

Peer Observation of Teaching Guidelines

Goals of Peer Observation of Teaching

Depending on how you set up the peer observation of teaching, it can be used to meet one or more of the following goals:

- Learn about how other instructors use a particular pedagogical practice or technology that you already use in your course or are thinking about using;
- Reflect on teaching and learning with a colleague from your department who teaches similar content;
- Reflect on teaching and learning with a colleague who teaches in a similar course format (e.g., large enrollment, online, hybrid);
- Provide you with formative information about your own teaching that you can use to continually improve your teaching over time;
- Provide a source of evidence (to be used in conjunction with other sources) for you to document your teaching effectiveness.

General Guidelines and Considerations

- Whenever possible, consider setting up a partnership with another instructor where you will each be observed and serve as an observer.
- Observations can be set up so that they primarily benefit the observer, the instructor being observed, or both equally.
 - For observations that *primarily benefit the observer*, the observer decides what teaching practice or question they will focus on during the observation. A pre-observation meeting and post-observation debrief are both optional.
 - For observations that *primarily benefit the instructor being observed*, the instructor being observed decides what teaching practice or question they would like the observer to focus on during the observation. A pre-observation meeting and post-observation debrief are both important to maximizing learning.
 - For observations that *benefit the instructor being observed and the observer equally*, both jointly decide what teaching practice or question they would like the observer to focus on during the observation. A pre-observation meeting and post-observation debrief are both important to maximizing learning.
- Teaching is deeply personal. Thank your colleague throughout the process for allowing you to have this learning experience.
- CET&L can provide additional resources to guide you in this process, including sample templates for use during an observation and for post-observation debriefs. Contact CET&L via email cetl@uc.edu or phone 513-556-9319 for more information about peer observation.

Before

- Contact the instructor you would like to observe and ask if they would be open to an observation and debrief
- Explain why you are interested in observing their course
- Gather contextual information about the course
- Confirm class time and location
- Ask whether there is any specific area where they would like feedback
- Decide what teaching practice or question you will focus on and how you will record your observations

During

- If possible, arrive early so that you will have time to get a sense of the classroom environment and introduce yourself if you have not already met the instructor in person
- Select a seat where you will be able to see both the instructor and a good number of students
- Take accurate notes and include specific examples
- Since you will not be able to record everything, focus on the teaching practice or question you identified ahead of time
- Thank the instructor for having you and arrange a time to debrief, if you have not already done so

After

- Meet with the instructor you observed to debrief
- Unless the instructor has asked you for specific feedback, focus the conversation on helping you better understand the pedagogical choices the instructor made and what you observed
- After the debrief, write a summary of the key things you learned from this process and how you will apply them to your own teaching
- Store your summary with your course teaching materials and refer to it the next time you revise your course