

College of Arts & Sciences

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University-Worldwide

Peer Observation of Teaching: Policies and Procedures

Context

Peer observation of teaching has become widely accepted as a best practice in institutions that have a demonstrated desire to develop and maintain excellence in instruction. Proponents assert that such observations encourage widespread improvements by creating a sense of community among faculty participating in a process of sharing ideas and advice with colleagues.¹ Feedback on teaching practices also can generate opportunities for a more deliberate and focused professional development plan.

The College of Arts & Sciences (COAS) has clearly established—via both policy and practice—that teaching is central to the mission and vision of the college. An effective peer observation process will support faculty as they strive to facilitate learning in the classroom and promote the attainment of Student Learning Outcomes and General Education competencies.

Each full-time COAS faculty member will have at least one peer observation of their teaching every academic year. Any available observation will be included as part of the Annual Performance Evaluation process and/or the promotion/tenure portfolio.

Process

The faculty member seeking a peer observation will work with the department chair to select the course to be observed, the time frame in which the observation will occur, and the peer who will be asked to do the observation. The department chair may also initiate observations.

Observation procedures are as follows:

Pre-observation

The faculty member to be observed:

- selects the course to be observed;
- provides the observer with any specific areas where they would like to receive feedback (may be written or verbal).

Observation

Observers will:

- review course playback sessions if the course is an EagleVision course;
- pay attention to specific areas for observation provided by the faculty member;
- examine as necessary all relevant modules that exist in Canvas for the course;
- complete the COAS Peer Observation Form (see below).

Post-observation

The peer observer and the faculty member observed will:

- debrief from the course observation and review the completed COAS Peer Observation Form;
- discuss strengths and areas for enhancement and improvement, including the observed faculty member's plans for addressing these items.

Upon completion of the post-observation, the observed faculty member will compose a brief reflection statement (no more than one page). The COAS Peer Observation Form and the reflection statement are submitted to the observed faculty member's department chair.

Ratified by COAS Interim Dean Donna
L. Roberts
29 April 2021

Revised
Ratified by COAS Dean
Alexander Siedschlag

Endorsed by COAS Leadership Team
23 May 2023

¹ Leicester Learning Institute. (n.d.) *Peer observation of teaching*. Retrieved from
<https://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/lli/developing-learning-and-teaching/enhance/peer-observation-of-teaching-1>

COAS Peer Observation of Teaching Form

Faculty Name: Darryl Chamberlain

Observer Name & Title: Timothy Smith, Dept Chair

Course: MATH 111 <https://erau.instructure.com/courses/164827>

Course Term: Oct 2023

PRE-OBSERVATION

Context or Background Information and Faculty Focus Requested (to be filled out by faculty member to be observed):

This post teaching review was requested so that the new department chair could observe the excellence in teaching from one of the department's most highly rated faculty (in regards to student evals), and provide his feedback.

POST-OBSERVATION

Observer will:

Discuss strengths and areas for enhancement and improvement (to be written by Peer Observer). This discussion may include items such as engagement with students, quality feedback, and demonstration of subject matter expertise.

Darryl, overall I feel the course is outstanding and could serve as a template for other faculty to view best practices etc. Please find below my notes on the main areas that I felt were outstanding, and other than to say keep doing what you're doing I do not have any comments and there are definitely not any areas of concern. The only suggestion I have is in line with the college's current project of adding more custom made video resources for our students, and while this project primarily is focusing on course redevelopment there is also an opportunity to add a vid here or there in places such as announcements etc

- Course set up, intro etc
 - All required items were completed, and it is great that on one of the first pages the students read (instructor bio & policies) not only did you have a very nice clearly defined policies you also took the time to add some personal comments about both your professional and personal self
- Announcements
 - It is great that you had consistent weekly announcements sent out at a common time each week, and from time to time added some supplemental resources (for example when a change was made in the small groups).
 - The initial announcement reads very well and I liked how you clearly defined the main points of the syllabus, but the posting was not too long (e.g. focused on main points not other details)
 - The only suggestion I would have here is that it could be nice to include a picture of yourself at the bottom to emphasize the “human” presence, maybe closing with that while reminding the students you are always available with questions through email
 - The overall structure of the general announcements were great, and I like how in some posts (such as study guides mod 1,2 & 3) you added links to supplemental resources
- Grading and Feedback
 - Everything looks good, I like how that you replied to students who posted comments in the feedback box as it appears this is one of the most efficient ways to communicate with students
- Discussions
 - Overall everything looks good with both the discussion and scoring.
 - The only suggestion I would have, more from my personal perspective rather than any course expectations, is within the first week the “intro & reflection” I like to reply to each student with a comment something like “I’m here to be of help, please don’t hesitate to reach out at anytime if you have any questions.”
- Overall

I feel that your performance in this class is great and I do not see any concerns! Thank you for all of the great work you do here at ERAU serving our students, and please do keep up the good work.

FACULTY REFLECTION (1 page)

Thank you for the kind words and thorough review Tim!

Course Setup/Intro

- I can take this one step further by providing a picture of myself here outside of the classroom, maybe on a run or in Boston. In courses where students are asked to provide a picture of themselves in the intro discussion, the pictures normally generate a lot of interaction.

Announcements

- Including a picture with each announcement is a great idea! I might even make a collection of 9+ professional pictures (headshots, at conferences, at graduations in robes, etc) to vary the picture much like a student in person would see their professor wear different clothes.
- I switched from a long-form announcement to short-form announcement and students do seem to prefer it.

Grading and Feedback

- I feel that robust feedback is an absolute necessity to learning and it appears that students very much appreciate the timeliness and amount of feedback I provide, especially on high-stakes assessments like exams.
- One idea I've had to move this forward is to provide the targeted feedback as written and then a quick recorded message to encourage or contextualize their performance in the course so far. I plan on implementing this in the next course I teach for high-stakes assessments only.

Discussions

- This is a good suggestion! I will add it to my future courses.
- One improvement I have made since the course you reviewed is posting a <5 minute video introducing myself. Students seem to appreciate the video format and it appears to "humanize" me more.

Again, thank you for the thorough review and I look forward to implementing the suggestions you made.