

Guide for writing peer classroom observation letters in Math [DRAFT]

When writing your peer classroom observation letter, please address the following items¹ (if they are relevant). To provide feedback on this guide, please respond to the questions on the 2nd page and return to Nat Thiem.

Review of syllabus and other course materials:

- Did the syllabus clearly describe expectations, requirements, and assessments for the course?

Technical aspects/classroom mechanics:

- **Resources.** Resources selected for the class (e.g., board work, slides, handouts, etc.) were educationally valuable, well executed, and beneficial for the students.
- **Organized.** The instructor's activities were well organized, structured, and made good use of time.
- **Accuracy.** Instructor's written and spoken content information was accurate and appropriately thorough (e.g. information written on board, in hand-outs).
- **Active Learning (if applicable).** The instructor employed active learning strategies appropriate for the size and structure of the class, and in line with departmental expectations.

What the instructor was doing/efforts made to engage students:

- **Content.** The instructor chose examples and details that were appropriate and worthwhile for helping students learn the content in this course.
- **Motivation.** The instructor provided context and made clear attempts to point out the relevance of the material, e.g., by connecting it to other subjects, giving examples, real world applications, etc.
- **Depth.** The instructor delivered content and answered questions in a way that was consistent with deep knowledge of the subject.
- **Reasoning.** The instructor highlighted the ideas behind the content and encouraged students to increase their reasoning ability.

What the students were doing/student engagement:

- **Engagement.** Students appeared to be on task throughout the class and engaged in learning.
- **Participation.** Many of the students in the class were contributing their voice to discussion; students appeared comfortable speaking up in class, both to each other and to the instructor.
- **Informal Assessment.** Students engaged with attempts by the instructor to gauge student understanding (e.g., by answering questions).

Additional considerations:

- Observations of what the instructor did well.
- Suggestions for the instructor to improve their teaching.
- Comments on your interactions with the instructor.

1. Items were adapted from the UTeach Observation Protocol (UTOP; Retrieved March 2018 from <https://utop.uteach.utexas.edu/>) and in partnership with the Teaching Quality Framework Initiative (<https://www.colorado.edu/teaching-quality-framework/>) with sponsorship by the National Science Foundation (DUE-1725959) - any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the NSF.

Your feedback on the above items is greatly appreciated!

1) Which of the items did you find particularly relevant/most helpful when writing your letter?

2) Which of the items did you find particularly irrelevant/least helpful when writing your letter?

3) Were there any concepts you addressed in your letter that were missing from the items?

4) Do you have any additional feedback on the items or the guide as a whole?