

## Section 1: Evidence-Based Practices

Pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) combines content and pedagogical expertise within a content area to employ appropriate instructional strategies that successfully address the most common misconceptions of students; the most difficult concepts for students; the most effective sequencing of concepts; important relevant connections; and the most crucial knowledge and skills students should master by the end of a course. PCK is the intersection of content knowledge and teaching expertise within a particular discipline.

The following is a list of evidence-based practices from the [Pedagogical Content Knowledge](#) domain of the [Teaching Effectiveness Framework](#). Look for some of these practices while observing your colleagues.



### KNOWLEDGE OF CONTENT AND INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

- Determine breadth and depth of content necessary for course level: [align with pre-, co-, and subsequent courses](#)
- Present information in a [sequence that makes](#) sense to a (new, intermediate, advanced) learner; set up the lesson structure and Canvas shell to build knowledge sequentially
- [Scaffold](#) lessons and activities to support students in reaching the level of critical thinking needed to master course objectives
- [Keep current on issues](#) of racism/sexism, racial tensions, and contemporary cultural issues in the United States, especially in relation to your discipline
- Be aware of the contributions of scholars in your field who represent diversity through demographics, identity, and thought and build those into your course
- Use a variety of [instructional strategies](#) to engage a [variety of learners](#)
- Determine which [instructional strategies](#) work best for your teaching style and your students
- [Teach students about Bloom's Taxonomy](#) and how it relates to higher level thinking required for course concepts; specifically teach critical thinking skills necessary for success in your field.
- Look to [Discipline-Based Education Research Scholarship \(DBER\)](#) for current perspectives on how curriculum and instructional practices best support student learning; provide [explicit reading strategies for your discipline](#)



### KNOWLEDGE OF STUDENTS

- [Proactively address common student misconceptions](#).
- [Assess prior knowledge of learners](#); use it to plan/revise class sessions
- Plan activities, discussions, and [formative assessments](#) to address difficult concepts and [misconceptions](#)
- Connect content within the course, other courses, contemporary issues, and the lived experiences of all students.



### INFORMATION LITERACY

Collaborate with librarian to:

- Introduce students to [discipline-specific databases](#) to find relevant information for your assignments
- Support students in [evaluating information sources](#) for credibility and accuracy using the standards of your discipline
- Teach students how to consume information sources (e.g., [research papers](#), blogs, audio visual, data sets, news articles, primary sources) in your discipline
- Demonstrate how to [use information ethically](#)—in accordance with the [CSU Academic Integrity and Honesty](#) guidelines.
- Teach students to [create products](#) (e.g., research papers, blogs, audio visual, data sets, news articles, primary sources) that align with your discipline

### 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. Where does this course fit within the course sequence?
2. For the class/module being observed are there any concepts that students find challenging or tend to have misconceptions? Explain.
3. Briefly describe any of the evidence-based practices in the Pedagogical Content Knowledge domain on page 1 of this document you incorporated into the observation dates/week.

#### Evidence-based Practice:

*Reason for Using this Practice:*

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*Reason for Using this Practice:*

4. Is there anything specific; a goal or issue you have been working on, that you would like the observer to pay attention to regarding **pedagogical content knowledge**?
5. Is there anything else you would like the observer to know before observing your class (student use of phones, student engagement overall, late arrivals, early departures, etc.)?
6. Is there anything else (not included above) you would like observed?



## 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*

Pedagogical Content Knowledge is about knowing your current students, who they are as individuals, what knowledge they bring to the course, what misconceptions they have, which teaching techniques work best for them for particular content, what kind of connections help them understand content, and how to best sequence content for them.

What evidence of Pedagogical Content Knowledge do you see at the beginning of class?

(See page 1)

## 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

#### Teaching the Class/Module

Describe any techniques specific to Pedagogical Content Knowledge you observe during

For example, **addressing common misconceptions, scaffolding information, connecting content to the field, using varied instructional techniques, supporting critical thinking**, or other techniques from page 1.

#### Technique #1

*Do you have suggestions to improve upon this technique?*

#### Technique #2

*Do you have suggestions to improve upon this technique?*

#### Technique #3

*Do you have suggestions to improve upon this technique?*

#### Wrapping up the Class/Module

1. Describe how the instructor ends the session/module.
2. Describe a technique from Pedagogical Content Knowledge on page 1 that might be integrated or refined to enhance student engagement and learning.

## Observer Reflection

*Things to remember for my  
own teaching...*

