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Class Observations

Overview

The Faculty Center staff support requests for class observations as a part of faculty professional development. These face to face or online observations are conducted only when requested by individual faculty members. All discussions concerning such observations are kept confidential.

Providing Context to the Observer

We suggest holding face to face meetings both before and after the observations. Should the faculty member request it, videos of the class may also be included to aid in the discussion of performance of face to face classes.

For both face to face and online classes , we suggest you help contextualize your course for an outside visitor at the in-person discussion. Topics you may wish to address include:

- Technologies used by the course

- Webcourses

- Email external to Webcourses

- Publisher's website

- Other course-management software (Angel, Moodle, etc)

- Wiki

- Blog

- Podcasts

- Other technologies: _____

- Reflection

You could also provide a written reflection to lay additional emphasis on the context (examples could include the size of the class, the teacher's philosophy of this course, the use of GTAs, any team-teaching, etc).

Ideas for an Observer

If you are asked to observe someone else's course, here are some possible topics and categories to consider:

- Goals of a lesson or course

- Familiarity with subject matter (interest and current knowledge)

- Teaching methods used (clarity, organization, preparation, delivery, manner)

- Teaching methods used (flexibility, variety, appropriateness, audiovisual aids)

- Classroom management (control of time, discussion, engagement of students)

- Creativity (adjusts class to learning needs of students, enthusiasm, stimulation of interest)

- Availability for students (answers questions, conveys interest in students)

- Purpose of the class is made clear - a plan is evident

- Things the instructor does well

- Suggested methods of instruction

- Summary

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time on task, intuitive navigation with no broken links

Content: relevant to course and program goals, sufficient level of rigor, representative of multiple perspectives

Assessment: offers formative feedback to students, provides summative data for course or program review, targets critical thinking as well as factual knowledge

Delivery: instructor methods and learning activities are engaging and diverse enough to accomplish the course goals; the instructor is available to students; there is evidence of instructor's efforts to create an effective presence

Syllabus and course documents: articulate clear, consistent, and fair policies and objectives, provide adequate information for student success

Face to Face Courses

Please see a variety of observation instruments, as well as other information that might assist in this developmental activity, at the following websites:

Preparing for Peer Observation - A Guidebook from the University of Texas:

<http://www.utexas.edu/academic/diia/assessment/iar/teaching/plan/method/observ.php>

University of Minnesota: <http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/teachlearn/resources/peer/index.html>

Chabot College:

<http://www.chabotcollege.edu/academics/Observation/ObservationofInstructionForm2004.doc>

http://www.ctcd.edu/pdf/Form_FE4_082504.pdf

http://www.fctl.ucf.edu/tresources/observation/criteria_for_observation.pdf

Online Courses

For peer or chair observations of online courses, we recommend that you add the observer to your Webcourses account as an Auditor (you can find the functionality to "enroll members" in the gradebook). If needed, the observer can be added as a Teaching Assistant to see objects, modules, and quizzes that are presently hidden. All past email communications with students will not be visible to the reviewer, but you can create a printable view to share this material, if desired.

Here are some rubrics for online evaluations:

Chico State's well-known [Rubric for Online Instruction](#) provides an online rubric with categories such as Learner Support, Online Organization, Instructional Design, Assessment and Evaluation of Student Learning, Innovative Teaching with Technology, and Faculty Use of Student Feedback.

The Roblyer/Ekhami [Rubric for Assessing Interaction in Distance Learning](#) focuses more explicitly on interaction and interactivity, with categories on Social Rapport-building Activities Created by the Instructor, Instructional Designs, Levels of Interactivity of Technology Resources, and Impact on Interactive Qualities as Reflected in Learner Response.

The Monterey Institute hosts an Online Course Evaluation Project that includes a [PDF of its evaluation categories](#) and highly detailed definitions.

Las Positas College has its own [online rubric for distance learning](#).

Further Reading

Chickering, A., & Reisser, L. (1993). *Education and identity*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Graham, C., Cagiltay, K., Craner, J., Lim, B., & Duffy, T. M. (2000).

Teaching in a Web-based distance learning environment: An evaluation summary based on four courses. Center for Research on Learning and Technology Technical Report No. 13-00. Indiana University Bloomington.

Faculty inventory: 7 principles for good practice in undergraduate education (1989). Racine, WI: Johnson Foundation.

Institutional inventory: 7 principles for good practice in undergraduate education (1989). Racine, WI: The

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★ Faculty Spotlight

[View Other Award Winners](#)**Graham Worthy***College of Sciences*

During my 22 years in academia, I've tried to excel at teaching, research, and service. I love interacting with students and mentoring them to achieve more

than they realize they're capable of. As an undergraduate student, I was known to walk out of a lecture if I didn't think I was going to get s...

[Continue Reading](#)**Tison Pugh***College of Arts and Sciences*

The one common feature of all medieval literature, despite differences in authors, cultures, and genres, is that it is very, very old. When beginning my courses, I often face

resistant students who have predetermined that, because of its age, the literature under examination is useless, if not altogether...

[Continue Reading](#)**Jane Waterman***College of Arts and Sciences*

Science is like a mystery novel; one looks for the solutions to puzzles. I try to bring science alive to my classes, to show them that science is always a work in progress and that

it is exciting. I think it is important to integrate my own research into the classroom, as research and teaching are synergis...

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