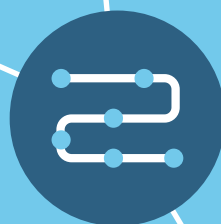


# TEACHING OBSERVATION GUIDE



“Watching someone teach well inspires us to try the strategy, and when we too are successful, our belief in the usefulness of what we saw and what we are capable of is enhanced.”

Hendry & Oliver, 2012



## INTRODUCTION

An excellent way to gain insight into your teaching is to observe a colleague. This is a guide to be used when observing colleagues at LBS. It is based on academic research (Donnelly, 2007; Hendry & Oliver, 2012; Tenenberg, 2016) and the analysis of existing peer observation schemes (C. Roland Christensen Center for Teaching and Learning, n.d.; Institute for Academic Development, n.d.; University of California, Berkeley, n.d.). It is designed to help you analyse the class you are observing, identify the key elements relevant to your teaching, and reflect on how to translate them into your pedagogical practice.

### WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF A TEACHING OBSERVATION?

There are many benefits. We almost always think of these as being mainly for the person doing the teaching, but research shows that, in many situations, the greatest benefits are for the person who is observing.

### Observing colleagues teaching can:

- trigger reflections on our own practice,
- give us new ideas to try, and
- help us to plan for action.



## GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS BEFORE THE SESSION

Speak with the faculty member before the session to understand the context and their goals for the class.

Take note of the level of learners, the nature of the teaching activity, and the format of the session. You may also want to look at the course outline, or any assigned readings. Ask the faculty member what has been taught previously and what will be taught in subsequent sessions (if appropriate) to help you place this session into an educational context.

You might ask the following questions to the faculty member to understand the purpose of the session:

If you haven't taught this topic yet, it might be useful to think how you would teach it before observing the class. Research shows that teachers learn more when they are familiar with the content of the lesson and have taught it before (Tenenberg, 2016).

What is the topic of the session?



What are you aiming to achieve in the session?



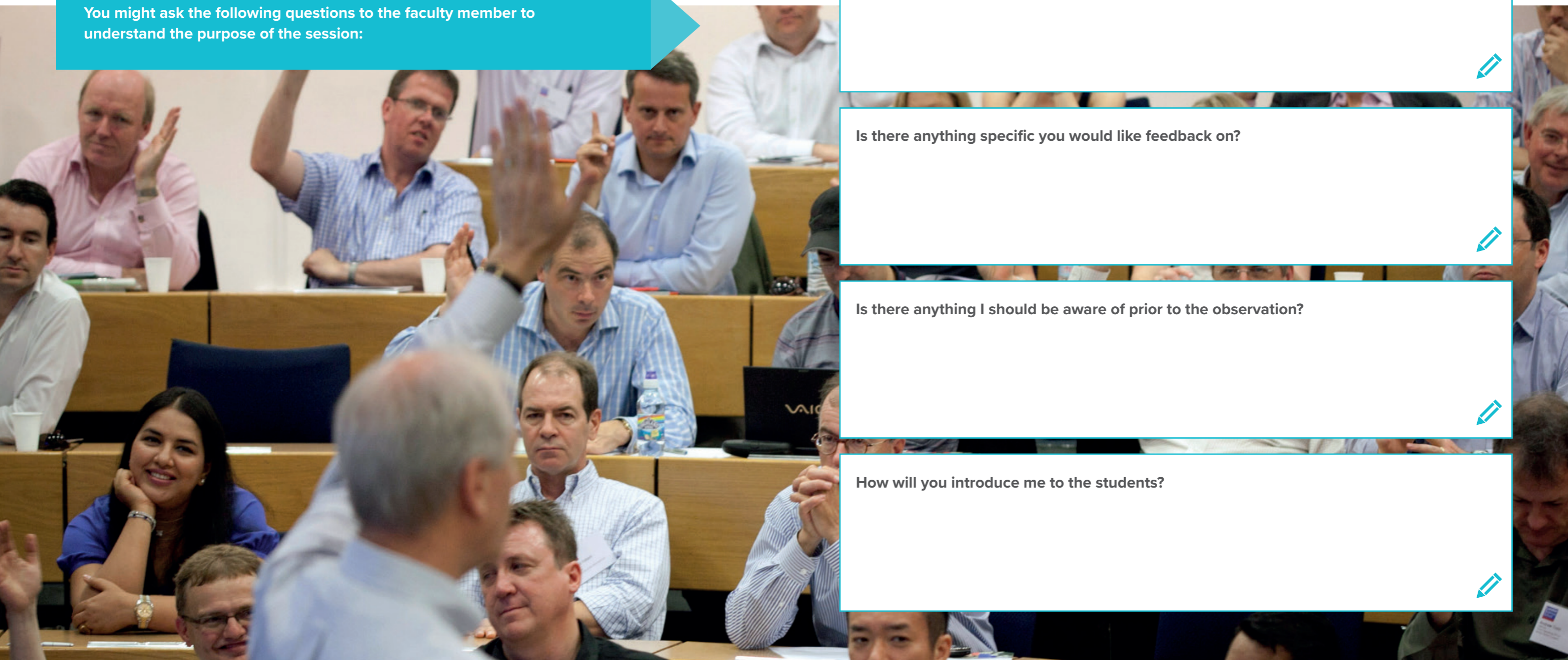
Is there anything specific you would like feedback on?



Is there anything I should be aware of prior to the observation?



How will you introduce me to the students?



## DURING THE SESSION

To capture what happens during the teaching session it is best to take detailed notes about the learning environment, learner engagement, teaching methods, and management of the session. You might bring the Observation Guide with you; however, it is difficult to pay attention to what is happening in the classroom while considering each item listed on the guide. Remember the guide's purpose is to analyse the observation, not to rate or assess a teaching performance. It is best to review the guide ahead of time, bring it with you, and reflect on the questions again after the class is finished.

When taking notes, it is important to stay focused on the pedagogy rather than the specific topic or content. The following table might help to structure your notes during the session.

### What happened during the class?

Time	Faculty activities	Students activities



Stay focused on the pedagogy rather than the specific topic or content.



Notes on Classroom setting



Notes on Integration of technologies



Notes on Organisation of content

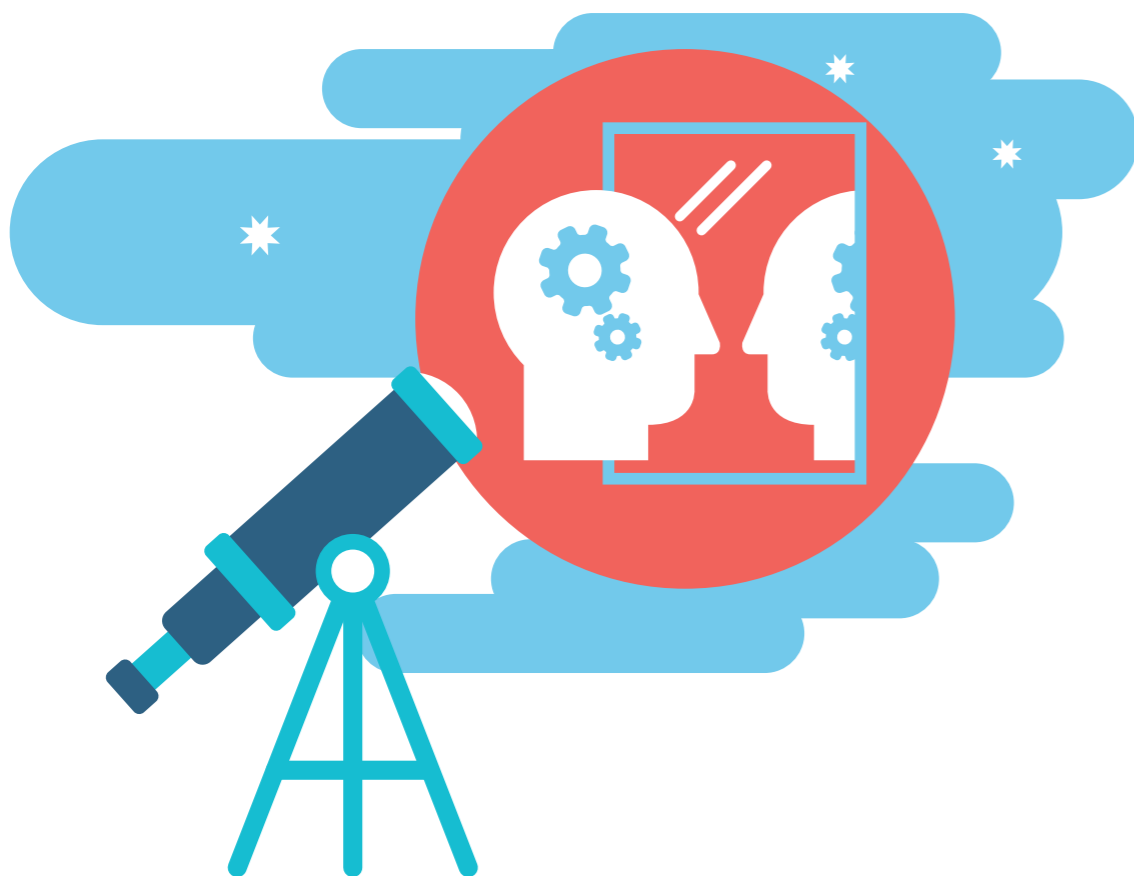


## AFTER THE SESSION

The purpose of these observations is, in the first place, to encourage reflection on your future teaching. **The Observation Guide** provides you with some questions to think about the teaching strategies you observed.

Review the notes from the class using the observation guide, try to identify the teaching activities that were particularly successful to drive students' engagement and deeper thinking.

**The reflection and feedback form** will help you to think how these strategies might be useful for your own classes. Would you feel comfortable trying these strategies in your class? Would you modify them in any sense? Are there any changes that you would make? Write down your thoughts and share them with the faculty member, keep these notes in hand when planning your classes.



## OBSERVATION GUIDE

**This guide is focused on the dynamics of the classroom, not on the content of the course.**

### CLASSROOM SETTING

These questions are valid for the first class or when something changes after that.

- How is the room setup? How does this contribute to the learning activities of the class?
  - position of seats and tables
  - doors (e.g., at front or back)
  - whiteboards, other equipment, podium
  - general noise level (does room echo; is there street noise, air conditioning noise, etc.)
  - ventilation (stuffy, cold, hot, etc.)
- Where do students sit? in back? down front? In groups?
  - disruptions if people come late? (having to find a seat in middle, squeaky doors, etc.)

### ORGANISATION OF CONTENT

- Are there distinct sections to the class?
- How does the faculty member transition between sections?
- How are materials presented in the class time? (projector, handouts, other)
- How are important points emphasized and summarized?
- How does the faculty member offer “real world” application?
- How does the faculty member relate class to course goals, students' personal goals, or societal concerns?

### STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION

- How does the faculty member create a participatory classroom atmosphere?
- How does faculty member help quieter students interact with others?
- How are students engaging in class, and being invited to engage in class? (i.e. taking notes, looking over prepared notes, taking to others] students)
- How does the faculty member encourage general attentiveness in class?
- How are student questions encouraged? when? how?
- How are questions handled? repeating them? can everyone hear all questions? are the answers clear?

### INTEGRATION OF MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY

- What technology/ies are used during the class? How?
- What technology/ies are used outside of class? How is the work done via technology outside of class integrated into class sessions?
- How is technology used to engage students, enhance learning, and/or generally enrich students' class experience?
- How is technology leveraged to facilitate a learning experience that would otherwise not be possible?

## TEACHING ACTIVITIES

The following questions are for different types of in-class activities

### DISCUSSION TEACHING

Specific questions to observe the flow of the class in sessions where the focus is on analysing a topic with contributions from the whole class.

- Who are the active participants and who is trying to avoid engagement?
- Who keeps the discussion going?
- Are all questions and answers relayed to the faculty member or do participants address each other?
- Which participants are listened to when they speak?
- Which are ignored?
- How is silence handled?
- How is the level of questions the faculty member poses to the learners (e.g. lower order factual type questions or higher order analytic and evaluative type questions)

### IN-CLASS GROUP WORK

Specific questions to observe work in small groups in the classroom. In these situations, it might be useful to choose one group and ask them if you can observe the interactions.

- How was the group work introduced?
  - What were students asked to do?
  - Were the directions to the students clearly stated? Why or why not?
- How was the time used by the students during group work? (on task, seeking clarification, distracted by tangents, etc.)
- What did the faculty member do while the students worked in groups? Specifically, what was helpful to the students? What could have been more helpful to the students to use their time effectively?
- How did the faculty member bring the group activity to a close? How did they transition to the next activity? How was the transition effective? How could it have been more effective?
- What else did you observe that is not represented above?



Think how these strategies might be useful for your own classes.



## REFLECTION AND FEEDBACK FORM

Fill this form after the session



**1** What went well with the session? What activities were successful to engage students and encourage deeper thinking processes?



**2** What have you learnt that you can use in your own teaching?



**3** Do you have any specific comments that might be useful for the faculty member teaching?



**4** Use this space to take notes about how you would plan and approach this class in the future (\*)





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