Section 1: Evidence-Based Practices

Classroom Climate refers to the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical environment in which students learn. Instructors who intentionally create a safe space and foster a community of learners find that students are more engaged.

The following is a list of evidence-based practices from the Classroom Climate domain of the Teaching Effectiveness Framework. Look for these practices while observing your colleagues.

🚪 CREATE AN INCLUSIVE AND WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

- Incorporate CSU Principles of Community into your class
- Use students' names and pronounce them correctly – use name tents or seating charts in large classes
- Use students' preferred pronouns
- Co-create class norms with your students, and establish a system to adhere to them; develop a netiquette guide for online interactions
- Connect the content to the lived experiences of a variety of students
- Incorporate practices that create a sense of belonging for students, including international students, students of color, and students of all gender identities and all abilities ; tell students outright they *belong* - use the phrases "our class" and "we" to signal that your class is a learning community
- Ensure inclusivity and cultural awareness in your non-verbal communication, language, and symbolic representations

🧑‍🏫 INSTRUCTOR – STUDENT RAPPORT

- Make time to answer student questions/create a system where all students ask questions
- Talk with students instead of at them
- Ask students for feedback on your teaching and class climate several times a semester; do something with their feedback
- Be authentic and vulnerable: tell students you don't know, share your mistakes and processes
- Create a welcoming and respectful environment; use humor when appropriate
- Address bias and microaggressions in your classroom
- Use the appropriate language when referring to social groups
- Do not ask individuals to speak for an entire group of people
- Show students that you care that they learn the course content (communicate concern for students, honor effort and commitment)

👥 STUDENT – STUDENT RAPPORT

- Create a system for everyone to call each other by name
- Help students learn how to communicate equitably and productively with each other
- Encourage students to be experts; allow them to teach concepts to each other
- Provide opportunities for students to work with others - and for students to see the value of diverse perspectives
- Teach and model appropriate small group behaviors
- Model productive disagreement by showing how to critique a statement or idea rather than the speaker
- Consider how the physical space of the classroom can impact discussions and activities; give students clear directions for how to use the space to engage with each other
- Engage students in the content – through discussion, activities, and time to think

PLEASE NOTE:

- The goal of Teaching Squares is for the observer to learn/gain as much, if not more, than the person being observed.
- Not all of these practices will be observable in one class session, 1-week or 1-module timeframe.

CANVAS OBSERVATIONS: You may have been added to the Canvas course as a *Designer*.
In this role you will not be able to view student grades, but this role does allow you to make changes to the course.
Please be careful as you navigate through the course, so you don't make accidental edits.
Be sure to maintain the confidentiality of the instructor and all students and their work. Limit your observation to the desired LMS module/week (typically 50-60 mins).

Section 2: Background Information
To be filled out by the instructor **being observed**

BASIC DATA

- Instructor Name:
- Course Number & Name:
- Course Location (or Canvas Shell URL):
- Observation Period (date or module):
- Number of Students Enrolled in Class:

PLANNING FOR THE OBSERVATION

1. Briefly describe any of the Classroom Climate strategies you incorporated into the observation dates/week. Refer to the list on page 1 of this document for ideas.

   Classroom Climate Strategy: _____

   Reason for Using the Strategy: _____

   Classroom Climate Strategy: _____

   Reason for Using the Strategy: _____

   Classroom Climate Strategy: _____

   Reason for Using the Strategy: _____

2. Is there anything specific, a goal or issue you have been working on, that you would like the observer to pay attention to regarding *classroom climate*?

3. Is there anything else (not included above) you would like observed? (student use of phones, student engagement overall, late arrivals, early departures, etc.)

4. Is there anything else you would like the observer to know before observing your class?

Section 3: Observation Notes

FEEDBACK STARTER IDEAS

- I really liked how you…
- This works well because….
- Have you considered…
- I wonder if…

OBSERVATION FEEDBACK

To be filled out by the instructor **completing the observation**

1. Describe the overall climate of the class during the beginning, middle, and end of the class/module.

   - What observable behaviors (from the instructor or students) do you think determine this climate?

   Beginning of Class/Module

   Middle of Class/Module

   End of Class/Module

2. What is one norm, practice, or pattern that seems to have been established that adds to a positive and welcoming classroom climate?

   - How do you know?

Observer Reflection

Things to remember for my own teaching…

Section 3: Observation Notes (continued)

3. Is there a norm, practice, or pattern that *detracts* from a positive and welcoming climate?

   ▪ How might it be changed?

4. Do you sense rapport between student and instructor?

   ▪ What makes you think this?

5. Do you sense rapport among students?

   ▪ What makes you think this?

6. Describe 1 or 2 techniques that might be integrated or refined to enhance classroom climate.

7. Other observations, thoughts, notes

Observer Reflection

Things to remember for my own teaching…