Classroom Observation Outcomes

Upon completion of the classroom observation, participants will
- Identify important aspects of classroom behavior that affect student learning.
- Assess strengths and alternatives to current methods used in their teaching.

Purpose

All participants will schedule a classroom observation through the Center for Teaching Innovation. Faculty will engage in dialogue about their teaching with a CTI staff member or, in some cases, a faculty member trained by the CTI. The observation will allow participants to assess their teaching and identify important aspects of classroom behavior that affect student learning.

Setting Up the Observation

Participants should suggest possible times and classes for the classroom observations as early as possible in the semester they would like to be observed. All observations should be set up at least one month in advance to ensure adequate time for a pre-observation conference.

Pre-Observation Conference

The pre-observation conference allows the participant to meet the observer and discuss the overall process of the observation. During this conference, the participant will be asked to provide the observer with a syllabus. It will include a discussion of what learners should be able to know or do at the end of the session being observed, what strategies or methods will be used to help the learners achieve the desired knowledge or skills, and how learners will demonstrate that they know and can do what is expected.

The pre-observation conference will outline the four areas that are generally the focus of the observation: 1) Structure and Goals, 2) Teaching Behaviors, 3) Instructor-Student Rapport and 4) Instruction. However, the participant can request that the observer focus on particular aspects of the class. The logistics of the observation will be discussed, including what will happen in the observation, where the observer will sit, and how the observer will be introduced.

Class Observation and Reflection

During the observation, the observer will take notes on the four areas listed above, as well as any specific areas requested by the participant. The observation will follow the format discussed in the pre-observation conference. After the observation, participants will be asked to reflect on their teaching. In reflecting on the goals for the class:
- Were your goals achieved?
- Did the students learn what you intended? How do you know?
- Were the choices of teaching methods or strategies effective? How do you know?
- Were the materials you used helpful? How do you know?
- If you could teach this lesson over again to the same class what would you keep/change? Why?

Post-Observation Debriefing

During the debriefing, the participant and observer will discuss the strengths of the class, as well as alternatives to current methods. The debriefing will be a collaborative discussion about the lesson in particular, and teaching and learning in general. All discussions concerning the observation and the participants’ reflections are confidential.