

## Center for Instructional Development and Research

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## Classroom Observation

Classroom observation is a collaborative process. Both the person being observed and the observer have important roles before, during, and after the observation. Collaborating at each stage of the process can help put both participants at ease so that each benefits from the experience. For more information on planning and conducting class observations, see CIDR's web site: <http://depts.washington.edu/cidrweb/resources/observationtools.html>

### IF YOU ARE BEING OBSERVED:

#### Before

- Be prepared to discuss with the observer:
  - Goals for the class
  - What you plan to do in class that day
  - What you want the observer to pay attention to
- Tell the observer
  - Where you'd like the observer to sit
  - If you'd like the observer to take part in class
  - Where the class meets, and when

#### During

- Introduce the observer to the class.
- Explain the purpose of the observation.
- Explain the observer's role to the students.
- Soon after class, write down your reflections on the class so that you will be prepared to discuss it with the observer.

#### After

- With the observer, reconstruct what happened in class
- Think about goals for the class and the specific class session that was observed. Be prepared to describe:
  - What you felt went well
  - What you would change
  - What was typical or atypical about the class
- Ask for specific descriptions and constructive suggestions.

Information for People who Teach  
at the University of Washington

Continued on back >>



## IF YOU ARE THE **OBSERVER**

### Before

- Clarify the purpose of the observation:
  - For reappointment, promotion, tenure?
  - For individual teaching development?
- Meet with your colleague or TA to discuss:
  - What will happen in class that day
  - What to pay attention to
- Describe what you'll be doing during the observation.
- Schedule a meeting to discuss the observation.

### During

- Record observations:
  - What is the instructor doing / saying?
  - What are students doing / saying?
- Record your impressions and questions; for example:
  - "Is there another way to present that concept?"
  - "Seems clear, but students look confused. Why?"
- Participate in the class only if invited to do so.

### After

- With the instructor, reconstruct what happened in class.
- Ask your colleague or TA to describe:
  - What he/she felt went well
  - What he/she would change
  - What was typical or atypical about the class
- Listen to your colleague or TA
- Describe rather than evaluate what you saw
- Finally, offer constructive suggestions.

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## HOW CAN CIDR HELP?

CIDR can offer a variety of services that can help you when you are preparing for an observation. For example:

- Consultation with a CIDR consultant to discuss and develop observation goals, criteria, or procedures
- Workshops to help people in your department prepare for and conduct observations
- References and resources on conducting observations: <http://depts.washington.edu/cidrweb/resources/observationtools.html>



## Center for Instructional Development and Research

CIDR promotes excellence in teaching and learning at the University of Washington through its work with individual faculty and TAs, departments, campus-wide initiatives, and University leaders. CIDR staff are available year-round to collaborate on the design, implementation, and assessment of ways to advance teaching and learning for all students in the diverse UW community. Consultations are confidential and offered at no charge to UW faculty, TAs, and departments.

If you have questions about teaching and learning, or you would like to find out more about working with CIDR, you can call us at 543-6588, send a message to [cidr@u.washington.edu](mailto:cidr@u.washington.edu), or visit our web site:

<http://depts.washington.edu/cidrweb/>



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