

**Certificate of Accomplishment in Teaching Program
 Classroom Observation Form – Option 1**

CoAT Participant's Name: Titus Barik
 Course observed: CSC 791
 Date of observation: 3/16/11
 Time of class: 12:50 PM
 Observed by: Emerson Murphy-Hill

Teaching characteristics – Comments	
<p>1. Planning and start of session <i>Appropriateness of aims and outcomes (where it is possible to evaluate this). Communication of these to students. Continuity with other sessions and students' prior knowledge made explicit. Coping with any unexpected occurrences, e.g. latecomers, missing equipment.</i></p>	<p>Titus was clear about his aim; for the students to talk about the material. He explained that it was different from previous classes (using active learning), and made his expectations clear in an email to students before class. Coped fine with unexpected occurrences.</p>
<p>1. Presentation <i>Structure. Relevance and organization of content. Attitude to subject matter. Clarity of presentation. Emphasis of key points. Pace of session (time management). Tone, volume, clarity of speech. Links made to other aspects of course (e.g. lectures, seminars or tutorials). Summary (end and/or interim).</i></p>	<p>Choice of teaching methods was good. Very engaging. Expertise in subject matter. Presentation was clear, although there were a few dangling concepts, like a mention of priming in the beginning of class that wasn't followed up on until the end. Pace of session was good, although didn't have time to fit it all in. Could have used co-teacher (Matlock) a bit more, such as to collect worksheets. Tone and volume excellent. Links explicit.</p>

1. Student participation

Question and answer technique. Exercises/activities. Class management (appropriate level of control and authority). Instructions to students. General class atmosphere. Level of participation between students (excessive? lacking?). Attention and interest. Attitude to students. Awareness of individual needs. Student-teacher rapport.

Student participation was good -- I think that everyone enjoyed it. For this particular course, more open-ended participation from the students would have been better. Titus did leave space for students to say whatever they wanted ("anything else you guys would like to discuss"), but such statements are often too high level for anyone to grasp on to. Good interactions with individuals.

1. Methods and approaches

Choice/variety of teaching/learning methods. Use and design of instructional materials (board, technology, handouts etc.) Use of appropriate reinforcement. Examples and analogies. References and links to research, other resources. Handling problems/disruptions.

Choice of methods was very good. Different from previous methods and it held students' attention. Excellent reinforcement with candy. Used figures from the papers to illustrate concepts. Provided an example of long-tailed distributions to explain why human activity is often difficult to statistically characterize. Students were not disruptive.

1. General

Were the aims and outcomes achieved? Appropriateness of teaching/learning methods. Was effective communication achieved? Awareness of needs of learners and differences in approach.

Overall, the class was quite successful.

1. Aspects to improve

Comment in terms of both teaching style and content (if possible).

As described in subsections above.

Signed by observer: EMERSON MURPHY-HILL Date: 3/19/2011

REFLECTION QUESTIONS for the CoAT PARTICIPANT

Complete this section *after* your class has been observed and you have met with your observer. Attach your comments to this observation form.

1. What did you feel went well in this class session?

The use of the whiteboard as an alternative to electronic slides went well. Writing on the whiteboard instead of having pre-designed slides allows for a natural throttle to the course so that

it is paced properly. Class participation (in terms of number of students) was increased from previous classes, where only a few students would repeatedly contribute to the discussions. I credit activities like think-pair-share and brainstorming as techniques that increased this participation.

2. What would you like to change about this class session if you had to teach it again?

I underestimated estimate the time that it would take to deploy some of the active learning activities in the classroom. As I gain more experience in activate learning strategies, I hope to have to better estimations.

Also, it is possible that the success of the class was at least partially attributable to the fact that the students in the class had not had a course with active learning before. In the future, I would need to find techniques to incorporate active learning without generating “active learning fatigue”.

3. In the light of the observer’s comments, what aspects of your teaching approach will you look at changing in the future? How will you do this?

Although the active learning techniques used in this lecture were quite successful, I found it difficult to design activities to address higher-order thinking skills. Instead, these activities were primarily related to knowledge and comprehension in terms of the Bloom’s Taxonomy. The observer noted this issue through his comments that “open-ended participation from the students would have been better.” To address this issue, it is likely that I will need to research more advanced techniques for generating discussion in the classroom, since many of the introductory active learning strategies are explained using simple examples.

4. What have you found useful/not so useful about the observation process?

In contrast with recorded lectures, this lecture was not recorded. In this case, the observation is useful because there is no way to re-watch my own lecture. The observation also provided a second perspective that confirmed some of the issues that I recognized during the lecture.

The observer noted that some of my questions were too high level, something which I did subconsciously. Later in the year, I attended a workshop on “Effective Questioning Techniques” that I had formal insight into asking questions. One of my motivations for attending the work shop was a direct result of the observers comments in this category.