

# Discrepancies in meeting OREO guidelines: The Teacher-researcher's sacrifice and new skill set needs

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## ABSTRACT

*In this evaluation research, the researcher aimed at examining the extent to which Hebei Foreign Studies University (hereafter referred to HFSU) implemented of the O.R.E.O guidelines during COVID-19 lockdown. To collect data, the researcher used the document analysis, an interrater checklist, and participant observation. As the study used both the qualitative and quantitative data, the analysis was equally qualitative and descriptive statistics was used to analyse quantitative data. The major findings were that HFSU did well as two raters found out that fourteen criteria out of sixteen on the rating metrics were fulfilled. The level of O.R.E.O implementation of that university during the Covid-19 lockdown (Semester I, academic year 2020-2021) is "Very Highly" (92%) but it could have done more than that by adjusting few things like insuring undisturbed learning space by parents or guardians and cross-checking information reported both by students and teachers concerning the daily activities of the online teaching-learning.*

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## 1. Introduction

Teaching and learning during the Covid-19 brought a surge of new needs. Such a fact is not hard to decipher given how demanding was the teaching and learning during the lockdown. There is newness in the way students are learning and teachers teaching. Digging deep into the matter would also show that teaching online created new needs in terms of teaching tools for a nice flow of lessons. Have you ever thought “*what you do well in person so that you can do those things in your online classes?*” (Darby, 2020). Some of these needs require teachers to exercise advanced research competencies or even to pay their own money to cater for those online teaching needs.

There is a lot that has already been done in justifying a teacher as a researcher. Hammersley (1993) for example refuted the idea that teachers can be called researcher only because they are teaching. A demarcation has to remain: there is a difference between research and teaching.

Wood (2017) vows that teacher researchers’ studies should be supported by school management to establish or to evaluate such scholarly works’ effectiveness. There is a relationship between Wood’s (2017) work and Tylor’s (2017) as both see teachers as researchers. Tylor (ibid) work shows how the teachers as researchers’ identity can be passed on during the teaching of research methodologies.

This was achieved through the teacher’s narrative and appropriation (use of “we” to show sameness). The gap in these three works is that none advocates on how research competencies can be fostered among students or teachers to be called researchers. Santrock (2011) takes a stance apart and establishes rather on the role research plays in one’s teaching career. This means that he joins Wood (2017) and Tylor (2017) that teachers can carry research. Indeed, the research at hand is an instance of a researcher’s narrative and appropriation.

Wanting to apply his participative observation skills as teacher-researcher, the researcher was hunting for tips to succeed in his online teaching endeavours; he wanted to teach effectively. The best way to get updated, if not live tips, was to resource himself from communities where like-minded teachers are agglomerated. Then, he stumbled into a post at reddit.com. That post and other 587 comments were a sort of attention-getters.

Teacher-researchers are always curious to participate top tier countries’ teachers’ inner-circles. There, teachers speak of their minds and comment on one another’s views. Here is the congruence reddit.com offers for teacher-researchers and research participative observers: everything is anonymous, which is the principle number one in the world of researchers: the protection of the research subject’s identity and privacy is mandatory.

For those who want to access that sub-reddit at reddit.com, below is the link: [https://www.reddit.com/r/Teachers/comments/h95gum/spending\\_your\\_own\\_money/](https://www.reddit.com/r/Teachers/comments/h95gum/spending_your_own_money/). On that reddit.com string of teachers’ ideas, the researcher noted that paying one’s money to improve teaching online experience is not an option for some teachers. Of course, in the profession where you do not have a good salary, it would sound like an excuse to do so. Even if one works in a private school that cares about business rather than education, an excuse cannot be made for teachers to shrug off some of their responsibilities. But whatever stance one might take, there is an ardent and urgent introspection: “*Am I implementing the O.R.E.O?*” For your information, O.R.E.O is an acronym developed by an international educator known as Alison Yang, (Western Academy of Beijing, 2020; Yang, 2020).

Yang (2020) has shown clearly what each layer of the acronym stands for. *Objectives*, both parties in the teaching-learning process, teachers and students, should have clear objectives. Under this perspective, teachers are entitled to identify the instructional objectives and learning outcomes. This makes it easy for students to have an idea of learning outcomes even before engaging with their learning. *Responsibility*, the scope of this layer expands to students’ education direct and indirect stakeholders. Teachers are always a key element in the implementation of this layer as well. They avail the learning materials together with clear tasks and then communicate annexed clear procedural notes they want their students to follow. This makes it easy for students to establish and get used to a sort of a daily online learning schedule. For students with the age that requires guardians to be close to them, it is clear that those guardians too might benefit from a teacher’s sense of responsibility.

*Expectations*, after all this heavy lifting by teachers, students are expected to do the following participate and engage with online learning and complete tasks and assignments with their highest level of effort. There is also another set of what teachers are expected to avail providing something looking like virtual 'office hours' and then communicate their availability online to answer students' questions or further clarify procedures or instructions. To avoid burnouts due to the big amount of work, either teachers' set live chat system or set tasks that have minimum-maximum (specified) length. *Organization*, To collect formative learning shreds of evidence about the teaching-learning, teachers should organize and sequence everything. If possible, they should avoid directing students to external links, which might save students' time. Equally, avoidance to direct their students to external URLs save those learners from failure due to being lost or distracted on the web. Another organization principle is entitled to incumbent students and parents/guardians. To achieve high standards of productivity, parents/guardians and students need to establish an undisturbed learning space.

## 2. Method

The study at hand is an evaluation research and it used the document analysis, an interrater checklist, and participant observation to collect data. The study took place at Hebei Foreign Studies University, (Hebei Province China), especially in the English department.

As far as instrumentation is concerned, the researcher has developed a metric termed "data collection checklist", (Sugiyono, 2015). The latter stands for a set of criteria developed following the OREO guidelines. To avoid bias, this research used two (2) raters/judges (who used the same online teaching platform at Hebei Foreign Studies University), (Albano, 2016).

Those two raters each filled the "data collection checklist" (16 observations for each, making 32 observations for those two raters) and then a two-rater percentage of agreement and its corrected version (the Kappa's Proportion of Agreement) were computed. Readers should note that the metrics considered the HFSU's<sup>1</sup> existing quality assurance tools (see entries 8, 12, 14, 15, and 16 on table 1). To have an idea on the structure and information collected, see the checklist table below.

The following table contains a list of statements or information about the online teaching learning at Hebei International Studies University during Semester I, academic year 2020-2021. Would you please tick (√) under the column "Observed" all the items (entries of the table below) you are sure that you observed them during your online teaching at that period? Equally, tick (√) "No Observed" any entry of the table below that you did not see or observe during your online teaching.

**Table 1.** Data Collection Checklist

No	Components	Conclusion	
		Observed	Not Observed
1	Teaching plans		
2	Daily Teaching reports		
3	Screenshot's proof which shows that someone has taught		
4	Possibility to report success during online lessons		
5	Possibility to report difficulties during online lessons		
6	Possibility to suggest solutions to difficulties faced during online lessons		
7	A teaching software that enables doing rollcall online		
8	A teaching software that enables improvised online visits by school supervisors		

<sup>1</sup>HFSU: Hebei Foreign Studies University

No	Components	Conclusion	
		Observed	Not Observed
9	A teaching software that allows teacher-students synchronous chats		
10	A teaching App that enables teachers to do video calls with students		
11	A teaching software that allows teachers to go live streaming or share the screen of their teaching gadgets/devices		
12	A platform that allows parents/guardians to attend online teaching lessons		
13	A teaching software/App that allows parents/guardians to interact with teachers		
14	Teachers are aware that the school has a system/strategy that allows students to assess (report about) teachers' activities		
15	The establishment of an undisturbed learning space by parents/guardians and students is known or felt by the teacher during online lessons		
16	Clear indicators showing how the school cross-check information reported either by students or teachers		

**Total Frequency**

To clarify the computations, the interrater agreement of percentage was obtained by calculating the number of times the two judges agree, divided by the total number of the items on the "data collect checklist" (technically referred to the observations that are rated) multiplied by 100. The interrater agreement is :  $\frac{15}{16} * 100$ .

**Table 2.** Interrater percentage of agreement

	Rater 2		Total	
	Observed	Not Observed		
Rater 1	Observed	14	2	16
	Not Observed	15	1	16
Total		29	3	32

When we have two humans who are rating a university performance over the aforementioned OREO guidelines, chances are that subjectivity or perceptions (technically referred to chance agreement) cannot be avoided. That is why we should statistically eliminate such *chance agreement* through the use of the Kappa's consistency agreement. The latter is an adjusted form of percentage agreement that helps to avoid the bias which is due to chance agreement. The following is the Kappa's formula for calculating two raters' consistency agreement:

**Equation (1):**

$$\kappa = Po - Pc \quad (2.3.1)$$

With:

Po: proportion of agreement

We obtain it by calculating the total for agreement divided by the total number of items or observation being rated

$$P_o = \frac{15}{16} : 100 \quad (2.3.2)$$

$P_o=0.93$

$P_c$ : is the chance agreement (to compute it, we multiply the row and column proportions (row and column totals divided by the total) from the contingency table 2

**Equation (2):**

$P_c =$

$$\sum P_i.P_{.i} = P_{\text{first-row}}P_{\text{first-col}} + P_{\text{next-row}}P_{\text{next-col}} + \dots + P_{\text{last-row}}P_{\text{last-col}} \quad (2.3.3)$$

So, here the Kappa  $\kappa$  consistency agreement removes chance agreement from the observed agreement by our two raters. It consists of dividing the observed “*non-chance agreement by the total possible non-chance agreement, that is,  $1 - P_c$ .*” (Albano, 2016).

$$P_c = (0.16)(0.29) + (0.16)(0.03)$$

$$P_c = 0.0512 \quad (2.3.4)$$

$$\kappa = \frac{0.93 - 0.0512}{1 - 0.0512}$$

$$\kappa = 0.92 \quad (2.3.5)$$

To facilitate understanding, let us convert the Kappa  $\kappa$  index into a percentage. With this case of two raters rating a university’s performance over OREO guidelines, 92% (see equation 2.3.5) and 5% (see equation 2.3.4) would be interpreted as the percentage of the two raters’ or judges’ ratings that were in agreement above and beyond chance. Then, the verdict becomes that when accounting for chance, the percentage decreased from 92 % to 5 %; and the corrected interrater agreement is 92% (all chance agreement eliminated) instead of 93% (with room for bias or chance agreement).

With the interrater corrected agreement, we can see that, according to the judges, HFSU University managed to implement the OREO guidelines at a rate of 92%. To locate the level of implementation on a scale of 100 if one wants the evaluation to be accurate, (Study, Karimnia, & Kay, 2015; Stufflebeam, & Coryn, 2014; Wholey, Hatry, Newcomer, 2010), it is better to set the categorization criteria:

- 0-29: Very Low
- 30-59: Average
- 60-89: High
- $\geq 90$ : Very High

The daily work of teachers at HFSU seems to frame in the OREO guidelines. The school has set up and availed some tools to implement those guidelines to the fullest. This explains the results of this study: HFSU has a score (92%) that falls into the “VERY HIGH” OREO guidelines implementation.

### 3. Discussion of results

Given the data described, analysed and interpreted in the previous sections, some aspects need discussing. It is better to remind the reader of Yang’s (2020) “OREO” guidelines for the online teaching-learning during the lockdown. It consists of Objectives, Responsibility, Expectations, and Organization. Below are sets of proof that HFSU University did a lot to fall into the “Very High” OREO guideline implementation category.

### 3.1. Example 1

For example, teachers are required to submit teaching plans that include teaching objectives. If this is well-written, it is a clear indicator that the school has a good move in implementing the O-layer.

Teaching Theme	<b>KUSOMA SAA (TELLING TIME)</b>
Teaching Objective	<b>1. Knowledge objectives:</b> 1.1. Telling time <b>2. Skill objectives:</b> 2.1. Be able to tell time 2.2. Be able to pronounce correctly Swahili words related to time-telling 2.3. Be able to do some reading tasks like answering the teacher's oral questions
Key Point	Ivi ni saa ngapi? What time is it ?
Difficulties	Ill-pronunciation of words that are unintelligible or affect meaning
Teaching Methods	Role play, Repetition drills, question posing
Teaching Aids	Computer Assisted Accessories, LCD projector, PPT slides, Course books, colorful pieces of chalk, and the chalkboard
Case Analysis during the Class	-----

Figure 1. Upper section of the Teaching plan structure: English Department/HFSU

### 3.2. Example 2

Another example is about daily reports. The school also has entitled teachers to give the daily online teaching reports of their teaching activities, which is a great indicator to urge teachers to do reflective teaching.


Online Teaching of Hebei Foreign Studies University					
学院名称 College	English Department	教师姓名 Teacher	Oscar Ndayizeye	课程名称 Course	
上课时间 Class time	年月日(周) 时 分 Date: <b>June 30 2020</b> (Week 20) Time: <b>10:10-11:30</b>	授课班级 Class	Swahili (19.3)	在线学习人数 The number of students present	57
应到人数 The number of the whole class	58	缺勤学生人数 The number of students absent	1		
网络实时截图 Screenshot of online teaching			学生出勤截图 Screenshot of students' attendance		
			Class 19本3: Students'		2020. 06. 30
			1	王涵洁 Jasmine	Present
			2	郑雪晴 Cherisch	Present
			3	郭子涵 Crystal	Present
			4	姚羽婷 Betty	Present

Figure 2. Upper section of the daily teaching reports: English Department/HFSU

### 3.3. Example 3

There is something great with these daily teaching reports: they are formatted in a way that allows teachers to report problems and suggested solutions, and success stories during their teaching online.

困难问题 (成功经验) Difficulties /Success experience	解决办法与建议 Solution & suggestion
<p>I. Success:</p> <p>Nothing to report</p> <p>II. Difficulties</p> <p>No issues</p> <p>Alert: <del>XXXXXXXXXX</del> has gone missing in my online classes)</p>	<p>Suggestions:</p> <p>=====</p> <p>=====</p> <p>Alert: Follow up with <del>XXXXXXXXXX</del> please.</p>

**Figure 3.** Lower section of the daily teaching reports: English Department/HFSU

### 3.4. Example 4

But this alone might have been cheated by some ill-intentioned teachers. Under recommendation by a professional teacher-researcher, my department introduced improvised online inspections. The department would announce that a given week is dedicated to those inspections for everyone to be ready but the date would not be mentioned.

### 3.5. Example 5

The upper left cell in Table 2 shows that for 14 cases (criteria), the two raters both marked "Observed." This means that the two raters observed that the HFSU university met 14 criteria out of 16.

Readers should note that the researcher developed the metric termed "data collection checklist" having in mind both the HFSU's<sup>2</sup> existing quality assurance tools (see entries 8, 12, 14, 15, and 16 on the chart below) and Yang's (2020) "OREO" guidelines for the online teaching-learning during the lockdown.

Generally speaking, the teaching plans and the daily teaching reports frame into the O, R, and E Layers. There is a sense of reflective teaching during Coronavirus lockdown (Snelling, Fingal, 2020), which also supports the findings by Wood (2017). Besides that, the teaching-learning software/Application utilized (DingTalk), etc. shows how the O layer is tackled.

Most especially, the DingTalk App has in-built features that allow the teacher to participate and engage with online learning; give tasks and assignments with their highest level of effort. providing something looking like virtual 'office hours'; and then communicate their availability online to answer students' questions or further clarify procedures or instructions. By the way, it is crucial to look at criteria that HFSU failed to fulfil. They include the establishment of an undisturbed learning space by parents/guardians and students is known or felt by the teacher during lessons and clear indicators showing how the school cross-check information reported either by students or teachers.

During his participatory observation, the researcher saw very few or no indicators/metrics which would demonstrate that there was someone who read the teaching reports and gave related feedback. Were they abiding with the Nelson's (2013) "*testing has spiraled out of control, and the related costs are unacceptably high and are taking their educational toll on students, teachers,*

<sup>2</sup>HFSU: Hebei Foreign Studies University

*principals and school*”? Did they not want teachers not to be burned out? Are they understaffed? Those are questions left unanswered under this O layer.

A mechanism that would allow the school to sensitize parents and students to establish or achieve high standards of productivity seems quasi-inexistent too. For example, in the researcher’s classes, parents/guardians and students did not ensure the establish an undisturbed learning space. These are some hidden or underlying indicators:

- *“Sorry, I’m doing something Sir”* (Said by a student who did not answer on time the researcher’s question during a class, when he followed up, that is the answer he got)
- *I’m eating my lunch*
- *My mum wanted me to do something*
- *Frankly, Sir, I was eating lunch* (said by someone who delayed to answer to a roll-call, after the researcher insisted that if she lied he would mark her absent)
- *I’m busy [\*with] doing something*

I cannot shut my eye to students who forgot to mute their gadgets’ sound and then shared their conversation with their relatives to the rest of the class. What is more, in some classes the researcher would improvise a second roll-call in the middle of the lesson and the number of attendees would go up from 37 to 50 shortly after starting that second roll-call. What would those students be doing? Why would their parents not change anything about this? These are the major discrepancies that that can be raised during the teaching-learning in the researcher’s five different classes, which resonates with what Yang (2020) feared about non-establishment of high productivity due to the lack of undisturbed learning space. It was also reported in the researcher’s colleagues’ classes as well.

#### 4. Conclusion

Given the discussion above, HFSU can escalate to more than the 92% implementation of OREO guidelines by sensitizing parents and students the need to establish undisturbed learning space; this would allow high standards of productivity; and cross-checking information reported either by students or teachers and holding evaluation session (via video calls) with teachers to gather evidence aimed at improving the teaching-learning online would be very great. To sum up, this article has examined the implementation of O.R.E.O guidelines when teaching online at HFSU during COVID-19 lockdown. Findings are that the school has done the heavy lifting and fulfils fourteen criteria out of sixteen. The level of implementation is “Very Highly” (92%) but it can do more than that by adjusting few things like insuring undisturbed learning space by parents or guardians and cross-checking information reported both by students and teachers concerning the daily activities of the online teaching-learning.



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