

Guidelines for the Instructor Being Observed

1. Inform your students that there will be a visitor observing the class

You want the day of an observation to be as “normal” as possible, so you want your students to be prepared for the presence of the observer and not feel uncomfortable. Emphasize that you requested this service to get constructive feedback.

2. Meet with the observer at least a day before the scheduled class meeting

The purpose of this meeting is for you to let your observer know as much as possible about your intentions for this class meeting and to identify your objectives. The discussion should create a context for the class to be observed and give you the opportunity to give the observer any special information he/she may need to understand what will be happening in class on the day of the observation. If the observer has not already seen it, bring a copy of your course syllabus and any other relevant materials to discuss during this meeting. Here are some questions you might want to be prepared to answer during this meeting:

How does this specific class fit into the overall course content?

What are the specific goals of this class session?

How does this class meet one or more of the course objectives?

What happened in the previous class meeting?

What have the students done to prepare for this class?

What will you do in class? What methods and strategies will you use?

What would you like for me to focus on when I observe?

How would you like to receive feedback from me? (i.e., What kind of observation instrument would you prefer that I use?)

Make sure you take time to discuss and agree upon the observation instrument and type of feedback you would like the observer to provide.

3. Reflect on the class meeting

After the observation and before you meet with the observer, take some time to think about how the class went. Ask yourself some questions:

What went well?

Where do you see evidence that you met your objectives for the class meeting?

What do you wish had worked better?

What changes might you make?

4. Meet with the observer

Soon after you have been observed, meet with the observer to discuss your perceptions of how the class went and what the observer recorded. This should be a collegial conversation in which there is an exchange of ideas about what went well and might even be enhanced as well as what areas might be changed. You should leave with a clear idea of a few items that you can work on to enrich the students' learning experience.