Peer Observation Process

The following process works for any course delivery model. Even if you are observing an online course, you can follow these three steps.

1. Pre-Meeting

The pre-meeting will be called by the observed instructor. The observed instructor will discuss the lesson plan and objectives for the class being observed. The observed instructor will determine what the observer should focus on during the class. The focus of the peer observation is the choice of the observed instructor. During the pre-meeting, the observed instructor will fill out page one of the Peer Class Observation Form.

Refer to p. 2 below for some examples of things to consider during an observation.

2. Observation

During the observation, the observer will sit in the back of the classroom. The observer will focus on what the observed instructor wants the observer to pay attention to during the session. The observer may take hand-written notes during the observation. No electronic devices should be used for notetaking. After the session, the observer will fill out page two of the Peer Observation Form.

For online courses the observer may also fill out the Online Peer Observation Form which focuses on the structure and navigation of the online course.

Following the observation, the observer should type up notes to share with the instructor during the post-meeting.

3. Post-Meeting

The post-meeting will be called by the observed instructor within one week of the observation. This meeting will focus specifically on the previously determined focus areas. During the post-meeting, the observed instructor will discuss his or her perceptions of the session. Subsequently, the observer will describe their perceptions of the session. The observer will provide the observed instructor with typed notes on the Peer Class Observation Form.

Process from McCartin & Dineen (2018). *Toward a critical inclusive assessment practice for library instruction,* Library Juice Press, p. 97-98.

Things to Consider During Observation

Class Structure

* Opens class by stating goals and outcomes and by outlining lecture/discussion content for the session
* Reviews prior class material to prepare students for the content to be covered

Recognition and Promotion of Diverse Identities and Perspectives

* Assigned readings, instructional activities, and assignments reflect a diverse array of identities and perspectives
* Provides options to accommodate learner differences
* Attempts to remove unnecessary barriers to learning
* Is aware of shared and non-shared identities among students and between students and instructor

Teaching

* Uses a variety of strategies to meet the needs of diverse learners (lecture, modeling, discussion, group activities, independent activities, labs)
* Uses strategies effectively
* Uses technology effectively
* Encourages self-reflection and critical thinking
* Communicates clearly and effectively with students
* Uses questions to generate meaningful discussion; responds to student answers effectively
* Connects the course to the “real world”
* Summarizes and distills main points at the end of class

Assessment

* Checks for student understanding throughout class session
* Provides feedback that encourages students to persist and work hard

Rapport with Students

* Students are respected and respect the instructor
* Students feel comfortable asking and answering questions
* Students are attentive and engaged
* Uses good eye contact, appropriate volume and tone, helpful hand/body gestures
* Responds to student errors with constructive feedback
* Handles dominant students effectively

List adapted from Appalachian State University, Center for Academic Excellence