

# Instructional Observation Guide

## ASYNCHRONOUS ONLINE: Narrative Version (May 2021)

**Note:** *Not all features in this form will be observable in every Canvas site. Examples listed are not comprehensive; criteria below can take many forms, including but not limited to those listed here.*

### **Essential Evidence of Excellence in Inclusive Teaching Includes:**

1. **Teaching Effectiveness:** Instructor allows students time to process and answer questions, listens to student comments and questions using supporting/reflective listening skills, and elicits responses requiring reasoning.
2. **Reflective Practice and Continual Refinement:** Instructor is reflective of their own characteristics, positionality, and power and the effects of these factors on student learning.
3. **Multilogical Thinking:** Instructor endeavors to provide more than one perspective, identify strengths and limitations of perspectives presented, and engage students in reflective critiques of disciplinary perspectives.
4. **Equity:** Instructor designs the course to elicit [funds of knowledge](#) or [prior knowledge](#) from students in relation to the subject, provides support in response to student performance, takes steps to remedy the situation when students express confusion, and facilitates intercultural communication.
5. **Inclusive Learning Environment:** Instructor ensures that all students feel safe and welcomed and have an equal opportunity to learn; students report that the classroom environment is respectful of diversity; instructor responds constructively to changes in student attentiveness; students report that they feel welcomed in class and office hours.

**Suggestion:** *For best practice, read the guide carefully BEFORE the observation. Discuss the guide with the candidate BEFORE and AFTER the observation, using the criteria as discussion points for reflection and professional development.*

# Organization

Observation Criteria	Examples/Descriptors	Observed			Comments
		Yes	No	N/A	
Course materials are posted in advance and in an orderly, organized fashion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Materials are posted on time</li> <li>Course content organized into clear, manageable chunks (learning modules or units)</li> <li>Discussions are organized in clearly defined forums, threads, or communities</li> <li>Instructor provides clear information regarding access to technology and related resources required in course</li> </ul>				
Clearly states the goals or objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Goals/objectives are stated clearly for each week/module/unit</li> </ul>				
Reviews or mentions prior class material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Video lecture reviews prior material or learning objectives and forecasts/previews the relevant/current lesson and/or learning goal/outcome</li> </ul>				
Effectively uses online course management systems and communication tools to facilitate student learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Course description includes the purpose and format of the course as well as prerequisite knowledge and competencies, if applicable</li> <li>Includes information about how to be a successful online student</li> <li>Lists due dates for all assignments so they appear in student "To Do" lists and Canvas calendar</li> <li>Includes an easy-to-find schedule of all due dates or consistent due date structure that is clearly stated</li> <li>Uses regular Canvas announcements to update students about due dates, important activities, etc.</li> <li>Includes multiple formats for student communication (email, office hours, Zoom, chat, Q&amp;A discussion forum), availability information, brief biographical information, and a picture of the instructor</li> <li>Canvas site is laid out simply, is easy to navigate, and offers logical and consistent means for navigating the course, including written or video instructions, e.g., "Start Here"</li> </ul>				

# Active and Engaged Learning

Observation Criteria	Examples/Descriptors	Observed			Comments
		Yes	No	N/A	
Answers/poses questions clearly and intentionally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considers opportunities for multiple forms of expression in discussions, e.g., vocal, physical, writing, etc.</li> <li>• Provides students with strategically directed and/or scaffolded questions throughout instruction</li> <li>• Elicits responses requiring reasoning, i.e. few Yes/No questions, more questions that ask students to elaborate their reasoning, often using both course materials and extracurricular materials/experiences (metacognition/synthesis)</li> <li>• Poses questions that focus on disciplinary perspectives, including strengths, limitations, and critiques (for example, delineating the state of disciplinary knowledge but contextualizing it historically, politically, socioculturally, etc.)</li> <li>• Communicates why the discipline emphasizes/values what it does/does not and may offer competing/differing perspectives</li> </ul>				
Solicits and incorporates students' prior knowledge in class activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surveys students on prior knowledge, experience, etc.</li> <li>• Links assignments, activities, lectures to students' prior knowledge, interests, backgrounds, experiences</li> </ul>				
Creates learning environments that welcome and support all students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implements <a href="#">humanizing principles</a> in Canvas creation; welcome video, icebreaker, etc.</li> <li>• Regularly reviews participation and reaches out if minimal</li> <li>• Clearly defines acceptable, alternative paths for completing assignments, etc., in the event there are technology issues</li> <li>• Considers assessment methods and tasks that reflect the diversity of student learning preferences, language, and culture</li> </ul>				
Demonstrates effective pedagogies for engaged learning where all students have opportunity to participate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implements frequent activities that require students to engage with peers</li> <li>• Respects culturally diverse expectations and practices with regard to group work, e.g. willingness to ask questions, express disagreement, take initiative</li> <li>• Considers opportunities that enable students to experience</li> </ul>				

	the world through the eyes of another				
Facilitates online discussion boards or other interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Establishes course etiquette expectations for a safe and welcoming learning environment (community guidelines) for various forms of course communication and dialogue (e.g. discussion forum, chat, VoiceThread, etc.) are presented and clear to the student</li> <li>● Students demonstrate working knowledge that enables them to go beyond recall of material to analysis, synthesis, creativity, and/or evaluation</li> <li>● Facilitates engagement with the course goals</li> </ul>				

# Rapport and Facilitation

Observation Criteria	Examples/Descriptors	Observed			Comments
		Yes	No	N/A	
Knows and uses student names and pronouns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evident in instructor responses to student work</li> <li>• Models in welcome message (photo, video)</li> </ul>				
Responds respectfully to student lack of knowledge or understanding and takes appropriate measures to refocus student understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides multiple opportunities to give feedback on student learning and helps students "self-check" their learning (formative assessment)</li> <li>• Responds to student work with not only correction but also highlights student work that is done correctly/to standards, etc.</li> <li>• Provides feedback in a timely manner</li> <li>• Considers using video or audio to personalize feedback, but checks on student preference first</li> </ul>				
Treats class members equitably, including but not limited to ensuring all voices are heard, inviting students to share their personal experiences as worthy knowledge, reflecting on the role of their own power and position in relation to student learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides multiple avenues for student engagement and participation so that different learning styles/preferences, comfort with personal sharing, and technological devices/ services are supported</li> <li>• Uses closure at the end of a module/unit; may include quick review of curriculum addressed; "What is your takeaway for this week?"</li> <li>• Creates multiple access points for student responses, e.g., polls, response assignments, video/audio/text tools, discussion boards</li> </ul>				
Listens carefully to student comments and questions using supporting/reflective listening skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates a safe and welcoming environment to maximize the opportunities for all students to learn, including but not limited to inviting students to share cultural experiences, validating students' experiences, reflecting on learning</li> <li>• Encourages student questions and feedback</li> <li>• Provides multiple opportunities to solicit student feedback on content and their learning for the improvement of the course</li> </ul>				

# Credibility and Content Knowledge

Observation Criteria	Examples/Descriptors	Observed			Comments
		Yes	No	N/A	
Demonstrates depth of subject knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Includes a diverse set of scholarly examples</li> <li>Engages in general and specific reflection regarding disciplinary perspectives and learning</li> </ul>				
Introduces/discusses historical development and context of discipline, including intradisciplinary controversies and/or development of disciplinary principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presents/makes central diverse disciplinary contributions, including but not limited to cultural practices/traditions, indigenous knowledge, historical contexts of knowledge production</li> <li>Threads examples of scholars from various backgrounds and cultures throughout the coursework and readings</li> <li>Honors contributions from indigenous cultures and scholars</li> </ul>				
Responds confidently to student inquiries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Speaks about course content with confidence and authority</li> <li>Is willing to admit error; understands limits of own expertise</li> </ul>				
Demonstrates openness to student input, including but not limited to showing humility, eliciting students' prior knowledge about content, engaging in mutual inquiry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitates and encourages intercultural experiences, including but not limited to co-creating classroom norms/agreements, encouraging multilogical thinking, practicing perspective taking</li> </ul>				

# Presentation

Observation Criteria	Examples/Descriptors	Observed			Comments
		Yes	No	N/A	
Presents information in a clear and understandable manner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course is simple and obvious to navigate</li> <li>• Information is offered in multiple forms, e.g., video, text, interactive puzzles/games, etc.</li> </ul>				
Engages with class and responds to changes in student attentiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reaches out to students with little-to-no online interaction</li> <li>• Provides flexibility, e.g., changes direction of class activities in response to student's learning needs</li> <li>• Acknowledges and affirms effects of external circumstances, e.g. disaster, pandemic, loss/grief</li> <li>• Communicates a sense of enthusiasm and excitement</li> </ul>				
Materials adhere to Universal Design Learning (UDL) principles; are clear, legible, and effective; acknowledge diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Materials integrate multiple identities through cultural histories, local histories, and contributions</li> <li>• Includes a variety of instructional material types and perspectives while not overly relying on one content type, such as text</li> <li>• Materials created by the instructor or from external sources are in formats that are accessible to students with disabilities</li> <li>• All tools used in or outside of Canvas are accessible and assistive technology-ready</li> </ul>				

**Additional Comments:**

A. Things that went well for the instructor/class:

B. Challenges in this particular class:

C. Specific suggestions for enhancing the online learning environment:

D. How does this observation provide evidence based on departmental RTP standards for teaching?