CLASSROOM OBSERVATION INSTRUCTIONS

Purpose of the Classroom Observation:
Observing experienced faculty members can give you ideas for your own teaching practice, including possible planning and delivery procedures to create an effective presentation and discussion. Observations create the opportunity to reflect and develop ideas about the connections among teacher planning, course structure, and the student experience.

Procedure for the Observation:
For this component of the AT program, your goal is to observe a tenured or tenure-track faculty member in their own classroom environment, gather ideas of best teaching practices, record your observations, and analyze how they might apply to your own future teaching experiences. The more you consider and understand the reasoning behind a particular teaching strategy or classroom procedure, the better prepared you will be when you meet challenges in your own teaching practice.

1. Choose a class to observe for three sessions and obtain permission from the faculty member. You may choose to observe faculty in your core area of research to gain insights into good teaching practice, OR you may want to arrange to observe a class in a department outside of your discipline. (Some students find it easier to focus on the process of teaching when not as familiar with the content presented.)

2. Arrange a pre-class meeting with the faculty member. Use the meeting to discuss your and the faculty member's expectations, the course format, and background of the course.
   • **Expectations** can include, but are not limited to: what both you and the faculty member hope to gain from the experience, what elements of the overall classroom dynamic you will likely pay attention to (i.e. transitions between activities or between classes, techniques to elicit discussion, faculty-student rapport, etc.), and any concerns or points the faculty member wants you to watch for in the observation.
   • Discussion of the **format of the course** should help give you insight into: the course goals, how the sessions are typically conducted, the overall course structure, and how the class to be observed fits in that structure.
   • **Background of the course** may include: what feedback the faculty member already has about/from the class, the typical attendance/involvement/response of students, and any specific issues or concerns you or the faculty member may have.

3. Attend three class sessions and conduct the observation. Take notes during your observations to help when you write your analysis. Be as descriptive as you can when you take notes. Record any questions you may have to ask after the class sessions. The following points are suggested areas of interest. You may want to choose a few of them to focus on for each session.
Class session structure
- Class beginning and initial engagement
- Incorporation of conceptual material into the topic of the day
- Organization of lecture material or other content
- In-class activities, time spent on each, and transitions between
- Conclusion and wrap-up at the end of class

Delivery
- Stimulation and maintenance of student interest throughout the class
- Creation of classroom learning atmosphere
- Command and flexibility of subject matter
- Connection of various topics to each other
- Use of props, visual aids, illustrations, and examples, if any
- Use of real-life anecdotes and examples to illustrate abstract ideas
- Uses of voice and body language
- Use of the chalk/white board

Classroom interaction
- Questions that encourage students to think about and engage with the subject
- Wait time after asking questions
- Reactions and responses to student questions and comments
- Ways to promote interaction involving everyone in the class
- How to handle questions that might divert the class from the topic
- Explanation of instructions for completing required tasks

4. Conduct a follow-up/de-briefing discussion with the faculty member. This is your chance to share and discuss your impressions—aspects of the sessions that you found interesting, challenging, most helpful, surprising, confusing, instructive, etc. You may wish, for example, to hear more about the rationale behind a particular lecture or discussion style, ask for insights or ideas on best practices from the faculty member’s experience with a difficult situation, or discuss strategies for rapport-building with students. Use this opportunity to ask any remaining questions you may have.

5. Prepare a 1-2 page, typed, single-spaced analysis of your observation experience. Submit your completed report, along with a Faculty Verification form, to CNDLS. The analysis should address your overall impressions, as well as detailed consideration of your experience. You probably want to consider many of the points suggested above in your analysis, including the value of the pre- and post-class conversations and a discussion of what you observed concerning the nature of the class session structure, the delivery, and the classroom interaction. Please be sure to include a list of best practices you observed and why they may be applicable to your own teaching practice in the future. Submit your report by email to CNDLS (atprogram@georgetown.edu), and deliver the Faculty Verification form in hardcopy to the AT Program mailbox in CNDLS, Car Barn 314. Lastly, in the interest of future AT participants, we would greatly appreciate it if you followed up your completed observation with a thank-you note to the faculty member you observed. Thank you.