semi-structured one-on-one interviews	42
	b. Semi-structured focus group interview	43
	c. Glossary	46

Index of tables

Table 1 – Participant Characteristics.....	24
--	----

I. Abstract

The implementation of an effective classroom observation system is needed to enhance the quality of education in underdeveloped countries like Guatemala. However, classroom observation is not a common practice at public and low socioeconomic status schools in Guatemala, and where implemented, teachers' perception and experience of classroom observation is not always positive. Consequently, they do not always perceive the potential benefits of related feedback for improving their practice. This qualitative study explored the perception of 15 Guatemalan teachers of their current observation systems in three private schools of Guatemala City. The purpose of this study is to understand the aspects teachers like and dislike about classroom observation as well as their suggestions to improve this process. Administrators may benefit from the findings, implications, and recommendations of this study for potentially improving their current systems. Findings show that aspects that teachers like and dislike about classroom observation are related to whether observations are announced or unannounced, the content of observation formats, the formative or summative purpose of observations, the quality of feedback they receive, the observers' behavior, the timing of observations, and the feelings that as teachers experience before and during the observation process. Teachers are aware of the importance of classroom observation as a tool to improve their practice. Therefore, the implications for improving and reinforcing the current classroom observation systems are discussed.

Keywords: Classroom observation, observers, feedback, teachers' feelings, formative, summative.

II. Introduction

The ultimate goal of teaching is to prepare and empower students with the knowledge and skills to successfully perform in different social environments and professional fields. This critical act is carried about by teachers in all schools all around the world. However, schools need to ensure that teachers are constantly improving their practice to provide students with relevant educational experiences which will help them reach this goal. Therefore, administrators use classroom observation as a process to watch teachers' performance in their classroom, assess their practice, and offer them feedback to make the necessary improvements. Unfortunately, teachers usually dislike being observed so they do not take advantage of the benefits they could get through classroom observation.

In Guatemala, classroom observation is not a common practice among schools, but some private institutions carry out observations to assure the quality of the education they offer. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore teachers' perception of the classroom observation system of three different schools around Guatemala City. Teachers participated in one-on-one interviews to share their experiences and perceptions of classroom observation and in two focus groups to offer recommendations to improve their systems.

III. Problem Statement

Classroom observation is used in many countries to evaluate teachers' performance and provide related feedback to improve the quality of teachers' instruction. Montoya et al., (2020) demonstrated that classroom observation can provide critical information about the quality of classroom atmosphere, teacher-student interactions, the effectiveness of instructional strategies, and efficient use of time and material resources. Despite its potential usefulness, however, research has demonstrated that many teachers, even the most experienced ones, dislike and even fear being observed, as they find classroom observation stressful and intimidating (Aubusson et al., 2007; Borich 2008, Gebhard & Oprandy 1999). When teachers can be open to observations and related feedback, the observation process can become part of a continuous, thoughtfully planned professional development program that can potentially greatly boost teachers' effectiveness.

Compared to the global context, teacher observation in Guatemala is a less well-established process for improving teacher practice. In 2018, the Guatemalan Ministry of Education published a document "Modelo de Acompañamiento Pedagógico en Guatemala" which describes the importance of classroom observation for guiding teachers in their professional practice (Wise, 2018). However, it is highly questionable how this theory is effectively applied. Ureta et al., (2019) presented a timeline of Guatemala's educational policies, showing how teacher professionalization programs, including teacher observation, are generally created within four-year presidential administrations, and then abandoned when the next presidential administration begins. Thus, such policies are repeatedly created and never properly implemented, and teachers in the public and private sectors in Guatemala often lack the experience of receiving high-quality observations and related feedback.

Because of this lack of policy coherence, classroom observation has been poorly implemented in many Guatemalan schools. As a Guatemalan educator, I have observed that in some cases, teachers receive their observation results, and they are only asked to sign their observation forms. Later, teachers are often required to attend a professional development workshop to improve teaching areas in general, often unrelated to the feedback they received. In other cases, observations have been used to punish teachers. For example, if any complaints emerged about a teacher, administrators would step into the teacher's classroom, observe the teacher, and then justify with the observations in hand the termination of that teacher's contract. As a result of such misuse of teacher observation, teachers' perception of classroom observation is negative and causes fear and stress.

Fortunately, the school where I have worked for the last eight years has a positive and constructive classroom observation practice that has helped me develop many skills regarding instruction, classroom management, use of evaluation instruments, and reflective teaching. I consider it important to explore the positive aspects of a classroom observation practice in the Guatemalan education system so that schools throughout Guatemala can implement a classroom observation system that benefits teachers and improves their practice. The purpose of this research is to understand how teachers from three different private schools in Guatemala perceive the observation and feedback process and to examine how observations are performed as well as the quality of feedback teachers receive. Findings will indicate how administrators can create observation and feedback protocols that genuinely benefit teachers. If administrators are empowered with this information, they can create effective observation systems for their individual schools, which is especially critical due to the political difficulty of creating a strong, reliable teacher observation system for all of Guatemala.

IV. Literature Review

Classroom observation involves more than just observing. It is a process that has as a goal the development and improvement of teachers' practices. To fully understand this complex process, this study reviews empirical studies that cover different areas and types of observation: (1) teachers' perception of classroom observation, (2) reliability of the observation process, (3) comparison of various countries' teacher observation systems, and (4) non-evaluative peer observation in post-secondary institutions. I will conclude this review with recommendations for related research for our Guatemalan context.

A. Teachers' perceptions of classroom observation

In the first study in this review, Lasagabaster and Sierra (2011) examined the perception teachers have towards observation by focusing their analysis on three types of attitudinal components: the *cognitive* component related to thoughts and beliefs, the *affective* component related to feelings towards observation, and *readiness for action* component related to the willingness of teachers to being observed. They conducted their survey in the Basque Autonomous Community in Spain, including 185 teachers from different sectors: 77 from infant/primary, 47 from secondary, 39 from university, and 22 from the private sector. Survey items asked about teachers' personal experiences, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes towards classroom observation as well as their view on participation in observation activities. Results related to the *cognitive* component (thoughts and beliefs) showed that classroom observation was "fairly or very important" to 84.8% of teachers. However, 65.9% of teachers believed that observations did not help them improve their teaching because they did not get proper feedback from the observer. Only 34.1% of participating teachers found observation useful because they were able to improve in

lesson planning and they could share their opinions with the observers. Regarding the *affective* component (feelings), the most frequent reactions among participants were the uncomfortable feeling of being watched, and feelings of distrust, insecurity, and anxiety about having an observer in class. Most teachers in the sample preferred observations to be performed by a colleague or a teacher-trainer. Finally, regarding the *readiness for action* component (willingness to be observed) when teachers were asked about being engaged in observation activities, only 56.6% answered that they were willing to be observed in the class while 38.5% were reluctant. On the other hand, findings in the open-ended item responses showed that teachers wanted a friendly and supportive observation environment with a familiar and experienced observer. Teachers believed the observer should affect the class as little as possible. Teachers wanted their observations to have pre-established observation objectives, with follow-up feedback that is constructive. Finally, teachers believed that observations must be systematic, and voluntary. An implication of these results is that administrators evaluate their current classroom observation system so they can take teachers' needs and preferences into consideration, especially concerning their thoughts, feelings, and their readiness for an active engagement in the observation process.

B. Reliability of the observation process

Considering the needs teachers voiced in the Lasagabaster and Sierra (2011) study, it is necessary that systems of classroom observation must be reliable and fair. Gitomer et al., (2014) carried out a study that documented aspects of observation that can ensure a reliable evaluation process. The authors used an observation instrument called CLASS-S (Classroom Assessment Scoring System for Secondary Classrooms) which included three domains: (1) emotional support, (2) classroom organization, and (3) instructional support. The researchers used the CLASS-S

instrument to evaluate the evidence on the aspects of instructional practice in algebra classrooms to consider (1) the variance of individual teacher's score, (2) how well observers were able to evaluate practice, and (3) how well teachers were able to evaluate their own practice to determine how much scores agreed or not. The study included 82 Algebra I teachers in middle and high schools. Five observers completed the observations and observed each classroom four to five times over one school year. Finally, participating teachers completed a self-report instrument (CLASS-T) which asked teachers to provide an assessment of their skills on the ten dimensions of CLASS-S using a 5-point Likert scale. Researchers evaluated observers' agreement in a number of ways. First, they carried out a calibration process. To do this, videos that had been scored live as a part of the study were selected for calibration and scored by three "master coders" who were members of the CLASS-S development team at the University of Virginia. In the next step of calibration, observers coded the same video lesson the master coders did. Observational scores on the calibration videos collected serve as the basis of the assessment of rater agreement. Results showed no significant differences between the domains of Emotional Support and Instructional Support but there was no consistent agreement in the domain of Classroom Organization. The second way authors examined rater judgment was by considering the stability of ratings over time. Results showed that Emotional Support and Instructional Support scores from both live and video observations decreased across days, while scores for Classroom Organization were fairly constant over time. Moreover, the patterns for self-reports were quite different from the CLASS-S observations. Teachers tended to rate themselves higher on Emotional Support and Classroom Organization and somewhat lower and more similarly on instructional support. Results showed that observers had trouble scoring accurately and that teachers had the most difficulty evaluating in the same way external observers evaluated them. Thus Gitomer et al., (2014) demonstrated that

even after following this complex process, reliability in classroom observation is difficult to achieve. The authors concluded that there should be shared conversations of the clear images of what teaching quality looks like for it to be successfully evaluated.

In another study on the accuracy of teacher evaluation, van der Lans et al., (2016) investigated the minimum number of observations, within a school year, that are required to guarantee that teachers receive feedback with modest reliability. Their method consisted of peer observation by using the International Comparative Analysis of Learning and Teaching (Rasch-scale observation instrument) in which three different teachers' peers observed a lesson taught by each of the teachers. They conducted 198 classroom observations by 62 colleagues of 69 teachers working at eight different schools across the Netherlands. Results revealed that 27% of the variation in observed scores was due to true differences in teachers' skills and that evaluations of the same teacher can vary substantially among observers. This means that reliable feedback required at least three lesson visits by three different observers, which represented an unrealistic amount per visit a year. A summative decision would require more than 10 visits, which would take about four years to gather. Therefore, the authors suggested the alternative of combining different measures such as student ratings, classroom observation, and student achievement to increase the teachers' evaluation reliability instead of relying on classroom observation alone.

C. Comparison of various countries' teacher observation systems

In order to understand how classroom observations can best be used, it is important to gain a comparative, international perspective of this system of teacher evaluation. Martínez et al., (2016) examined a purposely selected sample of sixteen classroom observation systems in six countries (Singapore, Japan, Chile, the United States, Australia, and Germany) to understand how

different systems around the world use classroom observation to inform teacher evaluation and professional development. First, they collected data from multiple sources through publicly available reports, online documentation, and relevant publications. Second, lead personnel at each participating system provided a range of different materials and documents like unpublished technical reports, internal research documents, policy guidelines, and directives, scoring rubrics, and observation manuals, among others. Finally, the researchers conducted structured interviews, by telephone or in-person, with key personnel or experts with direct knowledge of each system to fill the gaps in the information available in the materials and to obtain additional detail about the historical and policy context for each participating teacher observation system. Areas of analysis included the type of system, the country, number of participating students, the year of inception, the framework or standards of practice, the emphasis and target of observation, the weight of the observation in overall teacher evaluation, and the role of observation in professional development. Finally, the authors compared within these systems which teachers are observed and how often, who observes, whether observations are announced or not, the required training of observers, and the quality of the observation data.

Results showed that systems have some similarities but also important variations. For example, regarding the target of observation, some systems like Toledo and German focus primarily on novice or in-training teachers while the one in Singapore uses observation for summative aspects of evaluation for teachers in training and hiring decisions. In all systems in general, veteran teachers are observed less frequently, feedback is less systematic, and the consequences of the evaluation are less critical. The Tennessee or Chicago systems include all teachers by providing them with different schedules of observations at different career stages. In regard to weights and roles of observation, researchers found that classroom observation is the

most important component in all systems, both in terms of summative weight and value in informing professional development. Classroom observation provides an overall indicator of effectiveness, so all systems share the discourse of formative evaluation focused on improving teaching. Most of the new large-scale observation systems in the U.S. require that trained observers (and/or school administrators) meet with teachers, both before the observation to discuss focus areas, and after observation. Post-observation meetings are used to debrief teachers on the results of the observation, discuss them in more detail, and delineate plans for moving the teacher forward, including appropriate professional development.

Classroom observation mainly differs in terms of how it is carried out in practice and the format used. Novice teachers are observed more frequently than tenured and experienced teachers and, in most cases, they are evaluated on specific aspects, so the observation formats vary from one aspect to another. Another difference is that some systems in the U.S. use announced visits while others use a combination of announced and unannounced. Most of the systems use direct observation, while the Chilean system used video-recordings of classroom teaching. People in charge of observation involve principals, school administrators, external raters, and trained experienced teachers, but in all systems observers undergo training before they can conduct official observation ratings.

In general, it is important to adopt a comparative perspective on the good practices of classroom observation around the world since it is valuable for teachers to understand the appropriate uses of classroom observation for assessing and improving teaching practices. This new perspective requires each context to define the model of instruction desired to develop a local framework that involves the ideal combination of teacher competencies, psychological traits, and observable classroom behaviors to include. Districts, states, and countries need to decide whether

teacher evaluation and development systems will be designed in a standardized way or as a holistic system. Regarding reliability and validity, schools should decide how much resources they are willing to invest in the training of observers, how many observations will be performed during the year per teacher, and the different modalities of observation they would adopt to ensure reliable results. Finally, it is essential to decide what the purpose of observation will be to determine whether observations will serve for informing formative or summative decisions.

D. Non-evaluative peer observation in post-secondary institutions

The previous studies mainly examined teacher observation systems that are evaluative in nature. By contrast, in non-evaluative classroom observations, an observer watches another colleague's teaching, without necessarily judging their practice or being required to give feedback. Lowder et al., (2017) evaluated teachers' perception of a non-evaluative observation program called "Teaching Partners Program". The study was carried out at Kennesaw State University with a total of 49 pairs of participants over a five-semester period, split into 28 pairs consisting of partners from similar disciplines. In this program two faculty members met, observed a period of each other's class, reflected, and then discussed strengths and areas where improvements might have been warranted. Later, participants completed an anonymous survey, developed by the Research Learning Community members, to offer their feedback. Half of the participants had participated in this program more than once which suggests that many participants found value in the program. Participants indicated the program broadened their exposure to teaching styles and methodology and provided them with great tips for improving instruction. Participants appreciated receiving feedback in a low-stress environment, and they believed the experience could improve their teaching and be beneficial for their tenure portfolio. Finally, repeat participants (43 total, or

52% of all participants) stated that every time they participated, they learned something new to improve their own teaching. These findings show that unlike traditional observation, peer observation is meant to be formative and instructional, rather than evaluative. Therefore, a successful peer observation program would enhance communication between faculty members and would pave a way for non-threatening, constructive feedback. These findings are especially relevant, considering that peer observation programs are an inexpensive form of professional development.

In the same line of non-evaluative observation but now with faculty members observing outstanding colleagues, Mueller and Schroeder (2018) explored the effect of a non-evaluative observation initiative on teaching development at another post-secondary institution. The initiative, called “Open Classroom Week”, was started at the University of Calgary in Canada with the purpose to improve teaching and learning to lead to higher quality teaching. This initiative is a campus-wide event, during which faculty members can observe colleagues’ classrooms over a one-week period. The goals are to provide faculty with opportunities to observe how others apply teaching strategies, to encourage and initiate teaching development for observers rather than those being observed, and to provide learning opportunities that are low-risk and non-evaluative. Researchers carried out the study through the examination of two iterations of Open Classroom Week in which 24 instructors volunteered to open their classrooms to observers. Instructors were chosen if they had a strong reputation within the university community, if they had received a teaching award, or if authorities nominated them as strong instructors. Then, 36 observers accepted the invitation to participate, and they were asked to take the role of a learner within the classes they visited by following the behavioral cues of students. Observers also set learning goals before their observations. Instructors reported that they learned specific techniques and classroom

management, and how to foster student engagement and learning. Participants of the program reported gaining more benefit from observing than from the feedback they received from being observed.

These positive findings show that non-evaluative classroom observation is not only inexpensive, but it is also effective as a professional development strategy because teachers learn about different techniques and strategies that can be implemented in their own teaching practice.

V. Conclusions

Classroom observation is key to evaluate teacher performance and help teachers develop and improve their practice. However, findings have shown that teachers' perception of classroom observation is negative. According to the studies reviewed, teachers usually feel uncomfortable and anxious when having an observer in class and also believed that observations did not help them improve their teaching because they did not get proper feedback from the observers. Another important aspect found in the articles is that teachers consider it necessary to have pre-established observation objectives with follow-up constructive feedback.

Reliability of classroom observation is an important issue since results show that observation requires ratings of at least three observations by different observers. Since it would be impossible to conduct an adequate number of classroom observations to achieve reliability of rating, it is suggested to combine classroom observation with different measures such as student ratings, student achievement, along with classroom observation for it to be more reliable and feasible.

Even though the studies reviewed are not from Guatemala, the analysis of the different classroom observation systems from six different countries shows that Guatemala still has a long way to go regarding the preparation of professionals to conduct classroom observation. In general, it is important to understand how classroom observation works in developed countries to adopt and implement their good practices in our own system, such as: (1) choosing which teachers (novice, in-training, or veteran) will be observed and the purpose of their observation, (2) choosing who will perform the observation and how well-trained observers are for that purpose, (3) determining how often observations will be performed and whether they will be announced or

unannounced, (4) defining the summative or formative weight of the observations, and (5) determining how much impact observation has on the professional development of teachers.

Finally, most teachers in the studies reviewed expressed they prefer observations to be performed by a colleague or a teacher-trainer, or that they prefer to reflect on their own practice by observing exemplary practices from more advanced colleagues. Therefore, it is important to consider peer evaluation programs and non-evaluative teaching observations as valuable additions to teaching development efforts in education, especially since they may be inexpensive and beneficial forms of professional development. However, the studies reviewed show that these practices are more common in post-secondary teaching than in lower levels.

The Ministry of Education of Guatemala has issued documents regarding the job of pedagogical assessors that can help teachers improve their practice through classroom observation, but these documents need to be revised, improved, and properly implemented through pertinent processes in all schools, public and private. Considering that in general classroom observation practices are not well perceived among teachers but at the same time they are fundamental to guarantee the quality of education of schools all over the world, it is important to understand how classroom observation is performed in Guatemala. Currently, little is known about how teachers in Guatemala perceive classroom observation and the real impact it has on their practice, so we can only make a change until we identify the changes that need to be made.

VI. Objectives

Classroom observation is essential to evaluate teachers' performance and provide related feedback to improve the quality of education. Therefore, teachers' perception of observation regarding reliability, the purpose of observation, and the potential benefits they can get from feedback and the different observation practices should be positive, so they can embrace this process and make the best out of this practice. In pursuit of understanding this complex process, I explored the perception of Guatemalan teachers of Guatemala City of the current observation systems in their schools to identify the positive aspects that should be reinforced and the negative aspects that should be addressed, in order to develop suggestions for an effective classroom observation practice to be implemented in Guatemala. I proposed the following research questions:

1. What do Guatemalan teachers in Guatemala City like about classroom observation?
2. What aspects do teachers dislike about classroom observation?
3. How do teachers think classroom observation can be improved in their contexts?

VII. Justification

I conducted my qualitative research with teachers from three different private schools in Guatemala located in zones 12, 15, and 16. The first school is a single-sex school, girls only, with students from ages 2 to 17, from Preschool to 12th grade. Students who attend the school are from an intermediate to high-intermediate socioeconomic status. The second school is also a single-sex school (girls only) with students from Preschool to 12th grades. Students who attend the school are from an intermediate to high-intermediate socioeconomic status. And finally, the third school is a coeducational and bilingual private school (English-Spanish), with students from Preschool to 12th grades. Students who attend the school are from a high-intermediate to a high socioeconomic status. The study included a sample of 15 teachers, males and females, from preschool, elementary, and secondary levels, from five to 20 years of teaching experience. Teachers that participated in this study are from a low to high-intermediate socioeconomic status living in different locations in Guatemala City.

During the past thirteen years, I have noticed that classroom observation was not well-implemented in the different schools where I have worked. I also noticed that teachers generally have perceived this practice negatively. Thus, it is important to determine the factors that affect teachers' perception of observation and to understand what improvements might be made to help teachers welcome the process of being observed. At the same time, the previous schools I worked for did not have a clear classroom observation system. By contrast, at my current school, we have a regular classroom observations program. Not surprisingly, teachers still show resistance to being observed. If it is understood the reasons why teachers have a negative attitude toward classroom

observation this practice can be improved so that teachers can welcome this invaluable learning opportunity.

My findings have the potential to inform a future and contextualized proposal for improving teacher observation in Guatemala. These findings are especially relevant to the Guatemalan context because they will represent the experience of teachers of an intermediate socioeconomic status who teach in private schools, and many schools in Guatemala have similar demographics. These findings might also be relevant to private institutions in a lower socioeconomic status since teachers in this sector face the challenge of teaching in their communities with fewer resources and less guidance, and these teachers also deserve the opportunity to improve their teaching practice.

VIII. Research Methods

A. Purpose Statement

I conducted this phenomenological qualitative study to explore teachers' perception of classroom observation in three private schools in Guatemala City. Findings might be used to inform administrators how to create observation and feedback protocols that will benefit teachers according to their contexts. I proposed the following research questions: 1) What do teachers like about classroom observation? 2) What aspects do teachers dislike about classroom observation? 3) How do teachers think classroom observation can be improved in their contexts?

B. Research Design

Creswell (2013) explains that a phenomenological study is used to describe the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences. The number of participants in a phenomenological study range from three to four, to 10 to 15 individuals. As part of this phenomenological design, I collected data through focus groups and individual interviews to explore with a group of individuals (teachers) who have all experienced the phenomenon (classroom observation). I explored the attitudes that teachers show towards classroom observation and the needs teachers have for this observation process to become better and more beneficial for them.

C. Participants

The study included up to 15 participants as Creswell (2013) recommended in a phenomenological study with a heterogeneous group of individuals, teachers from different ages, males, and females, different years of experience, who work in different levels and teach different subjects, from three private schools in Guatemala. I intentionally chose individuals and the schools to carry the study out, to better understand the central phenomenon, classroom observation. Schools are well-known institutions in Guatemala City that are recognized for the quality of their education, which belong to an intermediate and upper-intermediate socioeconomic status and with a pre-established classroom observation system. I formed two focus groups from the 15 participants and only nine of them, three from each school, participated in one-on-one interviews.

D. Data Collection

The two sources of data collection that were used in this study are individual interviews and focus groups as suggested by Cohen et al., (2007). According to the author, an interview is a flexible data collection tool which enables multi-sensory channels to be used: verbal, non-verbal, spoken or heard. Individual interviews lasted 40 to 60 minutes, and they were used to get information in depth about teachers' personal experiences during classroom observation. Regarding focus groups, Krueger and Casey (2015) explain these are special groups with a specific intention, in a specific composition, required to provide qualitative data related to the research topic in a comfortable environment. The specific intention is to explore their perception of classroom observation. The specific composition of my focus groups was eight teachers representing the three schools (three-three-two), in which they answered a semi-structured focus

group interview questionnaire. Both interview and focus group questionnaires followed a funneling process described by Cohen et al, (2007) as questions that move from general to specific as the discussion goes on and the design and conduct of the focus group questionnaire followed the guidelines proposed by Krueger (2002). Interviews were recorded in the platform Zoom and then transcribed for further analysis. The purpose of individual interviews and focus group sessions was to gain insights about teachers' perception of classroom observation and listen to what they need from the process and their suggestions for improving this practice in Guatemala.

E. Data Analysis

Once data from the interviews and focus groups was collected, it was analyzed by using the software Dedoose. Kumar (2011) suggests analyzing qualitative data in the following steps: 1) Edit the data by "cleaning" or making sure that the raw data is free of inconsistencies and incompleteness; 2) Code the data (which consists of creating categories according to the different patterns found in the responses); 3) Develop a code book (which consists of writing down the different responses under each category in the code book so that, while coding, all the responses are grouped under a category); 4) Pre-test the code book (which involves selecting a few interview responses and coding them to ascertain any problems before carrying it out with all the interviews); and finally, (5) Code the data by using the software Dedoose (which consists of reading interviews and highlighting responses and assigning responses to the predetermined categories). It should be noted that in the last step, if any category emerged as the coding was in process, the new category was added to the code book. Kumar (2011) also suggests that a frame analysis must be developed before analyzing the data. This frame analysis helped me specify the variables that were analyzed, what cross-tabulations I needed to work out, and the variables that could be combined to construct

major concepts. Finally, the software provided graphs and tables that were used for the interpretation of the data to construct findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

F. Ethical Considerations

In order to carry out this study full consent from schools and participants was obtained prior to it. Schools and participants were ensured that their identity and privacy will be protected so their names will not be used in any of the stages of the research. This paper will address schools as School A, School B, and School C, and participants will be addressed as teachers or participants. Participants were ensured that the data collected will remain confidential and only used for the purpose of analysis and interpretation.

IX. Work plan

During the first stage of the study, I held one-on-one interviews with teachers who teach different subjects at different institutional levels (preschool, elementary, and secondary) from three different private schools in Guatemala City. I used a semi-structured interview with open-ended questions. I conducted all interviews through the cloud-based video communication application Zoom, with a small sample of nine teachers (three teachers per school – 60% of the target population of this research) I asked teachers about their general perception of classroom observation, how well and why they liked and disliked particular aspects of classroom observation, and what changes they suggested to improve the observation process. I asked teachers for their permission to video, or audio record the interviews, and I later transcribed these interviews for the purpose of data analysis. Interviews lasted around 40 minutes each. During the second and final stage of the research, I conducted two focus group sessions through Zoom, with groups of five and eight participants (13 teachers total) since two participants were not able to attend the first focus group. I also asked participants for their permission to video record the sessions, and I later transcribed these sessions for the purpose of data analysis. Focus group sessions lasted around 60-90 minutes each. The purpose of focus group sessions was to have teachers discuss and share their opinion about the findings of the interviews, to enrich and elaborate the conclusions of the study and recommendations for future research on this topic.

Table 1 – Participant Characteristics

SCHOOL A				
Participant No.	Level/Area	One-on-one Interview	Focus group 1	Focus group 2
1	Primary school/ Math and Science teacher.	X		
2	Primary school/ English Language teacher.	X	X	
3	High School/ Spanish Language Teacher.	X		X
4	High School/ History teacher.		X	
5	Preschool Math and Spanish Teacher.			X
SCHOOL B				
6	Middle School/ English Language teacher	X		
7	Middle School/ English Language teacher	X	X	
8	High School/ English Language teacher	X	X	
9	Middle School/ English Language teacher		X	
10	High School/ English Language teacher			X
SCHOOL C				
11	High School/ Spanish Language teacher.	X		X
12	High School / Science teacher	X		X
13	High School/ Math teacher	X	X	
14	High School/ English Language teacher			X
15	Primary School/ English Language teacher			X

X. Findings

Analysis of the collected data revealed considerable differences among the three classroom observation systems. At School A, teachers were observed from 4-8 times per year by their coordinator. At School B, teachers were observed up to 10 times a year by their coordinator and eventually by an external entity. And at School C, teachers were observed 15-20 times per year by their coordinator, their head of department, their academic principal, their peers, and an external entity.

Across the three sites, a few themes emerged among the data. These categories are labeled as follows: Announced versus unannounced observations, content of observations, purpose of observations, feedback, observers' behavior, timing, and teachers' feelings. In the remainder of this section these themes will be described.

A. Announced vs Unannounced Observations

In all schools, observations are sometimes announced but they are mostly unannounced. Teachers expressed feeling nervous in either way, but they believe it is normal to feel nervous during observations, especially when the observer is a school authority. Regarding their preference, teachers shared that they experience less stress when observations are announced. However, observers might not capture a true picture of how the classroom functions. As one teacher explained, "Being realistic, some teachers may not always follow their plan or all the steps in their routines, but if they know they will be observed, they could even do more than usual because it is natural that people want to look good in front of their bosses."

All teachers agreed that while unannounced observations may cause more stress, they show a more realistic view of what happens in the classroom day by day. Another teacher commented, “Unannounced observations do not necessarily show the 100% reality of the class because behavior changes inevitably when having an observer, students’ behavior and teachers’ behavior, but it shows the closest reality of the classroom.”

B. Content of Observation

Teachers indicated that observations tend to focus on the teaching strategies they use in the class and how well they follow the schools mandated routines or didactical sequences. However, teachers from Schools A and B shared that the observation instruments also include items related to the physical environment of the class, which they considered unrelated to the main purpose of the classroom observation to improve their practice. As one teacher from School A stated, “If observers are observing if windows are open, if students have specific objects on their desk, if the decoration of the class is properly pasted on the wall, if teachers wrote the date on the board, or if teachers started the class with the prayer or the agenda of the lesson, the purpose of observation is just to verify a process, not the strategies used in the class for teaching. It is not that the physical environment of the class is not important because of course it encourages learning, but maybe it should be a different type of observation, that way feedback is not focused mainly on these issues.” At the same time, teachers from School C shared that their observers do not use an observation format with a list of items on it. Observers at this school write everything that happens in the classroom in a narrative way by following every instruction given by the teacher and every interaction between teacher-student, student-teacher, and student-student. Observers mark the strengths of the lesson and leave questions

that will later help teachers reflect on their own practice. Teachers shared how positive it is for them to see everything they did during the lesson by themselves and think of the aspects they could improve. As one teacher expressed, “It is not the observer’s perception what I’m receiving during feedback. It is the observer showing me what I did during the lesson and together discussing the improvement areas. It is a more objective observation.”

C. Purpose of Observation

Most teachers believe the purpose of their observation is formative, which mainly seeks to help them improve their practice. But other teachers indicated that they receive a summative “grade” that represents a percentage in their final assessment of the year. This grade may impact their salary. Some teachers believed that summative observations did not have positive effects since they are mainly evaluative. As one teacher explained, “Some of my colleagues may just perform well in order to get a good grade on their assessment or to look good in front of the coordinator and because they may get a raise, not necessarily because they are committed to education.” Formative observations have a more positive effect on teachers because they value the learning opportunity and growth it represents to them. Regarding peer observation, one participant shared “I learned new strategies regarding cooperative learning and new techniques about digital tools by observing my peers. And I also learned from what I reflected and what my coordinator pointed out during our meeting.”

D. Feedback

Regarding feedback, all teachers hold a meeting with the observer and sign and receive a written copy of their observation. Even though all teachers can discuss the results with their coordinator, only teachers at School C carry out a reflective process in which they elaborate an action plan and get a follow-up of improvements. Some teachers from Schools A and B expressed that the feedback they receive is not always meaningful since observers usually point out negative and/or irrelevant aspects. One teacher from School A mentioned that she has received comments like “You did not notice that one student had her water bottle on her desk”, “Why was one of the students wearing a different sweater and not the one of the uniforms?”, and one teacher from School B was told “The decoration of the class was on the floor, and you did not pick it up.” Other teachers from School A believed their observers do not have the necessary mastery of the subject of the class they observe. One of the teachers shared that she/he was questioned about the sequence of topics and activities she/he chose for a class of preschoolers. The teacher stated, “My observer did not have any experience teaching or supervising lessons at the preschool level. If the coordinator had not understood my didactical sequence, he had to ask for clarification when he corrected my plan and not after I had already delivered the lesson.”

Teachers believe that observers cannot form a real judgment about their practice by only observing them a few times a year. Therefore, a low number of observations together with non-meaningful feedback do not contribute to a culture of observation since one of the teachers expressed, “I do not get anything from being observed only 4 to 8 times a year, but I do not want to be observed more than 10 times either if I am always receiving the same type of lousy feedback.”

Teachers suggested that it could be more beneficial if the coordinator observes the whole didactical sequence of a lesson even if three days in a row, so that the observer could get a better view of their practice and provide a more comprehensive and useful feedback. Teachers also consider it valuable to meet with the observer before the observation, not only to look at the observation format, but also to discuss what is expected from them and to share the context or the dynamic of the class beforehand, that way, during feedback sessions teachers do not need to justify their actions but just reflect and discuss about improvement areas. Lastly, participants consider that classroom observation should be as flexible as planning, so feedback is not too radical or focused on whether the teacher did or did not do something, but open to discussion on why something was done differently.

E. Observer's behavior

Teachers like the observation process where observers' behavior is friendly and focuses on strengths and positive aspects first, as well as when they provide useful feedback regarding teaching strategies, didactical sequences, and classroom management. Teachers appreciate being observed multiple times over the period of the year by multiple observers. This way, teachers are constantly receiving feedback from different points of view and from different levels (authorities and peers). This variety of observers and feedback provides teachers with a more reliable perspective of their own performance.

Teachers believed that peer observation was valuable for them since it is not evaluative, and it enriches their practice at different levels but mostly when they become the observers. Teachers shared that aspects that enrich their practice derived from peer observation are classroom management by observing how other teachers handle discipline, class activities by learning how

other teachers reinforce different topics like playing memory games, bingos, running dictations, literary circles, or the activities to evaluate content like debates, panel discussions, articles, speeches, essays, etc. Teachers also learn from their peers the use of different strategies or techniques like project-based learning, flipped classroom, Montessori, cooperative learning, among others.

By contrast, teachers do not like observations where observers' behavior is intimidating, and their faces do not show any expression because teachers are usually wondering how they are doing. Teachers who are observed by a single observer, think that these observations may not be completely reliable since it is the perspective of only one person which may be biased by their relationships and therefore subjective. Some teachers also believe that their observers lack qualifications or professional knowledge in some areas to offer them helpful feedback. As a result, observers are more focused on aspects about the physical environment of the class or routines than the content of the class and the strategies used by the teacher.

F. Timing

One positive aspect about timing refers to observers choosing a lesson in the block when teachers are doing productive work in their classes and when they could observe the process of a lesson or the result of it.

On the other hand, teachers do not like when observers choose days of special activities at school or the last day of a unit because they are usually closing projects and grades and there is not a didactical sequence to observe. Teachers also do not like when they feel the observation is done because of a complaint or a bad comment about the teacher because the message that is

transmitted is that their coordinators do not trust in them, so they are trying to find more weaknesses than strengths.

G. Teachers' feelings

At last, in relation to teachers' feelings, teachers shared that it is impossible not to feel nervous during a classroom observation. However, teachers' attitude towards observation is better when the teachers themselves feel appreciated for their good practices. With such appreciation, teachers feel more comfortable during observations and more eager to hear their feedback and reflect on their process. Teachers who experience highly frequent observations shared that their school's culture of observation helps them remain on task and consistently follow their lesson plans. This consistency, in turn, positively impacts their perception of classroom observation. One teacher stated, "Since I know that observers can come observe my classes at any time, I always revise and follow my plan and deliver my classes with confidence."

Teachers expressed they do not like the stress they feel before and during the observation. Teachers believe that even the way they handle technical issues during an observation is different from a regular lesson because they are more concerned about the way they look in front of the observer. However, one teacher stated, "The only way observations do not cause too much stress to teachers is when observations are part of the culture of school."

XI. Discussion/Analysis

One-on-one interviews showed that teachers are aware that classroom observation is an important process that is directly linked to the quality of the education that their schools offer. It was evident that the perceived usefulness of classroom observation was based on the quality of feedback they receive after being observed by multiple observers, multiple times per year. Consequently, schools should be open to embrace a classroom observation system where coordinators along with other school authorities as well as external entities and teachers could perform classroom observations. Schools should also verify the qualifications and experience of those who perform the observations and provide them with proper training to carry out this process.

Teachers believe that less than 8 observations a year are not enough to form a judgment of their practice, but the reality of schools is that a single observer does not have the time to perform more observations a year. Therefore, since schools may consider having more than one observer performing classroom observations, they should also determine the focus of each observer to collect a better view of teachers' performance. For instance, according to the teachers observed by multiple observers, principals may focus on general aspects of teachers' performance and students' behavior, coordinators may focus on specific aspects of the subject that teachers teach at school and the strategies used in class, external entities may focus on learners' performance during the implementation of specific programs, so schools get certified by them, and peers may focus on aspects they share in common like classroom management techniques, activities, or teaching strategies they found interesting. This way, teachers could receive more substantial feedback that will enrich their practice.

Schools should be open to explore the different observation formats that can be used during classroom observations. The current observation formats may be revised considering the school's expectations and the aspects that teachers consider relevant to improve their practice. According to teachers, a narrative format is an objective form of observation which helps them during the reflective process.

It was evident that both announced and unannounced observations cause stress to teachers, as well as the timing when observers choose to observe. Therefore, administrators should evaluate the way that lessons are currently chosen and scheduled. Observers should consider the benefit of observing complete didactical sequences even if two or three observations in a row to schedule them accordingly and to provide a more useful and complete feedback to teachers. Constant observations and useful feedback may promote an observation culture at school.

Classroom observation as a summative process in which teachers feel judged and evaluated mostly promotes a negative perception of it. Therefore, classroom observation should be carried out as a formative process in which teachers can reflect on their practice, create an action plan of improvements, and based on their feedback having opportunities for follow-up observations to monitor how the changes turned out. Implementing peer-observation as a non-evaluative form of observation has the potential to enrich observation systems and favors teachers' professional growth.

Limitations

The primary limitation of this study was that schools from a low and low-intermediate social status and public schools did not have a classroom observation system established, so it was necessary to focus on high-intermediate and high social status private schools. Therefore, the findings in this study do not include perspectives from teachers in low and low-intermediate social status schools. Since these schools make up a large proportion of schools in Guatemala, especially in the public school system, future research might include schools from a wider range of social contexts.

Another important limitation was that one school that was invited to participate declined the project so another school with similar characteristics had to be found. The school that was added to the project was similar to the other schools regarding socioeconomic status and the quality of the education they provide. It brought the significant difference that its classroom observation system was summative and used to assess teachers' performance at the end of the year.

Finally, internet connectivity and time were important issues faced during the research since some participants canceled their participation due to lack of time or internet connectivity problems. For instance, one teacher from School B canceled her one-on-one interview five minutes before it started and two teachers from School B and one teacher from School C canceled their participation on the first focus group by sending a notification by email informing, they did not have the time due to personal issues.

XII. Conclusions

The frequency of observations has a great impact on the teachers' perception of a classroom observation culture. Teachers who were constantly being observed by different observers such as coordinators, principals, heads of department, external entities, and peers were constantly receiving feedback and getting follow-up to help them make improvement. They work on plans of action, and as they know they can be observed at any moment, they are always on task and following their plan.

Being observed by different observers is also more reliable for schools and teachers than being observed by a single observer since this observation may be biased and may not reflect the real performance of the teacher unless it is corroborated by another observer.

Unannounced observations show a more realistic picture of what happens in the classroom. Therefore, teachers should know in advance what is expected from them, and observers should look for the most appropriate timing to perform the observations.

Classroom observation as a formative process is better perceived by teachers than as a summative process. The purpose of observation will determine the type of observation format to be used during the process. It is important that items in an observation format are relevant to teachers' practice, and that observers are also open to use a narrative format.

Observers play one of the most important roles in the classroom observation process. Thus, observers' qualifications, behavior, and feedback will have a direct impact on teachers' positive perception of classroom observation. Observers' training to carry out this process is also key to improving classroom observation systems. At the same time, peer observation makes them feel more involved in the process, and more aware of its potential benefits.

Finally, teachers' attitude towards classroom observation is more positive when they feel appreciated by the observers which also makes them feel more comfortable during observations.

XIII. Recommendations

Focus group interviews combined with one-on-one interviews promoted the discussion among teachers of what an ideal classroom observation system looks like. This discussion resulted in suggestions that could help their current systems improve and/or reinforce their practices. Suggestions presented were unanimously accepted by the participants.

Schools should inform teachers about the purpose of observations and the school's expectations from them at the beginning of the year. This discussion is not only about going over the observation format, but about having a deep discussion of what is expected in each one of the items in advance.

Participants suggest that the first observation that observers schedule focus not only on the didactical sequence of a single lesson but on the full sequence of a topic, even if it involves two or three observations in a row. This will help observers form a clearer view of the teacher's performance in two or three different moments, and consequently, feedback will be more complete. Teachers believe that there is not an ideal number of observations a year, but there should be observations as teachers need them.

Teachers expressed that the purpose of observations should be 100% formative. Teachers state that being observed by multiple observers has a great impact on their teaching practice since they are constantly receiving feedback from different perspectives.

At the same time, teachers consider that a narrative format of observation is a great tool for carrying out a reflective process during the feedback session. However, if schools opt for having an observation format with specific items, teachers suggest that formats share some items but differ

in others according to the observers, so that observers may focus on different aspects that together will enrich the teacher's practice and show more reliable results. For instance, principals may focus on general aspects like the physical environment of the classroom, learners' behavior, teachers' rapport with students, classroom management strategies, and teachers following the school's methodology. Coordinators may focus on specific aspects of the subject, like content, didactical sequence, teacher-student interaction, student-centered approach, and school's methodology as well. External entities may focus on the implementation of specific programs and the way learners respond to them. And finally, peers may focus on the instructions and activities done in class, the strategies used by teachers, and classroom management approaches.

Regarding announced and unannounced observations, teachers consider that schools should create an observation culture in which both announced and unannounced observations reflect the reality of what happens in the class because teachers should be truly committed to perform with excellence in either way. Teachers suggest that observation systems include both announced and unannounced observations to compare results which should be similar.

About feedback, participants believe that there should be a meeting before the observation to discuss important aspects of the context, the dynamic of the class to be observed, and any doubt that the observer may have about the plan. Then, feedback must be provided soon after the observation was performed. Feedback should promote a reflective process in which teachers can self-evaluate their performance so that an action plan can be elaborated and followed-up in future observations favoring teachers' development. Teachers' areas of improvement should be used to inform the teachers' development program at schools.

Teachers consider that peer observation is a valuable addition to current observation systems. Peer observation should be implemented for teachers to experience the benefits of observing a colleague supporting the observation culture of schools. Since its nature is non-evaluative, teachers may just exchange ideas, suggestions, and the best of their practices.

Regarding the qualities of an ideal observer, teachers agreed that observers should be experts on the area they are observing. They should enjoy working with people, they should be open-minded, friendly, understanding, and empathetic. They play the most important role in classroom observation, so their preparation to carry it out and their behavior will impact the outcome of the process.

Finally, it is inevitable for teachers to feel nervous while being observed. However, to embrace an observation process, teachers should also be open to the fact that everything can be improved, even the aspects that they already master or the activities that they have always done and that have always worked. Teachers should always be prepared to deliver their classes with confidence which will help them reduce the stress of being observed.

Since this research was limited to teachers' perception on classroom observation at their schools, further research may be done to investigate administrators' perception of classroom observation, the training they undergo to carry out this process, a revision of current observation formats, and the way observations inform teachers' development programs to continue determining improvement areas of classroom observation systems in Guatemala.

XIV. References

- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research Methods in Education* (Sixth Edition ed.). Routledge, Taylor & Francis e-Library.
- Cresswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design : choosing among five approaches*. SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Gitomer, D., Bell, C., Mccafrey, D., Hamre, B., & Pianta, R. (2014). The Instructional Challenge in Improving Teaching Quality: Lessons From a Classroom Observation Protocol. *Teachers College Record*, 116, 1-32. Obtenido de <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=97122786&authtype=cookie,custuid&custid=s4224794&lang=es&site=ehost-live&scope=site>
- Krueger, R. (2002). *Designing and Conducting Focus Group Interviews*.
- Kumar, R. (2011). *Research Methodology a step-by-step guide for beginners* (Third Edition ed.). SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Lasagabaster, D., & Sierra, J. (November de 2011). Classroom observation: desirable conditions established by teachers. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 34(4), 449-463. doi:10.1080/02619768.2011.587113
- Lowder, L., Atiqulla, M., Colebeck, D., Das, S., Karim, M. A., Khalid, A., . . . Utschig, T. (October-December de 2017). Peer Observation: Improvement of Teaching Effectiveness through Class Participation at a Polytechnic University. *Kennesaw State University, Journal of STEM Education*, 18(4), 51-56. Obtenido de <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=127592032&authtype=cookie,custuid&custid=s4224794&lang=es&site=ehost-live&scope=site>
- Martínez, F., Taut, S., & Schaaf, K. (April de 2016). Classroom observation for evaluating and improving teaching: An international perspective. *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, 49, 15-29. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2016.03.002>
- Meyer, J. P., Cash, A. H., & Mashburn, A. (2011). Occasions and the Reliability of Classroom Observations: Alternative Conceptualizations and Methods of Analysis. *Educational Assessment*, 16, 227-243. doi:10.1080/10627197.2011.638884
- Montoya, N., Glaz, L. C., Abad, C. C., Pereira, L. A., & Loturco, I. (September de 2020). What teachers need to know and be able to do: A view from teachers, students, and principals in the Brazilian context. *PLoS ONE*, 15(9), 1-12. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0238990>
- Ureta, F., Espinoza, E., & Mó, R. (2019). Evaluación del desempeño docente: mitos y realidades. *Dirección General de Evaluación e Investigación Educativa, Ministerio de Educación*. Obtenido de <http://www.mineduc.gob.gt/digeduca>

van der Lans, R. M., van de Grift, W. J., van Veen, K., & Fokkens-Bruinsma, M. (2016). Once is not enough: Establishing reliability criteria for feedback and evaluation decisions based on classroom observations. *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, 50, 88-95.
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2016.08.001>

Wise, D. (2018). Modelo de acompañamiento pedagógico en Guatemala: herramientas y orientaciones para el asesor pedagógico. *Agencia de los Estados Unidos de América para el Desarrollo Internacional USAID*. Obtenido de http://www.usaidlea.org/images/Modelo_de_Acompanamiento_Pedagogico_en_Guatemala.pdf

Other references

Aubusson, e. a. (2007). Enhancing teacher education practice through professional learning conversations. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 215-227.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research Methods in Education* (6th ed.). New York: Routledge.

Gebhard, J., & Oprandy, R. (1999). Language Teacher Awareness: A Guide to Exploring Beliefs and Practices. En J. Gebhard, & R. Oprandy, *Seeing Teaching Differently through Observation* (pág. Chapter 3).

Krueger, R. A. (2002). *Designing and Conducting Focus Group Interviews*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota .

Kumar, R. (2011). *Research Methodology a step-by-step guide for beginners* (3rd ed.). London UK: Sage.

Saldana, J. (2016). An Introduction to Codes and Coding. En J. Saldana, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. London UK: Sage.

XV. Appendix / Annexes

a. Semi-structured one-on-one interviews

1. Can you describe the process that your school follows for classroom observation?

How often are you observed?

How much time does it last?

Who observes?

Are observations announced or unannounced?

Are you familiar with the observation format/items before being observed?

What aspects of your practice are observed?

Do you have a meeting with the observer before and after the observation? If so, tell me how that meeting goes.

2. How do you receive feedback?

Can you describe the type of feedback you receive? Written or oral? Quantitative or narrative, face to face or a message?

How do you reflect on the results?

Do you create a line of actions to improve? If so, how?

Is there a follow-up of improvements? If so, how?

3. What are the benefits you have received from classroom observation?

Can you highlight the aspects that enrich your practice?

4. What do you dislike about your school's observation system?

Can you explain the reasons why you dislike those aspects?

5. How should classroom observation be improved at your school? What changes would you suggest?

What are the potential benefits that you as a teacher can get from those changes?

6. What aspects of classroom observation should be kept and reinforced?

Can you mention the best aspects of the different classroom observation systems you have known that can be integrated to improve the process?

b. Semi-structured focus group interview

Good evening and welcome to our session. Thanks for taking the time to join us to talk about “Classroom Observation in Guatemala”.

My name is Virginia Escobar. I am a student at Universidad del Valle de Guatemala. As my final graduation project, I’m collecting data regarding teachers’ perceptions on classroom observation. During the first phase of the research, we had individual interviews in which you shared the classroom observation process you are in and your personal perception of it. Now, during the second phase, I would like you to share what an effective observation system would look like so you can discuss the recommendations that can be made to the current systems or the aspects that should be reinforced. We will also discuss what you think about the role of both observers and teachers, and the way that feedback should be provided to determine the implications to create a better process.

You were invited because your schools have an established classroom observation program, so you're not only familiar with classroom observation but also with its potential benefits. There are no wrong answers but rather differing points of view and experiences. Please feel free to share your point of view even if it differs from what others have said. I am video recording the session because I do not want to miss any of your comments. I will use the audio file for the purpose of creating a transcription of your responses. We will be on a first name basis tonight, but I won't use any names in my final report. You may be assured of complete confidentiality. The findings will be presented to provide schools with useful recommendations to improve or reinforce their systems.

Well, let us begin. Please, make sure that your Zoom account has the name of your preference. Let us find out some more about each other by taking turns according to the chat. Tell us your name, years of experience as a teacher, subject you teach, and school you represent.

Tonight, we are going to pretend that we are now in charge of creating an ideal system for conducting classroom observations. What do you think an ideal classroom would be like?

I am going to ask you some specific questions to help you think of what this ideal system might be like.

Logistics:

1. Some of you mentioned that you are observed an average of 8 times a year and some of you are observed an average of 20 times a year. Which would be an ideal number for you and why?

2. Most of you mentioned that observers only observe individual lessons. Some of you mentioned that observing the complete didactical sequence would provide a better understanding of the dynamic of the class and your performance as a teacher. Which option would be more ideal and why?
3. Some of you shared that your observations are always unannounced and for others they are a mix of both, announced and unannounced, which type of observation would be more ideal and why?
4. During one-on-one interviews some of you shared that your observations are done with the help of a format or checklist with approximately 25 items that cover the physical environment of the classroom, teacher-student interactions, and the delivery of the didactical sequence. Others mentioned that the observer follows the lesson by writing down everything that happens in the classroom during the lesson (minute by minute) and you shared that it was a positive experience. Can you share which format do you think is the best and the most effective when carrying out observations and why?

Feedback

5. All of you shared that you receive a written report of your observation, that you sign the form, and that you have the opportunity to have a discussion about the results in which improvement areas are highlighted. Some of you shared that there is always follow up of the improvements, but others mentioned that no action plan is created. According to your experience, how should feedback be provided?
6. What should be the focus of feedback?
7. How long after the observation should feedback be given?
8. Should the observer and teacher get together before classroom observation to discuss the context or special considerations and after observation? How should a previous meeting be carried out?
9. Teachers have different opinions about formative and summative observations. Formative observations offer a descriptive report of observations, a space for related discussion between the observer and the teacher, and an action plan based on both the observation and the discussion. Summative observations are evaluative in nature offering quantitative feedback and an assessment of the performance. Which type do you think is the most effective for helping teachers improve their practice? Why?

Roles of observers and teachers

10. During individual interviews, some of you shared that observations are carried out only by the coordinator of the school, and others shared that you are also observed by the principal, by peers, and by an external observer. Could you share your thoughts on who should perform classroom observations and the purpose of the observation according to the observers?

11. One recurring comment during individual interviews was about the role of the observers in this process. Some of you mentioned that your observers were professional and that you relied on their suggestions and comments. It was also mentioned that the way they provided feedback was friendly and made you feel comfortable. On the other hand, others mentioned that their observers' opinions were not taken into consideration because you did not rely on their preparation and their comments did not make a difference in your practice. It was also mentioned that during the observations their attitude was intimidating and did not make you feel comfortable. Could you describe the characteristics of an ideal observer? Who should be an observer? Why? How should this person behave during the observation?

12. Most of you shared that teachers' attitudes towards classroom observation depended on teachers' preparation, confidence in their ability, and the observation culture in school. How could a positive attitude be reinforced/created?

13. Is there anything else that comes to mind about classroom observation now that you've had some time to think it over?

c. Glossary

- Assessment** the action or an instance of making judgement about something.
- Attitude** manner or way one thinks about, behaves toward, or feels toward someone or something.
- Behavior** to act or react in a particular way.
- Carry out** to put into execution
- Classroom** a room, as in a school, in which classes are held.
- Didactical** designed or intended to teach.
- Observation** an act or instance of watching carefully or noting something for a scientific or other special purpose.
- Observer** a delegate to an assembly or gathering, who is sent to observe and report but not take part officially in its activities.
- Feedback** a reaction or response to a particular process or activity. Evaluative information derived from such a reaction or response .
- Format** the defined arrangement of data encoded in a file.
- Formative** relating to formation, growth, or development.
- Peers** one who is the equal of another in abilities or social status.
- Performance** the execution of an action
- Reflection** a thought, idea, or opinion formed, or a remark made as a result of meditation.
- Summative** is used in much the same way as cumulative and comprehensive. Integrating overall data to a specified value.
- System** an organized or established procedure.