

Form B – Teaching & Learning Circle Observations

This is an exemplar involving a lecturer (AH) that may give you a guide as you complete your own teaching observation⁴. However, you are encouraged to choose an approach that best suits your objectives for participating in a TLC.

Description of what's happening

AH greets students as they come in. One student asks a question about the homework – AH says she'll address that in class. An agenda has already been written up on the board.

AH closes door and says "reading quiz!" – students put away books and get out paper.

AH reads through 5 questions, waits about 90 seconds between each. Invites students to suggest "bonus" question – a student speaks up immediately. Students laugh.

A couple of students come in late – don't get out paper, just sit there

AH reads through questions one more time and then after a minute calls "time!" and students pass up papers.

Personal Reflections

I like the easy rapport with students – seems organised with agenda already on board. Impressed that she held off on answering student's question – I think I sometimes jump in too quickly with an answer.

Students seem to know what's coming – this must be a regular thing. Interesting to let the students help write the quiz – what happens if someone suggests a bad question? But they sure like it.

Okay, definitely looks like a regular thing – and they already know they don't get to do the quiz if they're late. She must be really clear about her expectations. I wonder how Students feel about that . . . they don't look frustrated. Might be an interesting thing to try.

4. Exemplar and questions for reflection were sourced from the Centre for Teaching and Learning: www.stonehill.edu/ctl.xml

Form C – Teaching & Learning Circle Reflections

You may find the following questions useful in guiding your own reflection or post-observation discussion with your colleagues.

- 1 What have you learned about your teaching philosophy and the personal values you bring to your teaching from your classroom observations?
- 2 How has the experience of again being in the "learner" role prompted you to reflect on your own teaching?
- 3 What have you learned is one of your teaching strengths?
- 4 What aspect of your teaching do you wish to improve? How are you going to do this?
- 5 What surprised you during this experience? What assumptions about teaching were challenged by what you observed?
- 6 What is one thing you learned that will make your teaching more effective?
- 7 What is one thing you learned that you are going to apply next semester in your classroom?



Teaching & Learning Circles resource pack

Introduction

One of the most effective ways of refreshing our teaching is to see other teachers in action, and it's good to do that as part of a team. We hope you discover that for yourself as you take part in a 'Teaching & Learning Circle': at least three or four colleagues who will visit each other's classes over the course of a semester and then meet to discuss what they have learned from observing their colleagues' teaching. This resource pack provides information about the purpose and process of Teaching & Learning Circles, and includes some handy forms to guide you through the process.

Acknowledgements

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The Purpose and Benefits of Teaching & Learning Circles

Purpose

The Teaching & Learning Circles (TLC) initiative provides University of Otago Division of Humanities staff an opportunity to improve their teaching through reciprocal teaching observations, collegial dialogue, and self-reflection. The aim is to foster a culture of collegiality around teaching approaches, encourage reflective teaching practice, and provide a supportive environment regarding teaching development.¹

As a member of a Teaching & Learning Circle, you will have the opportunity to observe your colleagues' teaching for the purpose of reflecting on your own teaching practice. By observing others teach, you will be exposed to different teaching approaches, which may encourage you to question your own knowledge and refresh your teaching approach.

Benefits

Your participation in a Teaching & Learning Circle may include the following benefits:

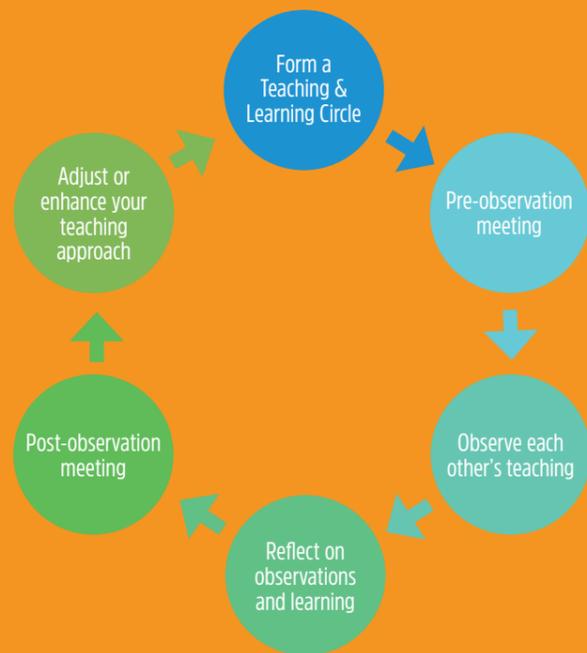
- ▶ improved confidence regarding your teaching;
- ▶ collegial affirmation of your effective teaching approaches;
- ▶ greater appreciation of students' learning experiences; and
- ▶ possibly, a heightened passion for teaching.²

Additionally, the information generated from your participation in a Teaching & Learning Circle can be used alongside student evaluations to guide effective teaching practices and student learning. You may also wish to use your written reflections as part of your 'self-evaluation of teaching statement' required in your teaching portfolio.

1. Drew, S., Phelan, L., Lindsay, K., Carbone, A., Ross, B., Wood, K., Stoney, S., Cottman, C. (2017). Formative observation of teaching: focusing peer assistance on teachers' developmental goals. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 42(6), 914-929. doi:10.1080/02602938.2016.1209733

2. Bell, A. and R. Mladenovic (2015). "Situating learning, reflective practice and conceptual expansion: effective peer observation for tutor development." *Teaching in Higher Education* 20(1): 24-36.

The Teaching & Learning Circle Process



- 1** Form a 'Teaching & Learning Circle' with colleagues across the Humanities Division or within your own department. You can sign up at otago.ac.nz/humanities/teaching-learning-circles
- 2** Meet with your Teaching & Learning Circle partners to agree on the date, time, and location of the classes to be observed. Form A – *Planning a Teaching & Learning Circle* – can assist with this. At your first meeting, also arrange a time to meet together after all observations are complete.
- 3** Observe each other's teaching (1 class each). Form B – *Teaching & Learning Circle Observations* – provides an exemplar for one possible approach on how you can note your observations.
- 4** Reflect on your observations using the prompts provided in Form C – *TLC Reflections*.
- 5** Meet over coffee or lunch to discuss what *you* learned about your own teaching from observing your colleagues.
- 6** Consider how you can enhance your teaching approach based on your observations and reflections, and try them out in your classes.
- 7** Arrange to meet with your TLC members later in the semester (or year) to repeat the process, and continue to engage, collegially, regarding teaching and learning.

Guidelines for Teaching Observations and Reflections

It is important to remember that the purpose of observing teaching is to encourage your own self-reflection. Therefore, observations are carried out in a non-judgemental manner, and post-observation discussions should be seen as a collaborative dialogue between peers.³ For instance, your post-observation meeting may include a discussion about what you have learned about your own teaching. You may also invite feedback from your colleagues on a specific aspect of your teaching.

Here are some questions you may want to discuss at your pre-observation meeting:

1. What are your personal values regarding teaching and learning?
2. What do you aim for your students to learn? How do you enable them to learn this?
3. How would you evaluate your teaching and your students' learning currently?
4. What are you doing well, and what might you improve or enhance in your teaching to enable student learning?
5. What are you feeling confident about and what are you feeling less confident about in your teaching approach?
6. Are you trying anything new this semester?
7. What are your goals for the day your TLC colleagues are in your classroom?
8. What are you apprehensive about, if anything, regarding being observed by your colleagues?
9. What are you hoping to gain from participating in a Teaching & Learning Circle?

3. Sachs, J., & Parsell, M. (2014). *Peer review of learning and teaching in higher education: International perspectives* (e-book)

Form A – Planning a Teaching & Learning Circle

Member details

MEMBER 1

Contact details

Additional comments

MEMBER 2

Contact details

Additional comments

MEMBER 3

Contact details

Additional comments

MY CLASS OBSERVATION DETAILS

Paper

Date

Time

Location

Additional comments

POST-OBSERVATION MEETING DETAILS

Date

Time

Location

Class observation details

Paper

Date

Time

Location

Paper

Date

Time

Location

Paper

Date

Time

Location