

Tips for Your Classroom Observations

Observers should be as unobtrusive as possible while visiting the classroom. Students might be observing *you*, as someone new in the classroom, as you observe the class. Please try to sit in the back quietly and observe the interactions carefully.

◆ Observe the classroom environment

- What is the mood before class begins? During class? The end of class?
- How is the classroom arranged and how does this influence teaching and learning?
- What kind of rapport exists between teacher and student or between students?

◆ Observe the teacher's techniques

- How does the teacher use verbal and non-verbal communication?
- How is the class organized and paced? How does this affect student engagement?
- What types of questions does the teacher ask, and when?
- What skills of presentation/lecture, discussion, or other activities seem to be most effective?
- How does the teacher use classroom media? (boards, slides, video, music, etc.)
- How does the teacher motivate students, and how do they respond?
- How does the teacher support student learning?

◆ Observe the students

- What are students doing to contribute to the learning process?
- How active or passive are the students? How engaged are students? Map the conversation patterns. Who holds the “conversational ball?” Is it student-to-student, student-to-faculty, the same students again and again?
- Does student behavior change throughout the class period? How and when?
- What sorts of concerns or misunderstandings do the students seem to have, and how does the teacher address them?