

## SECTION 1: EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES **\*\*PRACTICE OBSERVATION\*\***

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
- 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
- Address bias and microaggressions in your classroom
- Use current, inclusive language orally and in writing
- Do not ask individuals to speak for an entire group of people

### 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
- Assess the physical space of the classroom; consider the space and movement for discussions and activities

### 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

## **\*\*PRACTICE OBSERVATION\*\***

To be filled out by the instructor **being observed**

### BASIC DATA

Instructor Name: *Anonymous Instructor*

Course Number & Name: *Intro to Biology for non-majors*

Course Location (or Canvas Shell URL): *Large classroom*

Observation Period (date or module): *Spring 2020*

Number of Students Enrolled in Class: *320*

### PLANNING FOR THE OBSERVATION

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 1: *Walk around the room to answer questions***

Reason for Using the Strategy: *I want to be more engaged with students in every part (corner) of the room.*

#### **Classroom Climate Strategy 2: *Admitting to students when I don't know something***

Reason for Using the Strategy: *I am not much older than my students. Last semester, I was afraid to admit that I didn't know the answer to a question. I decided to let that go and see how students reacted.*

#### **Classroom Climate Strategy 3:**

Reason for Using the Strategy:

Briefly respond to the following questions related to the use of *Classroom Climate* in your course.

- 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*?

*I want students to be engaged in the content so they complete a worksheet during many of my classes. I also want them to feel comfortable enough to ask questions, but not so comfortable that they become unprofessional. What is the feeling in the class to an outside observer?*

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

*My students are not science majors, and I've worked hard to get them engaged. In general, do they seem engaged? Are there placed in the room where students don't seem as engaged as other students?*

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

*We did several getting to know you activities at the beginning of the semester so that students feel comfortable with me and each other. The activities were science- and content-based but low-stakes and fun.*



## SECTION 3: OBSERVATION NOTES

## \*\*PRACTICE OBSERVATION\*\*

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

### FEEDBACK STARTER IDEAS

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

### OBSERVATION FEEDBACK

- 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?

#### At the Beginning of Class/Module

#### Teaching the Class/Module

#### Wrapping Up the Class/Module

- 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?
- Is there a practice or pattern that has been established that **detracts** from a positive and welcoming climate? What might they do to change this?
- What does the rapport *between the instructor and students* feel like?
  - What might they add or refine to build *instructor-student* rapport?
- What does the rapport *between students* feel like?
  - What might the instructor add or refine to build *student-student* rapport?





## SECTION 4: OBSERVER REFLECTION

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

THINGS TO REMEMBER FOR MY OWN TEACHING

**\*\*PRACTICE OBSERVATION\*\***

