



Observation Skills for Effective Teaching (6th Edition)

By Gary D. Borich

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The sixth edition of *Observation Skills for Effective Teaching* focuses on observing others and incorporating the right tools, knowledge, and skills into your own practice — key principal means by which you can become an effective and professional teacher.

Using this text, you will learn to observe in the following eight areas: learning climate, classroom management, lesson clarity, instructional variety, task orientation, student engagement, student success, and higher thought processes. These eight areas have been found by researchers to be related to desirable cognitive, social, and emotional outcomes in learners. This book will also teach you how to decide what to observe, how to effectively and efficiently observe in the classroom, and how to apply what you have learned through observation to grow as a reflective teacher. In addition, the book provides methodological concepts, observation instruments, and dialogues designed to help you see and practice research-based patterns of effective teaching.

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Editorial Review

From the Back Cover

Do you want to begin developing the skills and competencies you need to become an effective, accountable teacher?

The sixth edition of *Observation Skills for Effective Teaching* focuses on one of the principal means by which

you can become an effective and professional teacher—by observing others and incorporating the best of what you see and hear into your own practice.

Using this text, you will learn to observe in the following eight areas found by researchers to be related to desirable cognitive, social and emotional outcomes in learners: learning climate, classroom management, lesson clarity, instructional variety, task orientation, student engagement, student success, and higher thought processes.

This book will also teach you how to decide what to observe, how to effectively and efficiently observe in the

classroom, and how to apply what you have learned through observation to grow as a reflective teacher. In addition, the book provides methodological concepts, observation instruments, and dialogues designed to help you see and practice research-based patterns of effective teaching.

New to this Edition:

- Revised! More than 50 revised and updated observation instruments and records create an easily accessible handbook for your first classroom. In this edition these observation instruments have been better formatted for reproduction and classroom use and are now assembled in one easy-to-access place (Appendix B) in the book.
- New! Expanded and updated activities at the end of each chapter, aligned with the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) and the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) principles, reinforce the important role of research-based teaching practices as they prompt you to learn and practice observing specific effective teaching practices.
- New! Expanded coverage of instructional media and technology and its importance to effective teaching behaviors. *For More Information* sections now include websites keyed to each effective teaching behavior presented.
- Updated! In addition to updated sections on teaching culturally, linguistically, and academically diverse learners within each chapter, discussions and citations have been added to emphasize the importance of differentiated instruction and what to observe in today's heterogeneous classrooms.
- New! Additional discussion and references on the social dynamics of the classroom, including reference to the work of Robert Pianta, appears particularly in Chapter 2.
- Expanded! Glossary of Key Concepts provides a convenient reference for reviewing and studying the professional language in preparation for national and state certification exams.

About the Author

Gary Borich grew up on the south side of Chicago, where he attended Mendel High School and later taught in the public school system of Niles, Illinois. He received his doctoral degree from Indiana University, where he was director of evaluation at the Institute for Child Study. Dr. Borich is professor of Educational Psychology and a Cissy McDaniel Parker Endowed Fellow in the College of Education at the University of

Texas at Austin and past member of the Board of Examiners of the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education. Dr. Borich's other books include *Effective Teaching Methods*, Seventh Edition; *Educational Assessment for the Elementary and Middle School Classroom*, Second Edition (with M. Tombari); *Clearly Outstanding: Making Each Day Count in Your Classroom*; *Becoming a Teacher: An Inquiring Dialogue for the Beginning Teacher*; *Educational Psychology: A Contemporary Approach*, Second Edition (with M. Tombari); *Educational Testing and Measurement*, Ninth Edition (with T. Kubiszyn); and *The Appraisal of Teaching: Concepts and Process*; and *Teacher Behavior and Pupil Self Concept*. Dr. Borich lives in Austin, Texas, with his wife, Kathy, and children, Brandy and Damon.

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People in all walks of life want to know how they can acquire the skills and competencies to become a professional in their field. All of us want to become experts or *professionals*, but we know that it requires more than simply a desire to be good at what we do. This book focuses on one of the primary means by which you can become a professional—by observing others and incorporating what you see and hear into your own behavior.

To be sure, this process requires more than simply watching others who are competent in their jobs. To become competent at teaching, you must know what to look for, and you must have a framework or structure by which what is observed can be made meaningful for your own behavior. Other skills are needed, too. You must be psychologically ready and physically prepared to observe, have tools for categorizing and recording what you see, and have a knowledge of content and methods. But even this is not enough: To become a professional, you must understand the patterns and sequences of effective teaching that make all of the parts work as a whole.

Where do effective teachers learn to make the parts work as a whole? How do they bring their natural abilities, knowledge of content and teaching methods, and professional goals together into a harmonious pattern of intelligent behavior to become a professional? It isn't from books or training sessions alone—these can focus on only a small number of activities. It isn't from teaching experience, either—the hectic pace of the classroom makes it impossible for many teachers to reflect on their own patterns of behavior. Only through observing more experienced teachers can all of these ingredients be brought together into a meaningful pattern to be modeled in your own classroom. These patterns of practice—not individual techniques, strategies, or methods alone—make teachers effective.

As we will see in this text, the purpose of observation is to improve yourself. Plans for self-improvement are realistic when they are based on your own unique strengths and challenges and on the school context in which they are to occur. The importance of this latter point is not always recognized: A teaching activity that is effective in one school or classroom may not be effective in another. No amount of student teaching, experience or formal instruction can prepare you to teach in every classroom context. Although student teaching and instruction can point you in the right direction to maximize your growth, the realities of a specific classroom and the students within it will determine *what* and *how much* you learn and grow as a teacher. This is the unique function of classroom observation: to understand teaching within specific classrooms of learners, and to develop a program of self-improvement based on that understanding. In short, the dimensions of effective teaching ultimately must be defined by the qualities and characteristics of those who must be taught. This is why classroom observation is so important: It reveals the patterns of practice by which real teachers—professionals—refine and match the dimensions of effective teaching most appropriate to a specific population of learners.

To accomplish this goal, this book presents effective teaching practices that can be observed during three stages of your career—preteaching, student teaching, and induction- (first-) year teaching. At each of these

stages this text provides competencies for preparing you to observe, learning how to . observe, and knowing what to observe.

ORGANIZATION OF THIS TEXT

Chapter 1 focuses on the close and necessary relationship between personal attributes for successful living and professional competence. It explores the characteristics that make an individual successful as a person as well as a professional—characteristics that you will learn from classroom observation.

Chapters 2 and 3 focus on the psychological preparation and attitudes important to observing the complex sequences of events that occur in classrooms. These chapters explain why observation is important (chapter 2) and how to prepare for transforming the casual process of *looking* into the systematic process of *observing*, from which your teaching can grow (chapter 3).

Chapter 4 is devoted to the technical competence that must precede systematic observation. This chapter describes the tools that observers use to record life in classrooms and to organize their observations in useful ways. You will learn how to develop and use simple tools of observation, and how to revise them to fit a particular school context and your own self-improvement goals.

Chapters 5 through 12 present the framework or lenses through which life in classrooms can be organized and made meaningful. Observation skills are presented according to eight areas found by researchers to be related to desirable cognitive, social and emotional outcomes in learners. These eight areas, each containing patterns for observing effective teaching, are learning climate, classroom management, lesson clarity, instructional variety, task orientation, student engagement in the learning process, student success, and higher thought processes. Each chapter in this section combines a study of observation skills with the patterns of effective teaching practice identified in the research literature. The methodological concepts, observation instruments, and dialogues they contain are designed to help the observer see and practice research-based patterns of effective teaching. This is the unique focus of *Observation Skills for Effective Teaching*, Fourth Edition.

NEW TO THIS EDITION

The fourth edition has a new look. To make the book more practical for students, we have continued to allow copying of more than 40 observation instruments and records, increasing its value as a handbook and recording tool that can be carried into the classroom.

Second, this edition is now aligned with the *National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS)* and the *Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC)* principles and standards, so that you learn the important role that research-based effective teaching behaviors play in the larger regional and national certification process. These national standards—prepared mostly by and for teachers—indicate what teachers should be able to do, along with a voluntary system to certify teachers who meet these standards. In this text you learn and practice observing specific effective teaching behaviors for meeting these national certification standards.

You will also notice that we have expanded the important role of instructional media and technology and emphasized its importance to effective teaching behaviors. To reinforce this emphasis, we have added an end-of-chapter section titled "For More Information" which highlights Web-based information for the teacher keyed to each of our effective teaching behaviors.

Readers of previous editions will also see that we have integrated into our discussions the most recent findings on teaching culturally diverse students. While updating sections on cultural diversity at the end of

each chapter, we have added additional discussions and citations within chapters to emphasize the importance of how to teach in culturally diverse classrooms.

We also have added to this edition a Glossary of Key Concepts—or "at a glance" summary of some of the most important professional terms and concepts provided in the text. The Glossary is an easy-to-access reference for reviewing and studying the professional language of teaching and some of the most important principles and concepts which underlie this language. In the text, glossary entries appear in bold.

These changes, along with the most recent references and presentation of new research, make this edition even more user friendly and practical for the beginning teacher than previous editions.

USES OF THIS TEXT

This book can be used in several ways. First, it may be used as a companion volume to *Effective Teaching Methods*, Fourth Edition (Borich, 2000, and its Fifth Edition, 2003), in which some of these same pedagogical concepts are presented in a methods text format. In *Observation Skills for Effective Teaching*, students learn how to observe and practice many of the behaviors and patterns of practice presented in *Effective Teaching Methods*, Fourth Edition.

Second, this text can be used for a preteaching or observation course taken prior to, or in conjunction with, a methods course. Thus, it can serve as an advance organizer for more specific and pedagogically oriented courses that follow.

Third, this text may be used as a resource during student teaching and beginning teaching to provide a direction and foundation for a program of self-improvement, training, and mentoring. It provides many practical tools for teacher self-development and renewal throughout the early years of teaching. In each of these applications, the major goal of this text is to sensitize the beginning teacher, through observation, to patterns of effective teaching and to begin the process of self-improvement based upon these effective teaching patterns.

SPECIAL FEATURES

Some special features of *Observation Skills for Effective Teaching*, Fourth Edition, are

- Beginning chapters (why observe?, preparing to observe, and how to observe) that prepare the beginning teacher for the psychological, technical, and cognitive demands of observing in classrooms.
- Integration of the most recent research findings on the dimensions of learning climate, classroom management, lesson clarity, instructional variety, task orientation, student engagement in the learning process, student success, and higher thought processes and performance outcomes, with discussions of why these dimensions are important and how they can be integrated to form patterns of effective teach...

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