



What do we see when we observe?

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“As ever, Watson, you see but do not observe. To you, the world remains an impenetrable mystery, whereas, to me, it is an open book. Hard logic versus romantic whimsy – that is your choice. You fail to connect actions to their consequences.”



–Sherlock Holmes



Here's what you'll need...

- A set of descriptors (External Standard)
- A link between these descriptors and your practice
- Different levels?
- Trial and Standardise




Now that we have it, the question becomes..

How can we use it?


A 7-step Process

1. Notify the Teacher
2. Teacher submits a plan
3. Pre-observation meeting
4. Observation
5. Write report
6. Post-observation meeting
7. Development conversation


Formal Observation Report

Teacher: _____ Observer: _____ Date: _____

1. Lesson Plan & Materials Preparation	Rating	Comment
1a) Objective clear & appropriate		
1b) Student & teacher tasks divided		
1c) Stages broken into steps		
1d) Outcome consistent with objective		
1e) Suitable choice & adaptation of material		
2. Use of Plan & Materials	Rating	Comment
2a) Adapts to student response		
2b) Material exploited for learning		
2c) Clear outcome achieved		
3. Language, Needs & Methods	Rating	Comment
3a) Language suits level & needs		
3b) Understood and clearly presented		
3c) In a relevant context		
3d) Gives an appropriate model		
3e) Level of challenge		
4. Classroom Management	Rating	Comment
4a) Effective use of board & other aids		
4b) Good organisation of students		
4c) Effective monitoring		
4d) Facilitates communication		
4e) Good pace		
5. Teaching Techniques	Rating	Comment
5a) Gives effective instructions & checks		
5b) Effective & appropriate correction		
5c) Varied & effective techniques		
5d) Leads to correct use of target language		
6. Classroom Dynamics	Rating	Comment
6a) Engages students		
6b) Sets up a good group dynamic		
6c) Good atmosphere for learning		
6d) Promotes learner autonomy		


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And what then...

- Observation gives us one picture of this teacher
- We have more from Student Feedback, Lesson Plans, Conversations, Instincts.
- Does all of this add up? Are their goals realistic now?
- How can you help structure their professional learning?





Fine fine, stop preaching and tell us about

Problems we had

- Not having enough standardisation
- Observing Ts who trained elsewhere doing what works for them
- Seeing a snapshot, but we can't really tell if learning is happening or not
- Ts development desires not matching training needs

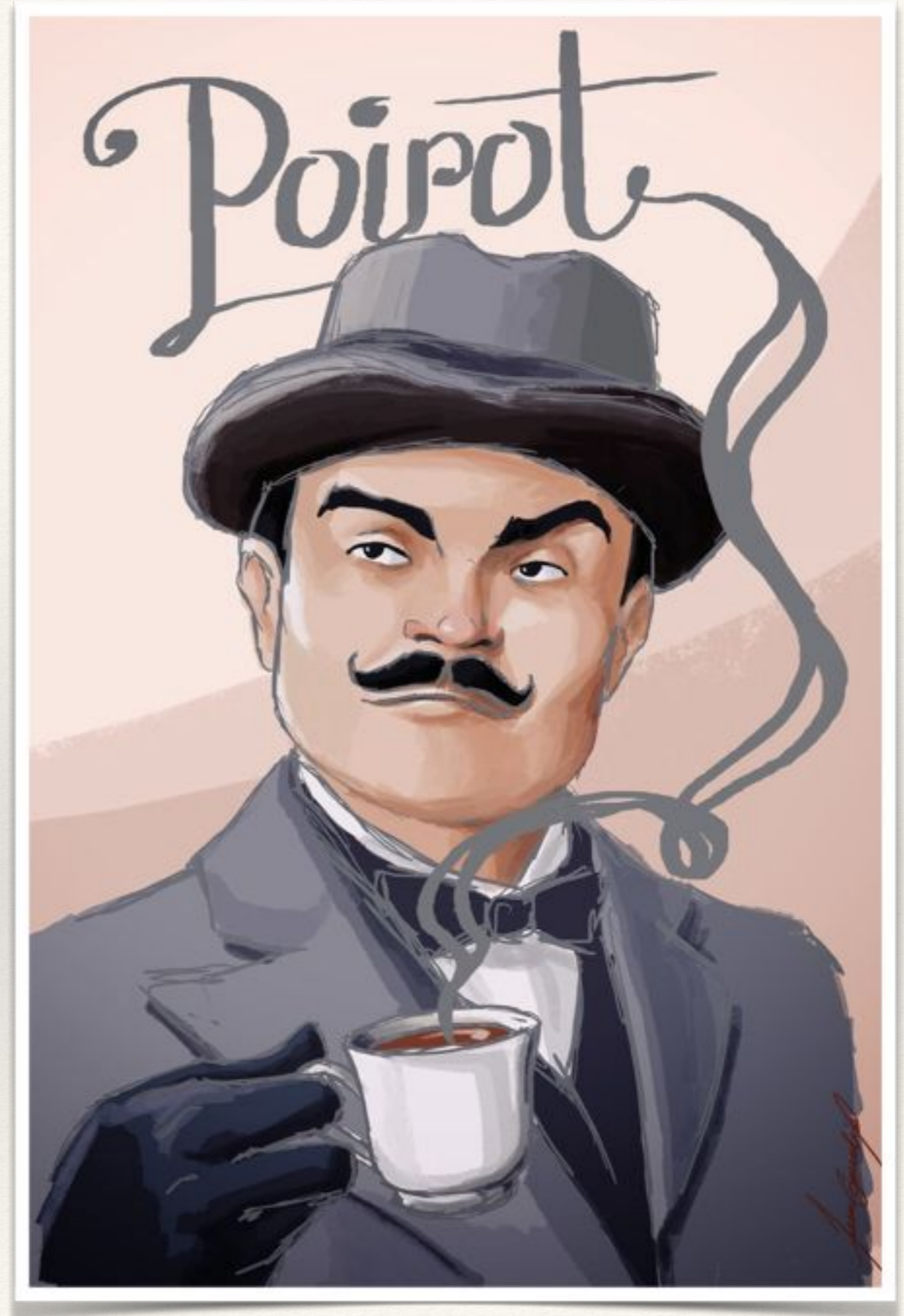
Problems everyone has

- Observations are one of our main ways to find out what Ts are doing in classes
- Research suggests we are really bad at observing
- There may be implications for CertTESOL, CELTA, DipTESOL, DELTA
- Is this another Learning Styles situation where discredited practice endures because it's part of the fabric and we're used to it?

So what can we do instead

An Alternative

- Process-based student feedback
- Targeted, evidence-based observation tasks
- Guided reflection tasks



Further Reading / References

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