Section 1: Evidence-Based Practices

Frequent formative assessments and low-stakes assignments inform instructors and students of how much, and the extent to which, content or skills are mastered. Teaching strategies can then be adjusted to meet students' needs. Integrating a variety of assessment strategies provides all students with multiple opportunities to succeed.

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

FIRST FOUR WEEKS

- Use low-stakes assessments during the First Four Weeks of class
- Administer a mini-exam at the same difficulty level as larger exams
- Structure time for students to engage in self/peer assessment
- Provide structure and guidelines for student group work and group assignments; guide and reteach skills for productive, inclusive group work

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

- Align assessments with objectives; share this alignment with students
- Provide transparent assignment directions: start with this template
- Create rubrics for assignments, papers, and presentations; share rubrics with students when presenting the assignment
- Use rubrics as a teaching and learning tool, plan activities that *engage* students in assignment directions and rubric criteria
- Vary the cognitive complexity of your assessments: quizzes, exams, assignments, papers, projects, simulations, and presentations
- Create real-world, authentic assessment opportunities; if appropriate, incorporate materials to prepare for licensing exams
- Scaffold large assignments: divide large assignments into small segments, allow for rough drafts, revisions, and peer feedback
- Give students opportunities to engage in self/peer assessment drafts of their assignment using the rubric
- Consider group quizzes or tests in addition to individual testing
- Engage students in project "exemplar" analysis before an assignment is due

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

- Not all formative assessment needs to be graded - Ensure students know that formative assessment is a form of supportive feedback
- Use Classroom Assessment Techniques to check for understanding and to promote mental retrieval and deep learning in residential, hybrid, and online courses
- Use technology tools to engage students and check for understanding: iClickers, Kahoot, Jamboard, Google
- Use "on the fly" in-class checks for understanding: fist to five, think-pair-share, think-ink-pair-share, thumb-o-meter, etc.
- Be willing to diverge from your teaching plan if checks for understanding reveal student confusion or knowledge gaps
- Integrate rough drafts and revisions. For larger assignments, such as papers, presentations and projects, require students to submit drafts for instructor or peer feedback
- Incorporate self & peer assessment: students use rubrics to assess exemplars and non-exemplars, giving them the skills to reflect on and improve their own work

FEEDBACK

- Give timely feedback ; Use the Canvas gradebook and keep it up to date
- Give specific feedback; ask questions or use sentences like, "The best part of this is _____ because" or "I don't have a clear picture of _____..."
- Provide guidelines, practice, and support for students to engage in problem solving or give feedback to each other
- Encourage students to develop test-preparation and test-taking skills by conducting a post-test analysis

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 feedback and assessment strategies you incorporated into the observation dates/week. Refer to the list of key components on page 1 of this document for ideas.

   Strategy:

   Reason for using this strategy:

   Strategy:

   Reason for using this strategy:

   Strategy:

   Reason for using this 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?

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**

Beginning of Class/Module

1. Describe how the instructor **begins** the class session/module.

2. Does the instructor follow-up with feedback from a previous class or homework?

3. Does it appear that they are using a specific feedback or assessment strategy (see side 1)? Please describe.

Teaching the Class/Module

1. Describe one or two ways throughout the class session/module in which the instructor checks for student understanding using a formative assessment technique.

   What portion of students appear to participate during checks for understanding?

   If some students are left out, did the instructor adapt their strategy?

2. Describe one or two instances during class session/module when the instructor intentionally incorporates feedback.

3. Describe how the instructor responds to/addresses an instance of student confusion (if applicable).

Observer Reflection
Things to remember for my own teaching…

Section 3: Observation Notes (continued)

FEEDBACK STARTER IDEAS

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

OBSERVATION FEEDBACK

Wrapping up the Class/Module

1. Describe how the instructor **closes** the class session or the module.

   Does it appear that they are using a specific feedback strategy (see side 1)?

   Describe the strategy.

2. Describe how students respond to the strategy.

   What portion of students appear to participate during this final strategy?

   If some students are left out, did the instructor adapt their strategy?

3. Do you have any suggestions that might refine or enhance the **closing** of the class/module?

Observer Reflection
Things to remember for my own teaching…