

CELT and eLearning's Recommendations for Online or Hybrid Teaching Observations

PHASE 1: SHARE COURSE MATERIALS

Provide access to BlazeVIEW course with modules for syllabus, content units, and assignments. May also share examples of student work (assessments) and student evaluations (e.g., SOIs, other student feedback collected).

PHASE 2: PRE-OBSERVATION MEETING

Areas of focus for pre-observation discussion between instructor and observer:

Context

- What is the target audience for this course and how does it fit into the major, minor, or core curriculum (if applicable)?
- How does the synchronous online class session, asynchronous online unit, or face-to-face class session that will be observed fit into the course as a whole—what topics have already been covered and what work have students already completed?
- What work (readings, activities, homework, assessments, etc.) are students expected to do to prepare for this specific synchronous online class session, asynchronous online unit, or face-to-face class session?
- What other information about the students, instructional technology, the course, or the curriculum would be helpful in understanding what happens during the synchronous online class session, asynchronous online unit, or face-to-face class session?

Learning goals/outcomes/assessment

- What are the learning goals, outcomes, or objectives for this synchronous online class session, asynchronous online unit, or face-to-face class session that will be observed?
- What do you plan to do during this specific synchronous online class session, asynchronous online unit, or face-to-face class session to help students meet those goals?
- What do you expect your students to do to engage with the learning process?
- How will you know or assess if students meet or make progress towards these goals?

Goals for observation

- What specific area of interest or concern would you like the observer to focus on?

PHASE 3: OBSERVATION

PHASE 4: POST-OBSERVATION MEETING

Areas of focus for post-observation discussion between instructor and observer, as well as recommendations for any formal write-up by observer, such as when writing a summary letter and/or filling out the attached form for online or hybrid teaching observations:

For observer

- Remember to keep in mind the instructor's specific concerns from the pre-observation discussion and focus on those areas. Be particularly mindful of whether you were asked to provide feedback on pedagogy, technology, and/or content, and then focus your feedback accordingly. It is not necessary to mention everything you observed. Prioritize your comments on the most important areas for feedback.
- Provide a manageable amount of feedback. You don't want to overwhelm the instructor with information. Focus on areas that the instructor can reasonably change or control.
- When providing feedback, use specific examples from your observations to illustrate or support your recommendations, avoiding generalizations.
- Balance positive and negative feedback. Focusing exclusively on areas in need of improvement can be discouraging to the instructor and counterproductive. And exclusively positive feedback gives the instructor no opportunity to improve teaching.
- Lead with positive feedback. Even if there is a lot of room for improvement, this will help clarify that there is a foundation to build on. Don't hesitate to mention things you learned or observed that you want to try in your own teaching.
- Frame negative feedback to focus on the potential for improvement rather than only judgment. Make sure that you are providing suggestions of approaches to try rather than prescriptions.

For instructor

- Value the feedback from your colleague as an opportunity for professional growth.
- Elicit balanced feedback. It can be challenging to provide negative feedback, just as it can be difficult to receive it. Encourage the observer to suggest areas for improvement and be receptive when they are provided.
- Listen to observations completely before responding to them. Try not to immediately explain, rationalize, or become defensive.
- Check that you have understood the feedback and seek clarification as necessary. Ask the observer to provide specific examples.
- Try to accept or incorporate formal and informal teaching observations as a normal and familiar part of your routine as a teacher.

PHASE 5 (OPTIONAL): WRITE-UP

Only if requested by instructor, observer writes a summary letter and/or fills out the attached form below for online or hybrid teaching observations

Form for Online or Hybrid Teaching Observations

Instructor name:					Date:
Name of course:					If applicable, date of synchronous online class or face-to-face class session:
Semester/term:			Focus of synchronous online class, asynchronous online unit, or face-to-face class session:		
Best practices of: Course Design and Online or Hybrid Teaching	Exceeds (3)	Meets (2)	Area for Improvement (1)	Not Observed (0)	Examples and Comments:
Syllabus: Course syllabus includes course description, schedule, contact info, office hours, grading criteria, etc.					
Course/Module Objectives: Course learning outcomes are clearly stated and each online unit/module has learning outcomes that align with the overall objectives of the course.					
Navigation: Online course content can be easily navigated with a getting started module, linear course map, task lists, etc					
Copyright and Accessibility: Online course content follows copyright, fair use laws, and is ADA compliant.					
Best practices of: Knowledge of Subject and Course Content	Exceeds (3)	Meets (2)	Area for Improvement (1)	Not Observed (0)	Examples and Comments:
Knowledge and Skill: Instructor demonstrates expert knowledge and skill with respect to subject matter.					
Alignment with Learning Outcomes: Content aligns with and contributes to the achievement of the stated course and module/unit learning outcomes.					
Level of Learners: Content adapts to student levels of learning and curriculum (e.g., first-year, general education, majors, graduate program)					

Complexity: Instructor inspires complex, higher orders of thinking and learning about subject matter (e.g., apply, analyze, evaluate, create).					
Best practices of: Student Engagement, Communication, and Instructional Technology	Exceeds (3)	Meets (2)	Area for Improvement (1)	Not Observed (0)	Examples and Comments:
Active Learning: Instructor prompts student engagement with peer-led learning, collaborative/group activities, discussion forums, experiential learning, and/or multimedia.					
Instructor Communication: Instructor regularly communicates with students and adheres to posted response time unless otherwise indicated.					
Student Communication: Students regularly communicate with instructor and each other.					
Instructional Technology: Pedagogical use of video conferencing, videos, slideshows, digital whiteboards, audience response systems, discussion forums, group chats, Web 2.0 tools, etc.					
Best practices of: Assessment and Academic Student Support	Exceeds (3)	Meets (2)	Area for Improvement (1)	Not Observed (0)	Examples and Comments:
Assessments: Various formative and summative assessments are present, align with learning outcomes for the course or module/online unit, and meaningful feedback is given.					
Gradebook: Grading criteria is clearly defined through rubrics and models, gradebook is visible for checking progress, and grades are posted in accordance with stated response times.					
Academic Student Support: Instructor provides clear, easy to locate resources to assist students with research, study skills, and tech support (e.g. Center for eLearning, online tutoring, library resources)					
TOTAL POINTS (out of 45 possible):					

Summary:
Observer name and title:

Observer signature:	Date:
Instructor name and title:	
Instructor signature:	Date:

Optional: Instructor has attached additional comments to this observation. Instructor initials _____