

Glossary: Observing learning and teaching - criteria

Openings and closings

- All sessions should have a clear introduction which indicates the aims and learning outcomes of the session and time plan.
- The session should be closed within the timetable time with some kind of conclusion or summing-up, summary of learning outcomes achieved and setting of work/reading for students to complete their study time.

Planning and organisation

- The class begins and ends on time;
- planned activities occur within the time allowed;
- there is evidence of planning of student learning;
- the tutor addresses the particular learning outcomes that students are expected to achieve, these relate to the overall aims and objectives of the unit/course, and these outcomes are communicated to the students.

Methods/approach

- The approach to organising and stimulating student learning is suitable to achieve the learning objectives set.
- The method adopted is justifiable in comparison with alternative approaches which may be taken.
- The approach ensures adequate student participation which is planned and not incidental.
- The approach is explained to students and understood by them.

Delivery and Pace

- In a tutor led session:
the pace and delivery is appropriate for the students present; sufficient time is given to explain key concepts; neither too rushed nor too slow.
- In student led activities:
explanations to students of activities was well paced; sufficient time was allowed for student activities.

Content

- The tutor demonstrates a good command of the subject being taught;
- the content is appropriate to the level being taught and the needs of the students, is up-to-date and accurate;
- the tutor is able to respond to students' questions, provides authoritative and accurate guidance on reading and further study.

Intellectual stimulation

Escalate Peer Observation

The class is conducted in a constructive learning environment in which the material of the lesson challenges the students and encourages them to develop their skills and move beyond their existing levels of understanding.

Student Participation

Students have opportunities to participate in the learning process in an active way that promotes their understanding, which gives them an opportunity to ask questions and relate the material to their own learning development.

Use of appropriate learning resources

Which learning resources are appropriate depends very much on the topic being taught examples include:

- texts
- video and film
- visual material such as posters, pictures, diagrams, samples,
- computer based learning packages,
- multi media packages.

Good teaching does not necessarily involve high tech equipment, more important is having the right stimulation for learning. The students' own knowledge and experience is often the most valuable resource.

Use of accommodation and equipment

- Best use is made of the accommodation and equipment available;
- suitability of the room/lab/studio for the type of learning activity being undertaken;
- seating arrangements are effective;
- any health and safety issues have been identified and dealt with.

Overall style and ambience

- Good communication with students;
- the tutor can be heard and understood clearly;
- the tutor communicates an enthusiasm for the subject; is lively and encouraging to students.
- Explanations are given at the appropriate level in clear language.
- Respect for students' own culture, language and religion: the diversity of the student body requires staff to be sensitive to the different cultural backgrounds of the students.
- Rapport with students: students are encouraged by the tutor, a good relationship exists with the group and students receive positive feedback.

Acknowledgement of students special needs

Escalate Peer Observation

Where students have special needs or disabilities the tutor takes these into account and accommodates those needs in the presentation of material and in his/her response to the students.