Peer Observation of Foreign Language Classrooms
presented by Antonia Schleicher, Executive Director, CLE

Wednesday, October 8, 2014
1:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Ballantine Hall 004
IU Campus, Bloomington

On Wednesday, October 8, 2014, the Center for Language Excellence (CLE) presented its inaugural workshop entitled “Peer Observation of Foreign Language Classrooms”. The workshop had 24 attendees including five CLE staff and language instructors from 10 different departments, servicing 14 different languages (Bengali, Chinese, Dutch, English as a Second language, Estonian, French, Greek, Hindi, Kazakh, Mongolian, Norwegian, Persian, Russian, and Swahili). The presentation was led by Professor Antonia Schleicher, Executive Director of the Center for Language Excellence.

This workshop was the first of a series of workshops to be offered by CLE.

Workshop participants were introduced to only one part of a comprehensive evaluation of teaching called peer observation. The goal of the workshop was to learn sound principles of peer observation of foreign language teaching and to design an instrument to guide peer observation of language teaching for their programs. Attendees reviewed a PowerPoint presentation that defined peer observation and its goal. They discussed the difference between assessment and evaluation, and shared about the guidelines for an instructor conducting observation and for an instructor being observed. A “StarTalk” video was presented as an example of observing a classroom so that participants could practice using a Peer Observation Instrument/Form. Afterwards, the participants (as observers) had a group discussion of each question on the form to check to see how well the instructor in the video was doing. Suggestions that were made by the participants to improve on the peer observation instrument/form were incorporated. This conversation led to a discussion on Backward Curriculum design.

The post-workshop survey evaluation showed that overall the participants said they were “Very Satisfied” with the workshop, and most learned new skills from their participation.

Below are what some of the participants had to say about the workshop:

“It was an awesome first workshop by the center and I really enjoyed the workshop presentation.”

“I learned more about classroom teaching observation and how this can help to foster effective language teaching in the classroom since it helps the instructor to develop himself/herself learning from the observer. As an associate instructor, I am glad to learn very early about the power of class observation and evaluation reports - they could be used to get good jobs in one’s career and also for promotion in one’s academic work.”

“The video with the evaluation document were great to have and practice doing together. The teacher in the video led a great lesson with interesting objects, clear pronunciation and objectives and lots of practice for the students.”