

UNIT SEVEN

Education and Socialisation

Copyright in the printed materials in this booklet belongs to Shirley Jordan and Celia Roberts. Copyright in the publication is held by © LARA (2000). Teachers or librarians in higher education institutions in the UK may reproduce that part of the publication of which LARA/Shirley Jordan/Celia Roberts hold the copyright for use in class or independent research by students within that institution. No copying for third parties or for financial gain is permitted.

Those items that are copyright material owned by third parties and for which permission has been cleared for use in this booklet may not be copied by recipient institutions. They must seek independent permission from the original copyright owner (see last page).

CONTENTS

	<u>Page No.</u>
Section 1	
1. Introduction	1
2. Links with other units	1
3. Background notes	2
Section 2	
1. Outline of a session	7
2. Description of a session	7
3. Advice and comments	11
Section 3	
1. Assignment	13
2. Handouts	15
3. Readings	16

SECTION ONE

1. Introduction

I had visited all the school's classrooms and found them all to be closer to the 'free' end of the continuum of explicit freedom and constraint. None of them supported the authoritarian characterisation that is suggested by stereotypes of German schools. (Spindler 1974: 245)

...Schönhausen School apparently transmits a culture which is orientated to the local environment in both its manmade and natural forms. The orientation is transmitted by what appears to be highly effective methods involving classroom interaction, excursions and the use of attractive instructional materials...The balance of freedom and constraint is maintained quite differently than in schools in the United States and the methods of doing so appear to reinforce the culture-transmission process.

(Ibid: 247)

This unit introduces students to the idea of secondary socialisation as an ongoing learning process that takes place outside the family, and approaches this through focusing on educational environments such as school and university. The broad questions are what kinds of learning take place in such institutions, how learning gets done, and what kinds of research might best reveal these issues.

It is worth helping students to think about the role of education in socialisation for several reasons. First of all, since they have all been relatively successful at school, and the majority have only just left, they can use their own experience to reflect on the socialisation processes they went through at school. Secondly, they can use their current learning environment as a context for observation and analysis. Thirdly, some students may go as teaching assistants to schools abroad, and therefore will be participant observers of a schooling process different from their own. Students who will be attached to a university programme will also have to adjust to a new learning environment, and many of their contacts will be with fellow students, so some preliminary conceptual work will help them to prepare for this. The educational environment in the host country, be it a school or a university, also offers an interesting context for an ethnographic project. Finally, even if students do not focus on this environment for ethnography, their informants, whoever they are and whatever they do, will have been socialised through their educational experiences and their current cultural and social practices will have been informed by them.

2. Links with other units

There are clear links with Shared Cultural Knowledge (Unit 4) and more particularly with Families and Households (Unit 5) in which the study of socialisation processes is first introduced. The reading for this unit from Paul Willis's *Learning to Labour* can be linked to Gender Relations (Unit 6) as 'the lads' are seen to be reproducing the values and behaviour patterns of a 'macho', working-class group. The idea of gendered hierarchies of knowledge is also touched upon in the introduction given to

students. In addition, the general question of how shared cultural values are maintained, challenged and negotiated through interaction is relevant here and is one which recurs in most of the units.

In terms of methodology, the Classroom Observation assignment students carry out for this unit provides further experience of participant observation and of data collection, analysis and presentation. The study of Mehan's data on class practices returns students to the idea of the fine-grained analysis needed to draw out the significance of apparently banal and routine interactions where nothing much appears to be happening. It serves as a reminder of the 'thick description' involved in ethnographic accounts, and will be built upon in Data Analysis (Unit 10). Finally, the concept of micro-ethnography introduced in Non-verbal Communication and Social Space (Unit 3) is reinforced and contrasted with macro-ethnography.

3. Background notes

Whereas in primary socialisation children learn the values, beliefs and practices of the home community, secondary socialisation is the process of learning about the assumptions and practices in the wider society, starting with the experience of schooling. Schools are not just places for learning, they have a life of their own:

While schools are most often viewed as social instruments for educational purposes, it is probably more accurate to describe them as social institutions having a life and even a culture of their own. (Spindler 1974: 31)

However, schooling is not a straightforward and apolitical process of secondary socialisation. It is also a means of producing social inequalities.

There has been a long debate over the twentieth century within sociology and education, about the role of schooling as a means of social reproduction. This debate is well summed up in Bourdieu's paper, 'Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction' (1977). The argument is that the school reproduces the stratified socio-economic ordering of societies. The processes of schooling are inherently selective so that social and economic opportunity is distributed in such a way that the children of the dominant middle classes will be successful. However, this successful learning is dressed up as individual achievement divorced from social context.

These processes of schooling are a combination of ideologies about knowledge (what is allowable and how it should be displayed) and of what is generally known as the 'hidden curriculum'. The ideologies of knowledge challenge children's common sense view of the world and replace it by what has been called 'decontextualised' knowledge, constructed out of the evidence and authority of the particular 'discipline' area taught. The hidden curriculum is made up of all activities of school life outside the explicit, taught curriculum. It is the complex set of unwritten rules and hidden agendas which keep classrooms functioning as classrooms and is embedded in the communication system of the classroom which 'indicates to pupils the boundaries of who they are and what they may do' (ibid.:17). So the hidden curriculum embraces

assumptions about responsibilities, expectations and routine ways of behaving which create the social identities of 'good' or 'troublesome' pupils.

There is a great deal of classroom ethnography literature (mostly in the American tradition of educational anthropology, for example, Erickson and Mohatt (1982) and Mehan (1979) referred to in this unit) which looks in detail at the ways students and teachers interact together to maintain the classroom. These unwritten rules are set by teachers, and are largely observed by students, but can be resisted as well. For example, Jay Lemke, looking at science teaching in American classrooms (Lemke, 1990) shows that there is a basic level of co-operation between teacher and students but that many of the unwritten rules – for example about students talking together while the teacher is talking to the whole class – are very frequently broken. He argues that teachers allow this because it is one way in which the class becomes a community, and a place where shared learning can happen.

Both the authority of schooled knowledge and the hidden curriculum are about values and power. The schooling process requires students to submit to certain kinds of control in which their right to speak, their right to come and go when they want, their right to have some control over how they are judged, are all denied them. They are in a subject position to the institution and its values. They are expected to learn certain types of knowledge and display it in certain ways. Their relative competence is judged not just in terms of a particular intellectual or practical skill, but as part of their social competence. Notions such as 'illiterate', 'bad grammar', 'uneducated' still have a moral value. This is a residue from the nineteenth-century attitude to literacy described by Graft as 'the moral economy of literacy' (quoted in Cook-Gumperz and Gumperz 1986).

Recent studies of the social and cultural aspects of schooling have examined the processes whereby certain students (usually from middle-class and white backgrounds) find the values and styles of communicating at school accord with their experiences at home, while the majority find no such match. This discontinuity between home and school, between community and the educational institution, has been studied by linguists and by American anthropologists (e.g. Philips, Heath and Erickson).

It is worth students being at least aware of these studies for two reasons. Firstly, the contrasts between home and school identified in them will help students to reflect on their own schooling and on the extent to which, as a group, they had common experiences. Secondly, it will give them some analytical tools for observing and understanding the similarities and differences between these experiences and the social and cultural practices of the college/school abroad. For example, most British students will have experienced much more explicit pastoral care in their schools as compared with their peers in the French school system.

Susan Philips in *The Invisible Culture* (1983) studied native American Indians and the ways in which the white Anglo school system was failing them. By working on the Warm Springs Reservation in Arizona, she contrasted the ways in which Indians communicated and learnt in the community with the expectations about learning and communicating in the Anglo classroom. She found that the Indian children performed less well than their Anglo counterparts because the public display of

knowledge and its evaluation was at odds with the way most learning was done on the reservation. Here, lateral peer group networks of children were the most significant way in which children learnt. Similarly, Erikson and Mohatt's work in Canada contrasted an Anglo classroom with an Indian one to show how teacher/student relations, class activities, pacing and discipline, etc. contrasted systematically. These are examples of micro-ethnography in which the fine-grained detail of interaction is used to build up a picture of particular groups in particular contexts. Students who read the handout on family conversations in Unit 5 will already be familiar with this level of analysis.

Shirley Brice-Heath in *Ways with Words* (1983) studied the black and white communities in South Carolina. In this and other studies, she shows how the working-class black community have different traditions of learning at home – both in relation to literacy and the way in which new knowledge is conveyed and learning assessed – from the white middle-class community, and, to a lesser extent, the white working-class community. Again, these differences, when realised in the classroom, serve to reproduce the social divisions and distribution of economic power in society as a whole.

The classroom is a key example of what the anthropologist Dell Hymes calls a 'communicative event' – that is, an event like a funeral or even a routine occasion such as a maths class where it is the communication between people which creates the event. Such events have been studied within the sub-discipline of anthropology called the 'ethnography of communication' (Gumperz and Hymes, Scherzer and Banman, Saville-Troike and see Unit 14 for more details). The ethnography of communication has tended to study the more formal, bounded, ritual events of a particular community or group, e.g. religious ceremonies, narratives, greetings and other key political, judicial or ceremonial events where ways of speaking are central to a definition of such events. The structures and rituals and assumed relationships within such events form a pattern of predictable options. Those who are members of the community will be competent participants in such events – in other words they will be communicatively competent.

In a similar way, middle-class children come to school communicatively competent while the majority of children will have their behaviour negatively evaluated despite being competent members of their own community. The classroom, like any other communicative event, has its own rituals, structures and conventionalised social relationships which are learnt, and resisted, by working-class children. And this resistance is something that is actively engaged so that in McDermott's terms (1974) status labels are achieved through interaction. Paul Willis's *Learning to Labour* (1977) is a classic ethnography of working-class boys learning to resist the discourses of school, but at the same time colluding with the 'macho' ideology of the unskilled factory life towards which they inevitably orientate. Within their own terms, however, Willis's 'lads' triumph over the oppressive socialisation of school.

Students have frequently drawn on educational contexts for their ethnographic projects, although few have thus far concentrated on detailed analyses of classrooms or other learning situations. Instead, aspects of the educational experience have fed into research on student groups. Blind students and student

single mothers in Germany have both been the focus of projects, as has the general experience of being a university student in Aix-en-Provence.

References

- ◆ Bauman, R and Scherzer, J (eds) (1974) *Explorations in the Ethnography of Speaking*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- ◆ Begag, Azouz (1984) *Le Gone du Chaâba*. Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon.
- ◆ Bourdieu, Pierre and Passeron, J.-C (1977) *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*. London: Sage
- ◆ Brice Heath, Shirley (1982) 'Questioning at Home and at School: A Comparative Study', in Spindler, George (ed.) *Doing Ethnography: Educational Anthropology in Action*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, pp.102-131.
- ◆ Brice Heath, Shirley (1983) *Ways with Words: Language, Life and Work in Communities and Classrooms*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- ◆ Cook- Gumperz, J and Gumperz, J (1986) Introduction in Cook-Gumperz, J (ed.) *The Social Construction of Literacy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- ◆ Erickson, Frederick and Mohatt, Gerald (1982) 'Cultural Organisation of Participation Structures in Two Classrooms of Indian Students', in Spindler, George (ed.), *Doing Ethnography: Educational Anthropology in Action*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, pp.132-174.
- ◆ Gumperz, J and Hymes, D (eds) (1972) *Directions in Sociolinguistics: The Ethnography of Communication*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston
- ◆ Lemke, J (1990) *Talking Science: Language, Learning and Values*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex
- ◆ McDermott, R. (1974) 'Achieving School Failure: An Anthropological Approach to Illiteracy and Social Stratification. In Spindler (ed): 82 – 118
- ◆ Philips, Susan (1983), *The Invisible Culture*. New York: Longman
- ◆ Saville-Troike, M (1982) *Introduction to the Ethnography of Communication*. Oxford: Blackwell
- ◆ Spindler, G (1974) 'Schooling in Schönhausen: A Study of Cultural Transmission and Instrumental Adaption in an urbanising German Village.' In Spindler (ed.) 230 - 271
- ◆ Spindler, G (ed) (1974) *Education and Cultural Process: Toward an Anthropology of Education*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

SECTION TWO

1. Outline of a session

1. Introduction: socialisation and education
2. What is learnt in educational institutions?
3. Feedback on student assignments: classroom observation
4. Class discussion of student reading: extract from *Learning to Labour* (Willis)
5. Being a competent member of the class: analysis of micro data from Mehan
6. Summing up: What happens in educational settings?

2. Description of a session

2.1 Introduction: socialisation and education

Remind students of the concept of socialisation introduced in Unit 5 on Family. There we described it as the process of acquiring the behaviour, skills, values and cultural knowledge required to become an accepted member of a social group, and of society as a whole. We saw how kinship systems 'slot' people into certain roles with attendant rights, obligations and behaviour. We looked at the questions: how is this behaviour acquired? How do we come to 'pick up' the skills and attitudes necessary for slotting into these given roles?

Move beyond the idea of the family as a place for 'primary' socialisation by introducing the idea of 'secondary' socialisation. Taken together, the units help make the point that socialisation is a process involving a wide variety of institutions and agencies, from the family to educational institutions (kindergarten, school, university and professional training), work environments and leisure environments (peer groups, clubs, religious groups, etc.). It is also perpetuated in a more informal way by other processes such as the media and advertising.

Make the point that socialisation is a two-way, interactive process that involves negotiation and mutual learning, not just a process by which we are 'fed' unchangeable sets of rules for behaviour. Equally, it is not confined to childhood but is a life-long process. All social experiences are part of and contribute to our socialisation, and there is constant re-socialisation throughout life. We are always taking on different roles in new situations we enter into in successive phases of life, from our first taste of family rules and values to our learning, for example, about how to adapt to an old people's home. We are also often required to adapt to wider changes in society. An example could be given of the need for former East Germans to unlearn patterns of behaviour which were appropriate in an authoritarian, so-called socialist society and to learn new modes of behaviour more in keeping with the requirements of a free market society.

Finally, remind students that as usual we are trying to make sense of shared patterns of behaviour through examining interactions, and through 'making strange'. Making explicit patterns of behaviour that are usually 'invisible' and 'taken for

granted' by us will help us to explore how, in a classroom environment, socialisation is taking place even when it might look as if nothing very significant is happening.

2.2 What is learnt in educational institutions?

Use the background notes to introduce students to the notion of the 'hidden curriculum', i.e. the unwritten rules and forms of social control to which students are required to submit. Make the point that school and college are not just about imparting and acquiring 'discipline'-specific knowledge, but also the skills and cultural knowledge required to become an accepted member of society, and perhaps also of a particular social group. In other words, the ways in which children learn to conform to or to resist the social norms of the school are a necessary part of school life, and school socialisation reflects and helps to maintain the socialisation outside school.

A reference to learnt patterns of gender behaviour can also be made here in as much as hierarchies of knowledge within the school system may still sometimes be gendered. Certain 'difficult' subjects have traditionally been thought of as appropriate for boys (maths, physics, etc.) whilst girls have tended to be channelled towards e.g. domestic science, English or biology for which it has been assumed they have a 'natural aptitude'. Whilst this is increasingly challenged, there are still some heavily gendered areas of study (e.g. engineering).

School, then, is as much a social as an academic experience, and learning gets done through the ways teachers and students interact in and outside the classroom. Patterns of behaviour that routinely occur in such interactions are therefore interesting to study in detail. The kinds of questions we could ask when investigating socialisation at school might involve: what kinds of behaviour are approved of? How are children expected to show respect for hierarchy? How are they expected to show that they value the knowledge that is on offer at school, and how are they expected to display this knowledge? Which groups are most likely to do well at school because they understand its regime and value school knowledge?

It may be useful to briefly ask students to reflect on their own school experience, focusing on how the communicative competence expected and the forms of social interaction may have differed from those experienced at home.

2.3 Feedback on student assignment: Classroom observation

Working in groups of three or four, students find it helpful to begin simply by exchanging accounts of how their assignment went. They could initially be asked to focus on the following:

- Results/findings: what did you discover?
- Methods: what system did you use to record your observations?
- Difficulties: How did you manage to do the task?
- Consequences: What were the effects on the class of your observation (if any)?

Following this, it is essential to encourage a more focused discussion and stress the need for a more analytical approach (i.e. not just a 'common sense' view). The headings below could be used for a closer, data-led analysis of the feedback from the groups:

- Think of the class as a social or communicative event – how does it manifest itself? What are the boundaries around this event?
- What patterns in behaviour were found?
- Can anything be said about rule-keeping and rule-breaking? What were the effects/consequences of instances observed? From these examples, what can be said about the hidden curriculum?
- What types of socio-cultural knowledge would you need to behave appropriately in such a class? In other words, how do you do well in class?
- How is appropriate knowledge and behaviour rewarded? How much of this is knowledge that students have been socialised into over a long period and how much of it is local and recent knowledge? (Refer back to Erickson in Unit 5).

2.4 Class discussion of student reading: *Learning to Labour* (Paul Willis)

Remind students that ethnography is about groups and the patterns of behaviour to be found in them, and that Willis's study of non-conformist working-class kids in a Midlands school is a classic group account. Begin by eliciting from students all the groups mentioned in the text (the 'lads', 'ear'oles', 'semi-ear'oles', 'teachers', 'younger teachers', 'senior teachers', 'school management', 'teachers' wives', and 'the lads future kids'). It is helpful to write these up on the OHP, and to put them in some kind of classification system (see Section 3).

Use the questions on the student handout to structure the feedback. The main focus should be on how roles are constructed and how group identity is defined and maintained through interaction. Elicit information from students on the importance the lads attach to belonging to their group, and on the various ways they construct and maintain it (e.g. through symbolic discourse, clothes, cigarettes, alcohol, music, sexual prowess, rejection of authority, etc.) Close attention should be given to the ways in which all groups involved here describe themselves, and their relationships with other groups. Discuss, here, the idea of social and cultural reproduction (see background notes) in relation to class reproduction in Willis's study. Make the point that we cannot look at school in isolation; it is always related to other groups in the community (e.g. the family, the world of work, the police, the lads' perception that school is divorced from the 'real life' experience outside, etc.)

If there is time available, Willis's study of a group in an educational setting can be used as the basis for the class to take a reflective look at itself. The following broad questions might be asked: What can we learn from this study of a group about our situation in this class? You are a group – what is the basic difference between you and the lads? (e.g. they have to go to school – you don't have to do a degree, you didn't have to choose ethnography, etc.) Is this class made up of sub-groups? If so, what are they? What are the relationships between the different groups? How are they structured? Are there any patterns? Do we share a common purpose? Do we

subscribe to the same values? Where do you place yourself in this web? How do you see and evaluate your own role? And finally, are there any new aspects to interaction and learning within the ethnography class?

2.5 Being a competent member of the class: analysis of micro data from Mehan (see Section 3)

In terms of the analytic focus of ethnography, this is 'micro-ethnography'. This implies that, as with the classroom observation assignment, very detailed attention is given to the minutiae of interaction within a particular cultural scene. The reading from Willis, by contrast, had a broader analytic focus and was attempting to describe the whole way of life of a social group (the lads). This type of study is referred to as 'macro-ethnography'. Point out the usefulness of the detailed, micro approach because of the enhanced attention to language it involves.

Start with a general question such as what is school about? The analysis of Mehan's data illustrates the thesis that apart from the acquisition of knowledge there is also a social aspect of learning at school – the hidden curriculum. Learning to behave appropriately, learning to conform to the social organisation of the classroom (e.g. turn taking) is as important as knowing the right answer. Students may find it difficult to comment on this data initially since at first sight it does appear to be a record of classroom interaction where nothing much is happening. Point out that by looking closely at the interaction, i.e. the behaviour of the participants, the 'invisible culture' of the classroom becomes apparent.

Try to elicit the following information from students:

Social order in the lessons is achieved through the turn-allocation mechanism. The basic structure for this is (IRE):

- Initiation (by the teacher)
- Response (by the student)
- Evaluation (by the teacher)

Initiation is done by:

- nominations (verbally or non-verbally)
- invitations to bid (e.g. raise your hand)
- invitations to reply (e.g. addressed individually or to the whole class)

The turn-taking rules are only tacit. Often we only notice the system when it is disrupted for some reason, i.e.

- if the wrong person replies ('Wait a moment – let X reply')
- if a child replies when the teacher has asked children to bid ('wait a moment', 'raise your hand')

When violations of the rules are allowed, the teacher is in trouble and cannot get any of the responses she wants. When order breaks down, she may use certain strategies such as 'doing nothing' (i.e. not positively or negatively evaluating the unsolicited/out of order response, even though the answer may be right, as in the case of Jerome).

If time, extend the notion of violating rules to the more general notion of violating cultural rules and how such violations give insights into cultural norms. As newly arrived visitors, students will, no doubt, have plenty of opportunities to learn from their own accidental violations.

2.6 Summing up: What happens in educational settings?

Sum up the idea that school and university do not just impart knowledge but act as a means of social reproduction. Educational institutions have a job to do in alliance with other socialisation agencies in terms of maintaining the social fabric and turning individuals into competent members of society.

Remind students of the educational environments they may be involved in during a period of residence abroad, and of ways in which these might be studied to form the basis of, or part of, an ethnographic project. Make the point that classroom behaviour is culturally specific and that they will certainly notice differences when involved in university or school abroad.

3. Advice and comments

Given that students' experiences of educational environments are fresh in their minds, it is useful to conduct as much of this session as time allows through eliciting information from them. This approach could be adopted for Section 2 of the session in particular ('what is learnt in an educational institution?').

As the course is still in its early stages, students may still be uncertain as to what they should be looking out for in data-collection assignments and in readings. They may still be concerned about getting the 'wrong' answer. It is therefore helpful to get them to share their ideas about the Willis reading as well as about the assignment before feedback is given to the class. It should also be pointed out that readings are springboards for debate, and not 'reading comprehension' exercises.

The sheet showing the teacher's participant observation recordings which is appended to the assignment on classroom observation should be commented upon explicitly as an example of how data can be presented both to make sense to the reader, and as part of the process of analysis. It is important to draw students' attention to such examples as they are made available throughout the course. Although there is a lot to focus on in this session, students should be encouraged to keep one 'track' open for thinking about how data can be organised, analysed and presented. It should be noted how the teacher made her notes immediately after the lesson, before the data had 'gone cold', and that the diagram would help her to 'recreate' the scene when she returned to it at a later stage.

Finally, for students of French there are a number of novels from the 1980s by Beur writers (second generation North African immigrants) that deal with the conflict between the home and the school environment. Azouz Begag's *Le Gone du Chaâba*, for example, shows how the North African children in the Lyon school can

be seen to engage in a 'counter school' culture similar to that of Willis's 'lads' where answering questions in the classroom is rejected since it 'isn't Arab'.

Although quite a number of the references in this unit have been to minority groups at school, it is worth advising students that they do not have to look for the exotic or different in their study. It is the normal and routine which, if studied in enough detail, is interesting. Students may be working in multi-cultural and working-class schools where there is a 'counter-culture' but its usefulness will be as much in illuminating the majority culture as in being interesting in itself.

Student Comment

I found 'socialisation' quite stimulating in that it is with us everyday yet we need something like an ethnography lesson to point it out to us!

What I thought was useful was the discussion about structuring classroom lessons. It became very clear to me that conclusions can be drawn from seemingly simple data.

SECTION THREE

1. Assignments

Classroom Observation

The objective of this assignment is to observe the social aspects of one of your classes. You will be both a participant (as one of the students in the class) and an observer. This makes you a **participant observer**, i.e. you are both taking part and watching and recording what is going on.

Think about the classroom as a place where a great many social interactions take place: between lecturer and students and between students and students. This means

THINKING ABOUT

1. The role and status of everyone in the class
2. The social background of everyone in the class, i.e. age, gender, ethnic background, etc.
3. The physical organisation of the classroom, i.e. seating positions, furniture, movement in the class
4. Other aspects of setting, e.g. physical environment, time of day
5. Turns and topics:
 - Who gets to talk?
 - How do they get to talk?
 - What are the topics?
 - How are they developed?
6. Other 'local' factors, e.g. the lecturer arrives late, you are feeling tired, etc.

CHOOSING A SAMPLE AND OBSERVING

1. Choose one class to observe
2. Decide whether to tell the lecturer and / or the other students
3. Decide whether to observe the whole class, i.e. for the whole class time and all the students, or whether to take a fixed period of time, the beginning and ending of the class only, part of the student group only, etc.

RECORDING YOUR OBSERVATIONS

1. You will need to think beforehand about what aspect of the classroom you will concentrate on. But don't worry if nothing immediately strikes you.
2. Make field notes with paper and pen.
3. Decide beforehand if you want to develop some kind of personal shorthand (eg initials for each participant, Q = question, E = extended answer, S = single word or phrase answer, etc.).
4. Have a watch handy in case you want to time contributions.

5. Add to your notes immediately afterwards if you can. Remember to make a distinction between description and interpretation.
6. Note, in particular, any effects your observation had on the class.

WRITING UP YOUR OBSERVATION

1. Describe the context and circumstances of the class, e.g. a French language class with X students, their background, the content covered in the class and why you chose it.
2. Describe what you decided to observe and why
3. Give examples of what you recorded – either as brief jottings or as a chart/diagram. (Example attached from *Curriculum in Action*, The Open University, 1980. This example is of a teacher doing participant observation of her class).
4. Write a short account of your interpretation of what went on in the class and any other comments you want to make.

WHAT TO FOCUS ON

If possible, decide for yourself what you want to look at. You may only be able to do this while you are actually in the class – when something strikes you. This is fine. You will have to improvise some way of taking notes which allows you to document what you find interesting.

If you feel completely stuck, the following are ideas you could consider:

1. How much time the teacher talks and how much time the students talk.
2. Student contributions: Do some students contribute more than others? If so, could this be related to any social factor, e.g. gender, language, background, etc.?
3. How does the teacher elicit responses from students? Does he or she use different methods for doing this?
4. How far does physical positioning affect the way teacher and students interact?
5. How do students know how to behave during the different stages of the lesson, e.g. when is 'writing notes' done and when is it not done?
6. Are certain topics/items of language explicitly developed and are certain student-introduced topics discouraged by the lecturer?
7. How much time is spent on dealing with the academic task and how much time is spent on social talk?

Etc. etc.

Bring your observations to the next session for discussion.

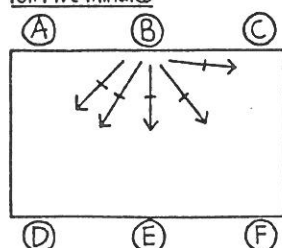
Unit 7 – Education and Socialisation

HANDOUT 1 – classroom observation

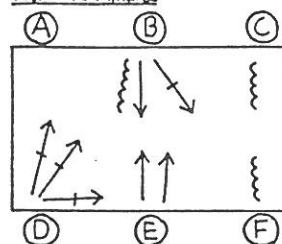
Example from: Curriculum in Action. The Open University. 1980.

(N.B. This example is of a teacher doing participant observation of her own class.)

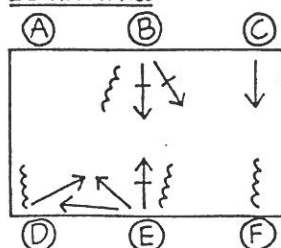
1st. Five minutes



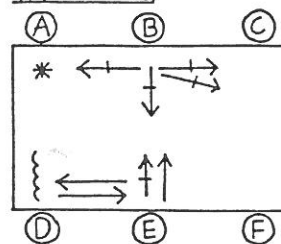
3rd. Five minutes



2nd. Five minutes



4th Five minutes



KEY

- Ⓐ Pupil
- Talk to do with work
- ⇄ Talk not to do with work
- ~~~~~ Laughter
- * Question to the teacher
- Work table

Notes:

Observations were carried out for 4 periods of five minutes. A separate plan is used for each period.

The group observed in detail was fairly typical of the rest of the behaviour in the class.

Expansion of information on the plan : Notes made immediately after the lesson.

When talking, pupils all continued working, except for Ⓑ who stopped working when making a point.

Ⓓ and Ⓔ had a discussion about work that Ⓓ was doing which involved Ⓔ handling Ⓓ's work. (2nd five-minute period)

Ⓑ appeared to be a conductor of most conversations (what would have happened if Ⓑ had not been present?)

Ⓐ asked me a question, but did not communicate with the others at all, even when a question was directed at him. (4th five-minute period)

Ⓔ did not talk to any of the group, but was listening and joining in with laughter.

Looking at their work, and assessing it. I would suggest that there may be a correlation between quality of work and amount of talking in this case. (The work Ⓓ produced was of poor quality, unimaginative; the work Ⓐ produced was sensitive, skilful and well finished off.

I was surprised by the amount of laughter present.

Much of the talk concerned music on the radio that was playing in the background. Is this a good or a bad thing?

The observation confirmed my view that Ⓐ is an isolate. I was surprised at the amount of talk from Ⓓ.

Unit 7 – Education and Socialisation

Reading

♦ Willis, Paul (1977) *Learning to Labour*, London: Saxon House, pp.11-22

When you read this text, you might find it useful to consider the following questions. You should be able to quote/refer to evidence.

1. What are the different groups mentioned in the text?
2. What kinds of relationship are described?
3. What do teachers do?
4. What can they do? What happens between teachers and students?
5. How do the lads see the teachers' behaviour towards them?
6. What do the lads and teachers have in common?
7. Do they pursue the same aims?
8. What are the lads learning? Could it make social sense?
9. How is the time perspective different between lads and conformists?
10. What do you think is the author's attitude to the groups he observed?

Elements of a Culture

Opposition to authority and rejection of the conformist

The most basic, obvious and explicit dimension of counter-school culture is entrenched general and personalised opposition to 'authority'. This feeling is easily verbalised by 'the lads' (the self-elected title of those in the counter-school culture).

[In a group discussion on teachers]

Joey (...) they're able to punish us. They're bigger than us, they stand for a bigger establishment than we do, like, we're just little and they stand for bigger things, and you try to get your own back. It's, uh, resenting authority I suppose.

Eddie The teachers think they're high and mighty 'cos they're teachers, but they're nobody really, they're just ordinary people ain't they?

Bill Teachers think they're everybody. They are more, they're higher than us, but they think they're a lot higher and they're not.