Section 1: Evidence-Based Practices

The classroom, whether it be on campus or virtual, draws students from different backgrounds with various experiences and abilities. Using a variety of instructional strategies increases student engagement, critical thinking, connections to learning outcomes, and student success for *all* learners. Being an effective teacher requires the implementation of creative and innovative teaching strategies - it takes practice to determine teaching strategies that work best for course learning outcomes, your students, and your teaching style.

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

ACTIVE LEARNING

- Grab students' attention during the first five minutes of class; finish strong in the last five minutes
- Break lecture or videos into micro lectures and check for student understanding with Classroom Assessment Techniques
- Use a variety of teaching methods and modalities (verbal, interactive, Socratic, etc.) that align with learning objectives
- Use discussion protocols for an equitable discussion experience
- Support content retention and critical thinking in any discipline with writing activities
- Promote deep learning and problem solving with case studies: (science case studies)
- Integrate discussions, debates, or problem-solving scenarios synchronously during class; use synchronous text chats in the LMS or MS Teams to foster interaction or note-taking. Host asynchronous online discussions in the Canvas LMS
- Use instructional strategies that have a proven effect size on student learning, for example:
  - Give students the opportunity to be the expert with Reciprocal Teaching (peer-to-peer instruction)
  - Reverse the traditional order of teaching with Inductive Teaching
  - Help students organize knowledge with Concept Mapping; Provide graphic organizers to students to support student understanding
  - Provide support, clarity, and structure to students by scaffolding learning and assignments
  - Prime students for learning by activating prior knowledge
  - Add structure to Cooperative Learning such as Jigsaw Method for successful groupwork
  - Enhance critical thinking with Problem Solving Teaching or Problem-based Learning

LEARNING TECHNOLOGY

- Use accessible slide presentations, documents, videos, and other course materials
- Provide students with the ATRC Quick Start Guides to share the free assistive technology tools available at CSU
- Intentionally choose learning technologies that enhance student engagement. Popular apps include: Kahoot, Flippity, Quizlet, Edpuzzle, Flipgrid, iClickers
- Ensure your Canvas classroom materials are accessible: 1) Run the UDOIT for Canvas tool to check your course for accessibility compliance; 2) Share ReadSpeaker for Canvas tool with students
- Use Canvas, Echo360, or Microsoft Teams to record videos; limit instructional videos to less than 15 minutes
- Work with Classroom Support Services to learn how to use classroom technology as well as report classroom technology problems

SCIENCE OF LEARNING

- Intentionally embed Science of Learning practices into your instruction
- Align questions with the level of thinking you want from students
- Guide students in the three phases of learning (surface, deep, and transfer) to retain, understand, and then apply knowledge to a new context
- Design classes so that students engage in Predicting, Interleaving, Connecting, Practicing
- Avoid cognitive overload for students and allow time for metacognition
- Incorporate elaboration, spacing, and frequent quizzing/testing

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 Instructional Strategies you incorporated into the observation dates/week. Refer to the list on page 1 of this document for ideas.

   Instructional Strategy:

   Reason for using this strategy:

   Instructional Strategy:

   Reason for using this strategy:

   Instructional 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?

Teaching Squares
Peer Observation Form

Section 3: Observation Notes

FEEDBACK STARTER IDEAS

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

OBSERVATION FEEDBACK

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

Beginning of Class/Module

1. Describe how the instructor **begins** the class session or module. Does it appear that they are using a specific instructional strategy? (See side 1)

   - Describe the strategy

   - Describe how students respond

2. Do you have any suggestions that might refine or enhance the beginning of the class/module?

Teaching the Class/Module

1. Describe instructional strategies demonstrated for the class session/observation period being observed. Do you have any suggestions for refining any of these strategies?

OBSERVER REFLECTION
Things to remember for my own teaching…

Section 3: Observation Notes (continued)

FEEDBACK STARTER IDEAS

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

OBSERVATION FEEDBACK

Teaching the Class/Module: Technology

1. Describe any visual presentation or technology enhanced instruction or student engagement. (PowerPoint, i-clickers, demonstrations, etc.).

   Do you have any suggestions to further develop the use of technology?

2. Describe 1 or 2 techniques that might be integrated or refined to enhance instructional strategies.

Wrapping up the Class/Module

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

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

   Describe the strategy.

   Describe how students respond.

4. 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…