

Department of Chemistry
Guidelines for Peer Observation of Classes

OVERVIEW: These guidelines are intended to suggest a framework for the peer observation of classes in the Department of Chemistry. In addition, the guidelines may suggest an outline for a discussion of class observations between the observer and the instructor observed. A separate “Report on Peer Observer’s Classroom Visit” should be filed with the Department Chair for each class observed.

Syllabus: Did the observer obtain a syllabus for the course? Did the syllabus adequately describe the course and its goals? Any comments on the syllabus?

Appropriateness of content: To what extent was the material covered in the class appropriate for the course and at the right level of difficulty for the students? Was there evidence that some students were challenged? ...that most students understood?

Pace: Was the amount of material covered in the class appropriate for the class meeting time? Given the time in the semester when the class was observed, has the course progressed as far as might be expected in relation to other sections of the same course (if any) and to the course syllabus?

Class structure: Was this class organized with recognizable goals? Did it connect with other aspects of the course (or other courses)? Did students participate constructively in the class (ask and answer questions, contribute otherwise)? Was the instructor engaged with the students on the substance of the class?

Methods of pedagogy: “Methods of pedagogy” refers to such class activities as lectures, discussion, computer/calculator activities, group work, or other in-class experience that contributes to student learning. What methods of learning were dominant in the class? Was there evidence that they were effective? If appropriate, was technology used effectively? Did students respond better to some aspects of the class than to others? Were other methods used occasionally?

Particular Strengths: What aspects of the class, such as the methods of learning identified above, were particularly effective? Did the class atmosphere support learning?

Suggestions/Concerns: What might have made the learning in this class more effective? Could the rapport between instructor and students be improved? Are there any discipline problems that need attention?

Summary of the class: Compared with other examples of classroom instruction in chemistry at UST, how would you describe the overall teaching in this class?