

Observing colleagues in the classroom and providing feedback on teaching are critical components of faculty development. Below are guidelines on recommended principles and processes to support faculty observations. Based on a review of the research, we recommend a three-part process for conducting observations: 1) a substantive pre-observation conference; 2) an in-class observation; and 3) a reflective post-observation conference.

Pre-Observation Conference	Observation	Post-Observation Conference
<p>Discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• relevant instructor background</li> <li>• notes from any previous observations</li> <li>• context of the course</li> <li>• class design</li> <li>• objectives of the class session</li> <li>• purpose of the observation</li> <li>• teaching strengths</li> <li>• particular teaching concerns/challenges wanting to be addressed</li> <li>• special behaviors to observe</li> <li>• teaching goals</li> <li>• observation process                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ how notes will be taken</li> <li>○ where the observer will sit</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Collect relevant materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• syllabus</li> <li>• supplemental readings</li> <li>• class materials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observe the entire class period (for 75 minute classes) or part of the class session (3 hour classes).                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Videotaping is an option.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Introducing the observer is optional.</li> <li>• Many methods for collecting data during the observations exist (anecdotal records, running records, or observation guides).                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The faculty member can be included in the decision of what procedure to use.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Be as unobtrusive as possible. Don't interrupt or participate in the lesson.</li> <li>• Observe both small details and the big picture.</li> <li>• Take notes.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Class notes vary, from detailed, minute-by-minute transcripts to brief remarks on various aspects of the class.</li> <li>○ Effective notes should aid recall of specific examples as well as broader impressions.</li> <li>○ Consider questions and statements, call patterns, student responses, transitions, and board work, discussions, learning activities/events, student engagement and participation, time on task, questions asked, opportunities for student reflection, etc.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Debrief soon after the observation.</li> <li>• All results of the observation are confidential.</li> <li>• Participate in productive exchanges about teaching and course content.</li> <li>• Allow the faculty member to begin the conversation.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ask the instructor to reflect on the class – including what went well and where there might be potential for improvement.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Be particularly sensitive to gaps between observations of the class and the instructor's self-evaluation.</li> <li>• Praise the faculty member, but give honest and useful feedback.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Remain constructive and forthcoming throughout debrief.</li> <li>○ Do not write a report for the teacher.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Distill many potential pieces of feedback into a core set of 3 strengths and 3 opportunities.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What are the instructor's principal strengths, and are there ways these strengths could be leveraged more extensively in the classroom?</li> <li>○ What opportunities for growth, if addressed, would yield the greatest improvement in teaching effectiveness?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Provide specific examples to illustrate each strength and opportunity.</li> <li>• Collaboratively generate general yet actionable recommendations for future class sessions.</li> <li>• Make yourself available to discuss questions or revisit points raised during the observation process.</li> </ul>

References:

C. Roland Christensen Center for Teaching and Learning, Harvard Business School. Retrieved October 30, 2015 from <http://www.hbs.edu/teaching/docs/Guidelines-for-Effective-Observation-of-Case-Instructors.pdf>

Reformed Teaching Observation Protocol (RTOP): Reference Manual Michael Piburn and Daiyo Sawada ACEPT Technical Report No. IN00-3 Arizona Collaborative for Excellence in the Preparation of Teachers. Retrieved October 30, 2015 from [https://mathed.asu.edu/instruments/rtop/RTOP\\_Reference\\_Manual.pdf](https://mathed.asu.edu/instruments/rtop/RTOP_Reference_Manual.pdf)

University of North Carolina at Charlotte, The Center for Teaching and Learning Division of Academic Affairs, Retrieved October 30, 2015 from <http://teaching.uncc.edu/services-we-provide/classroom-observations>