**TEP Teaching Observation Guide**

This guide assists a TEP observer in looking for teaching practices shown by research to support student learning. We use it to help structure specific, collegial conversations about the overall effectiveness of a class session. Not all the items included here are relevant or possible for a given course or class session. Conversely, it may be appropriate for a TEP observer to comment on practices not specifically included here.

For many of the teaching practices included in this guide, we provide references to research showing the link between the practice and enhanced learning. Many of the references also contain suggestions for implementing the practices.

To give the most useful and complete feedback about your teaching, the TEP staff member observing you may:

1. Obtain copies of the course syllabus, course learning objectives, and department learning objectives and review them in order to assess how the class session observed fits into the larger context of your course and the department’s curriculum.
2. Meet with you before the class observation to discuss the content of the session to be observed, the approach you will take, and particular teaching practices you have been working on to which you would like them to pay particular attention.
3. Perform a “fact-based” observation in class. They will record exactly what you and your students do, examples you use, etc. while keeping this guide beside them to remind them what to look for.
4. After class, fill out the form that starts on page 2 of this document, adding comments and notes to give a complete picture of the class session.
5. Meet with you again to discuss the observation and identify one or two areas you might want to work on.

**TEP Teaching Observation Guide**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date: |  | Has observer obtained course syllabus? |  |
| Instructor: |  | Has observer obtained course learning objectives? |  |
| Observer: |  | Has reviewer obtained department learning objectives? |  |
| Course: |  | Have reviewer and instructor met prior to observation to discuss review procedures? |  |
| Number of Students (approx.): |  | Will/have reviewer and instructor meet after observation to discuss results? |  |
| Classroom Layout: |  | List any aspects of the physical classroom environment that might affect the class (hot/cold, noise, etc.) |  |
| List audio/visual media or materials used (e.g. PowerPoint, board, document camera, handouts, polling devices, etc.) |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Practices** | **Yes/Mostly/**  **Partially/No/**  **Not Applicable** | **Observations and notes** |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Preparation and Organization: Alignment** [1][2] | | |
| *Class session* learning objectives aligned with *overall course objectives.* [3][4] |  |  |
| *Course* learning objectives aligned with *overall departmental objectives.* |  |  |
| *Class session content* (knowledge, skills, or abilities) and activities aligned with the *class session learning objectives.* |  |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Preparation and Organization: The instructor…** | | |
| Has organized the material into an obvious, explicit, and logical framework. [3] |  |  |
| Shows command of the material. |  |  |
| Teaches the class at a level appropriate for most students. [4] [5] [6] |  |  |
| Connects to students’ prior knowledge, lessons, assignments, and/or readings. [7] [8] |  |  |
| Explores and values connections with other disciplines and/or real-world phenomena (tangible examples when they exist). [5] |  |  |
| Draws upon scholarly works, including current research/developments. [3] |  |  |
| Draws upon student experience and/or current events. [5] [7] |  |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Tactics: The instructor…** | | |
| Provides students with learning objectives for the class session. [3] [4] |  |  |
| Gives lesson outline at the beginning of class, verbally and visually (e.g., on board, slide, handout). [3] |  |  |
| Employs methods (activities, examples, audio-visual aids) broken down into steps to scaffold student learning. [4] |  |  |
| Invites students into the subject matter, e.g. through storytelling [9]; compelling case studies [10]; explicit commentary about the skills, values, or formation of the discipline; etc. [11] |  |  |
| Incorporates small-group discussions or problem-solving sessions into the class period. [12] [13] [14] |  |  |
| Poses questions and allots time for students to discuss them. [15] |  |  |
| Asks a variety of types of questions (e.g., factual, application, critical). |  |  |
| Builds off student answers/comments whether correct or incorrect. |  |  |
| Incorporates low-stakes assessment (such as iClicker questions, one-minute papers, muddiest point, etc.) to help instructor and students gauge progress. [15] [16] [17] |  |  |
| Encourages students to reflect on their learning (e.g. by asking students to write an end-of-class summary, identify the day’s muddiest point, or write about what they know now that they didn’t 5 weeks ago). [17] |  |  |
| Has chosen content to reflect a diversity of voices, where appropriate. [18] [19] |  |  |
| Finishes with a summary or closing activity. [3] |  |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Mechanics: The instructor…** | | |
| Starts and ends class on time. |  |  |
| Seems excited about/interested in material. |  |  |
| Conducts the lesson at a pace that supports learning (i.e., not too fast or too slow, suitable for note taking, questions and reflection). |  |  |
| Provides adequate time for completion of in-class activities. |  |  |
| Checks or is aware when students are lost, hurried, etc. |  |  |
| Pauses to ask for student questions or clarifications |  |  |
| Verifies that questions are answered to students’ satisfaction. |  |  |
| Waits 5 - 15 sec for answers before repeating, rephrasing, or moving on, and avoids answering own question. [20] |  |  |
| Ensures that all in the classroom can hear questions and comments. |  |  |
| Is aware of raised hands. |  |  |
| Encourages and facilitates dialogue, discussion, and student-student interaction for all students (e.g. helps people find partners, structures activities to promote equal participation). [11] [21] [22] |  |  |
| Has designed the class session to be accessible and welcoming to all (e.g. pictures show a variety of races, ethnicities, and genders; names used in problems are not ethnocentric). [11] [18] [19] |  |  |
| Employs audio and/or visual media (PowerPoint, writing on board/doc cam, handouts, videos) effective for learning (readable, not too much text, etc.) and uses media skillfully. [11] |  |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Interaction and Social Climate: The instructor…** | | |
| Uses a system to signal beginning of class; students quiet quickly. |  |  |
| Maintains an appropriate level of eye contact. |  |  |
| Uses respectful and inclusive language and works to ensure a respectful and open learning community. [11] |  |  |
| Is relaxed, in command of session, and willing to engage with students. [23] |  |  |
| Uses student names or makes attempts to learn them. [23] |  |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Interaction and Social Climate: The students…** | | |
| Arrive on time and remain until dismissed. |  |  |
| Are attentive (e.g., not having side conversations or surfing the web [24] [25]). |  |  |
| Take notes. [26] |  |  |
| Gather around instructor after session to speak about material. |  |  |

**Overall Impressions**

# Works Cited

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [1] | J. B. Biggs and C. Tang, Teaching for Quality Learning at University: What the Student Does, 4th ed., Maidenhead, Berkshire: Open University Press, 2011. |
| [2] | G. Wiggins and J. McTighe, Understanding by Design, 2nd ed., Alexandria, Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2005. |
| [3] | S. A. Ambrose, M. W. Bridges, M. DiPietro, M. C. Lovett and M. K. Norman, "Chapter 2: How Does the Way Students Organize Knowledge Affect Their Learning?," in *How Learning Works: Seven Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching*, Hoboken, New Jersey: Jossey-Bass, 2010. |
| [4] | S. A. Ambrose, M. W. Bridges, M. DiPietro, M. C. Lovett and M. K. Norman, "Chapter 5: What Kinds of Practice and Feedback Enhance Learning?," in *How Learning Works: Seven Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching*, Hoboken, New Jersey: Jossey-Bass, 2010. |
| [5] | S. A. Ambrose, M. W. Bridges, M. DiPietro, M. C. Lovett and M. K. Norman, "Chapter 3: What Factors Motivate Students to Learn?," in *How Learning Works: Seven Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching*, Hoboken, New Jersey: Jossey-Bass, 2010. |
| [6] | R. Wass and C. Golding, "Sharpening a Tool for Teaching: The Zone of Proximal Development," *Teaching in Higher Education,* vol. 19, no. 6, pp. 671-684, 2014. |
| [7] | S. A. Ambrose, M. W. Bridges, M. DiPietro, M. C. Lovett and M. K. Norman, "Chapter 1: How Does Students' Prior Knowledge Affect Their Learning?," in *How Learning Works: Seven Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching*, Hoboken, New Jersey: Jossey-Bass, 2010. |
| [8] | S. A. Ambrose, M. W. Bridges, M. Di Pietro, M. C. Lovett and M. K. Norman, "Chapter 4: How Do Students Develop Mastery?," in *How Learning Works: Seven Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching*, Hoboken, New Jersey: Jossey-Bass, 2010. |
| [9] | C. E. Abrahamson, "Storytelling as a Pedagogical Tool in Higher Education," *Education,* vol. 118, no. 3, pp. 440-451, 1998. |
| [10] | C. F. Herreid, Ed., Start With a Story: The Case Study Method of Teaching College Science, Arlington, Virginia: NSTA Press, 2007. |
| [11] | L. Nilson, Teaching at Its Best: A Research-Based Resource for College Instructors, 3rd ed., San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010. |
| [12] | L. Deslauriers, E. Schelew and C. Wieman, "Improved Learning in a Large-Enrollment Physics Class," *Science,* vol. 332, pp. 862-864, 2011. |
| [13] | J. Handelsman, S. Miller and C. Pfund, "Chapter 2: Active Learning," in *Scientific Teaching*, New York, W. H. Freeman , 2007. |
| [14] | S. Freeman, S. L. Eddy, M. McDonough, M. K. Smith, N. Okoroafor, H. Jordt and M. P. Wenderoth, "Active learning increases student performance in science, engineering, and mathematics," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences,* vol. 111, no. 23, p. 8410–5, 2015. |
| [15] | P. C. Brown, H. L. Roediger and M. A. McDaniel, Make it Stick: The Science of Successful Learning, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press, 2014. |
| [16] | C. Dirks, M. P. Wenderoth and M. Withers, Assessment In the College Classroom, New York: W. H. Freeman, 2014. |
| [17] | S. A. Ambrose, M. W. Bridges, M. DiPietro, M. C. Lovett and M. K. Norman, "Chapter 7: How Do Students Become Self-Directed Learners?," in *How Learning Works: Seven Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching*, Hoboken, New Jersey: Jossey-Bass, 2010. |
| [18] | J. Handelsman, S. Miller and C. Pfund, "Chapter 4: Diversity," in *Scientific Teaching*, New York, W. H. Freeman, 2007. |
| [19] | S. A. Ambrose, M. W. Bridges, M. DiPietro, M. C. Lovett and M. K. Norman, "Chapter 6: Why Do Student Development and Course Climate Matter for Student Learning?," in *How Learning Works: Seven Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching*, Hoboken, New Jersey: Jossey-Bass, 2010. |
| [20] | M. B. Rowe, "Wait Time: Slowing Down May Be a Way of Speeding Up!," *Journal of Teacher Education,* vol. 37, pp. 43-50, 1986. |
| [21] | S. L. Eddy, S. E. Brownell and M. P. Wenderoth, "Gender Gaps in Achievement and Participation in Multiple Introductory Biology Classrooms," *CBE-Life Sciences Education,* vol. 13, no. 3, pp. 478-492, 2014. |
| [22] | C. Moss-Racusin, J. F. Dovidio, V. L. Brescoll, M. J. Graham and J. Handelsman, "Science Faculty's Subtle Gender Biases Favor Male Students," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences,* vol. 109, no. 41, pp. 16474-16479, 2012. |
| [23] | D. M. Christophel, "The Relationships Among Teacher Immediacy Behaviors, Student Motivation, and Learning," *Communication Education,* vol. 39, no. 4, pp. 323-340, 1990. |
| [24] | J. H. Kuznekoff and B. S. Titsworth, "The Impact of Mobile Phone Usage on Student Learning," *Communication Education,* vol. 62, no. 3, pp. 233-252, 2013. |
| [25] | C. B. Fried, "In-Class Laptop Use and Its Effects on Student Learning," *Computers & Education,* vol. 50, no. 4, pp. 906-914, 2008. |
| [26] | B. S. Titsworth and K. A. Kiewra, "Spoken Organizational Lecture Cues and Student Notetaking as Facilitators of Student Learning," *Contemporary Educational Psychology,* vol. 29, no. 4, pp. 447-461, 2004. |