

## Peer Observation Guide

### **I. Why peer observation?**

- Provides mutual understanding for both observer and observed
- Less intrusive and less stressful than other forms of observation, such as videotaping or faculty observation.
- Logistically and technologically uncomplicated
- Can be focused according to the interests of each instructor

### **II. Giving feedback constructively**

- Be empathetic; emphasize your shared purpose over evaluation
- Set your peer at ease first, then get into specifics
- Begin with constructive criticism, end with a focus on the positive.
- Phrase constructive criticism tactfully, emphasizing alternatives and avoiding personal attacks.
- Positive statements can be given in first person (e.g., “I liked how you did this”)
- Be specific. The greater the specificity, the more useful the comments. (e.g., More students may have raised their hands if you had said “so and so” instead of “so and so”.)
- Give each observer equal time to give feedback and to discuss it.
- Keep the conversation confidential.

### **III. Considerations in planning your peer evaluations: Discussion**

- Are both members of the dyad able to observe each other within a week or two?
- What will you tell the students? What will be the role of the observer? (anonymous observer, explain presence as evaluation of instruction, or full participant observer)
- Do you want written notes from your observer?
- What is each member hoping to get out of the observation?
- Will you meet after each observation or when both are completed?

#### IV. Factors to observe and discuss with your peer:

##### **I. Overall Classroom Set Up**

###### a. Organization/Goal of class

- Is the goal of the class apparent to you as the observer?
- Is there an opening and summation to the class meeting?
- Any suggestions?

###### b. Preparation

- Is the instructor prepared for the class meeting?
- How can you tell?
- Any suggestions?

###### c. Content

- Is the main content of the class apparent to you as the observer?
- Does the content match the stated goals of the session?
- Does the content seem clear to the students?
- Any suggestions?

###### d. Seating arrangements

- Describe the seating arrangements.
- Do they facilitate: discussion, listening, notetaking?
- Is the arrangement purposeful?
- Any suggestions?

###### e. Do you observe any other factors that contribute to the general classroom set up?

##### **II. Personal Qualities of the Instructor**

###### a. Enthusiasm

- Describe the level of enthusiasm with specific observations.
- Is it contagious?

###### b. Voice

- Can you hear the instructor? (e.g., clear enough, loud enough)
- Any suggestions?

###### c. Eye contact

- Does the instructor make consistent eye contact with all students?
- Any suggestions?

###### d. Body language

- Describe the body language of the instructor with specific observations.
- Any suggestions?

###### e. Habits

- Describe any distracting habits of the instructor("um", pacing back and forth, etc.).
- Any suggestions for how to avoid it in the future?

###### f. Congruence of style with subject matter

- Given the subject matter, size of the class, other classroom characteristics, does the teaching style maximize learning and teaching?

-Any suggestions?

g. Any other observations about instructor's personal qualities?

### **III. Specific Instructional Skills**

a. Knowledge of subject

- Does the instructor illustrate appropriate knowledge of the subject?
- Any suggestions?

b. Asking questions

- Write down some questions verbatim that the instructor asks.
- Does the instructor wait long enough for student responses?
- Does the instructor ask information questions?
- Analysis questions?
- Synthesis questions?
- Evaluation questions?
- Application questions?
- Any suggestions on kinds of questions that are most appropriate for this course?

c. Use of Examples

- How would you describe the use of examples?
- Any suggestions?

d. Timing

- How would you describe the overall pace of the class?
- Any suggestions?

e. Any other observations about specific teaching skills?

### **IV. Interactions with Students**

a. Motivation

- How would you describe the motivation level of the instructor?
- What specific observations did you make?
- How do the students respond?
- Any suggestions?

b. Dealing with silence

- Describe any students sitting silently.
- Describe how the instructor reacts.
- Any suggestions?

c. Dealing with vacant stares

- Describe any students staring vacantly.
- Describe how the instructor reacts.
- Any suggestions?

d. Dealing with unruly students

- Describe any unruly students.
- Describe how the instructor reacts.
- Any suggestions?

e. Use of humor

- Describe any use of humor.
- Any suggestions?

f. Affirmative teaching

- When illustrating points, does the instructor use positive examples (e.g., This is how you do this...) rather than illustrating mistakes?
- Any suggestions?

g. Engaging the class

- Describe the level of engagement of the class.
- Any suggestions?

h. Responding to questions

- Write down verbatim a question asked by a student and the instructor's response.
- Does the instructor understand the question?
- Does the instructor adequately answer the question?
- Any suggestions?

i. Any other observations regarding interactions with students?

**V. Use of Materials**

a. Notes

- Does the instructor use notes?
- Would they be/Are they helpful or distracting?

b. Handouts

- Are there handouts?
- Would they be/Are they helpful or distracting?

c. Audiovisual/multimedia

- Are any media used?
- Any suggestions?

d. Blackboard

- Does the instructor write on the blackboard?
- Is handwriting legible?
- Any suggestions?

e. Texts

- Does the instructor use assigned texts/readings in class?
- Any suggestions?

f. Are there other suggested materials to make instruction more effective?