

Teachers Helping Future Teachers: Peer Observations

Teachers can collaboratively observe each other for professional development purposes. These peer observations are confidential and nonevaluative in nature.

Peer observations benefit both the observer and the observed teacher:

- Observers see new techniques in action, get new ideas for their teaching toolkits, and can reflect on their own assumptions, beliefs, and teaching practices based on what they witness.
- Observed teachers benefit from analyzing the descriptive data the observer collects about classroom interactions and the class environment; they can also grow through discussions that result from observer questions and suggestions to improve learning outcomes.
- Based on their discussions and reflections, participants can develop action plans or action research projects to improve their teaching practice.
- Peer observations can also improve camaraderie, deepen collaboration, and increase self-awareness among participating teachers.

Peer observation stages:

- **Pre-observation contact:** The PFF student contacts the observer to schedule the observation. The contact should be made well in advance of the scheduled guest lecture...a minimum of two weeks. Provide the content/focus of the guest lecture and notes/slides being used. The observer should inform the student how long they will observe the student (e.g. 30 minutes, the entire class, etc.)
 - **Observation:** The assigned faculty member for the class being used may or may not want to introduce the observer. The observer and PFF student should arrive a few minutes early. The observer will be as discreet as possible: sit in the back of the room; focus solely on the observation and observe the entire lesson (or agreed upon segment); be open-minded and make detailed descriptive records in preparation for the observation review.
 - **Post-observation contact:** This is the most important part of the observation process. The observer will provide a written review of the guest lecture. Open dialogue should be available in the reflection of the review and in the experiences of the PFF student.
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Observer Considerations

□ Things to look for while you observe:

- What are the major lesson stages and the associated timing and interaction patterns?

□ Things to consider as you review your records and prepare for the post observation meeting:

- What has the teacher done especially well?
 - Were the students engaged? How did you know?
 - Were there a variety of activities?
 - Was there a lot of STT (student talk time)?
 - What activities do you enjoy the most / find the most interesting?
 - What questions do you need to ask about unobservable information?
 - Do you have suggestions for improvement or alternative?
 - What have you learned about your own teaching practices, beliefs, and assumptions based on this observation?
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Observer: Observation Form

Teacher: _____

Observer: _____

Date _____ Time _____ Class/CRN _____

Material/Topic Discussed _____

Observation focus areas _____

Time/Media Used	Stage / Activity	What I saw – interactions, classroom environment	Questions, comments, reflections, suggestions

Overall Comments:

Reflection notes:

Observed Teacher: Reflection Form

After your lesson, use the prompts below to make notes about the positive aspects and areas for improvement or desired changes. Complete this form before the post observation meeting with your colleague. Be sure to bring these notes to the meeting.

Lesson Plan and Activities:

- Did your lesson go as planned?
- Were your activities effective and appropriate for this learner group?
- Did you meet the lesson's objectives?
- How was your time-management?

Personal Qualities and Communication

- Did you enjoy teaching, and did you convey this to your students?
- How was your classroom management?
- Did the lesson include Student Talking Time (STT) opportunities and varied interaction patterns?
- Where did you position yourself in the classroom?
- How did you react to students' responses, non-responses, and errors?

Materials:

- How well did your materials work in the lesson?
- Did you encounter any problems?
- How could you have improved the materials themselves or the way you used them?

Observation Focus Areas

- Make notes about your performance in relation to the areas you asked your colleague to observe

Summary:

- How will you apply what you learned today to improve your planning and teaching of future lessons?
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