**Chapter Two**

**Exploration of Teaching**

**What are ways to explore teaching? (Page 15)**

1-Do self-observation.

2-Observation of other teachers.

3-Talkwith other teachers.

4-Read journal articles and books about teaching and learning.

5-Attend professional conferences .

6-Establish a mentoring relationship .

7-Put together a teaching portfolio .

8-Do action research .

9-Keep a teacher journal .

10-Learn another language .

11-Read teacher narratives .

**-How can teachers explore teaching through self-observation?**

1-Teaching while collecting samples of teaching .

2-Analyzing the Samples of Teaching.

3-Reflection and interpretation .

4-Generate changes .

**1-Teaching while collecting samples of teaching .(Page 20)**

To make self-observation possible, we can collect samples of our teaching, and this can be done in a variety of ways. How taping is done often depends on the goals of exploration. For example, if you are interested in the students' reactions to instructions or explanations, the audio recorder or camcorder can be focused on the students. If you are interested in what happens during group work, it is logical to place the audio recorder or camcorder with a group of students for a period of time. The idea is to think about the objective of the exploration and to consider how to tape the class to obtain useful samples for later analysis.

**2-Analyzing the Samples of Teaching (Page 21)**

An analysis can also depend on the objective of the exploration. For example, if you are interested in knowing about the number of questions you ask, you can tally each question you ask, as well as jot down examples of actual questions.

A second way to analyze the collection of teaching samples is to make short transcripts from the audio- or videotapes. Again, what you decide to transcribe can depend on the focus of your exploration. For example, if you are interested in learning about how you treat language errors, you might make and study short transcripts of the times errors are treated.

**3-Reflection and interpretation (Page 22)**

After doing an analysis, you can stop to make sense of the descriptions of classroom interaction. To do this, teachers focus on several questions. One set of questions I like to ask include: "How does the interaction in this class provide chances for students to learn the language?" and "How does the interaction possibly block students from learning the language?" Of course, you can narrow the question based on a particular interest. For example, if you are interested in error treatment and have analyzed the patterns of interaction around the treatment of students' oral errors, you can ask, "How does my way of treating students language errors possibly provide chances for the students to be more accurate in their use of English?   
  
**4- Deciding on changes in teaching behavior (Page 23)**

One reason to change the way we teach is because there is a problem to be solved: Students don't talk; instructions aren't clear ;students habitually speak their native language. When we are problem solving, we can make calculated changes aimed at solving the problem. For example, if some students aren't talking during whole class discussions, the teacher might try group work to see if these students will talk with classmates. If the teacher discovers that students do not understand instructions when they are given orally, the teacher might write them down.

**-What Teachers Have Done: Examples of the Self-Observation Process(Page 24)**

**-What an ESL teacher did to explore the way she gave instructions?**

The teacher videotaped her teaching and made short transcripts focusing on how she gave instructions and on what students did afterward .She discovered that her oral instructions took two minutes and that many of the students did not understand them. During the start of group activity, for example some students ask each other-some in their native language-what they were supposed to be doing . Two students finally, ask her to explain the task again. She ended up going from group to group to explain the instructions, and it took five additional minutes before the students were all working on the task.

She reflected on her way of giving instructions and decided that she was not giving the students ample opportunity to comprehend the instructions .However she also saw some value in giving vague instructions ;students were given chances to negotiate meaning with her .To explore different ways she could give instructions ,she decided to try three different ways, each on different day. The first day she wrote the instructions and read them orally ,the second day she dictated the instructions, and on the third day she asked the students to paraphrase the instructions back to her. Through her analysis she discovered that all the three ways worked for this particular class. In addition, she discovered that it was possible to turn instructions into a language learning activity.

**-What did an EFL teacher do to explore her ‘praise behavior’?**

She audio and video taped her class of young teens with an open mind toward discovery. As she viewed the video tape, she became curious about her use of praise behaviors. So, she decided to count the number of times she praised students, as well as to jot down short dialogues between the students and her when she praised them. She discovered that she verbalized "very good" quite often, and she praised them even when they didn't get a correct answer or understood her. The teacher-explorer interpreted her use of praise as being ambiguous to the students. Her praise had become empty gestures. She also reflected on why she praised students and decided that praise can be an important motivating force. She also realized that if the students cannot distinguish when and why she is praising them, it is useless. As such, she decided to implement small changes in her praising techniques. For example, she monitored her use of praise and verbally expressed it only when she was genuinely impressed. After taping and analyzing her praise behaviors again, the teacher knew that she used praise far less frequently and usually at times when students showed improvement. She also analyzed the quality of the students' use of English, and she concluded, after two months, that their work was genuinely improving.

**-What did an EFL teacher do to explore his ‘questioning behavior?**

The teacher audio-taped his class and used the tally sheet. He kept track of the target of his questions ( e.g. , to an individual student or the whole class ), and the content of each question ( e.g. , about students’ lives, about people and places in general , about language , or the content of reading selection).The tally sheet showed that he asked 28 questions during 25 minutes time period ;that most of his questions addressed to whole class.

Upon reflection, he was surprised that he averaged two questions per minute. This discovery was very useful. It gave him a chance to reflect on his questioning behavior . He thought how all the participants not only answer questions but also ask them and react to each other’s responses. Second he was able to modify his questioning behavior.

In the next seminar, he consciously asked fewer questions and attempt to achieve more discussion on a single question . Also, after a student responded to a question, he remained silent or said uh-huh in an encouraging way then paraphrased what was just said. After audio-taping the second seminar, he discovered that he asked fewer questions, that students ask each other questions, and that students reacted to the responses of others.

**-How can explore their own teaching through the observation of other teachers ? ( Page 28 )**

We can see our own teaching in the teaching of others .When we observe others to gain knowledge of self, we have the chance to construct and reconstruct our own knowledge. While observing other teachers, it is possible to collect samples in variety of ways. We can take notes, tally behavior, and audio / video tape their classes . These tapes can be used later to be analyzed. By doing so, exploration is enhanced for all. The following example will clarify the importance of observing other teachers :

**-How did an ESL teacher do to explore her ‘praising behavior’? ( page 28-29)**  
The teacher, June, is correcting Anna’s language error .Here is one of these short transcripts:

-Anna: I have only two sister.

-June: Huh-huh.

Anna: I have no brother.

June: Two sisters (June uses rising intonation).

-Anna: Because my mother she dead when I was three years old.

June: She died when you were three?

Anna: Yes. She dead when I was three years old.

Through the analysis of this dialogue, the two teachers concluded that June’s way of treating Anna’s errors was not working. June attempted to treat Anna’s errors twice. The first time she used rising intonation when saying :Two sisters, trying to draw attention to the error and perhaps get Anna to correct herself. Instead, Anna elaborates .Then, when June puts the correction into a question and emphasizes died with ,’She died when you were three?’

Anna did not catch the correction. Rather, she took June’s question as a request for clarification. After appraising her treatment techniques , she decided that students most likely did not know she was treating or correcting their errors . Instead they focused on meaning. As a part of our discussion, she decided that if she did treat errors, she could at least do so in a way that the students were aware of being corrected. She read about and discussed error treatment, and implemented alternative ways to treat errors. In the spirit of exploration, we were also able to generate a number of alternative ways she could use praise behaviors .She could, for example, praise students only when they do outstanding work. She could also use award symbols, such as pasting stars on their written work for an outstanding job or give class awards to those students who made the most progress in certain areas. It is worth mentioning that the teacher did explore her use of praise behaviors by only praising students when they were truly outstanding, and she later reported that students seem more accepting of her praise and some even more motivated to work to gain her praise.

**-How can teachers explore through a teacher journal?**

The purpose of writing in a journal is to have place to record our observations of what goes on in our classes and other teachers’ classrooms, write about our discussions, teaching ideas, and reflect on our teaching. Here is a list of what some teachers include in their journals:

1-Quickly written descriptions of classroom interaction.

2-Tally sheets, sketches, etc.

3-Photos and what goes on in each photo.

4-Summuries and reflections on discussions.

5-List of alternative ways to give instructions.

6-Streem on consciousness writing to let the ideas flow.

7-Reflection on language-learning experience.

8-Questions about teaching and learning.

9-Summaries of journal articles.

10-Lesson plan and teaching ideas.